



# EUROPEAN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT **PROJECT** FOR 2030

*Study carried out by Protourisme*



*supervised by Patricia Chagnon  
Member of the European Parliament*

**PATRIOTS**  
FOR EUROPE FOUNDATION



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# « PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR B OF THE EUROPEAN UNION T

## PREFACE

*Tourism leads to the discovery of the riches of our natural landscapes, to the unique history of our countries, to our traditional ways of life so much admired, but also takes us back to our dreams, our aspirations, our national imagination.*

**W**hat could be more wonderful than sharing all this, with our own people and also with all those who are curious about others, about sharing the joys and beauties of the world? Tourism in Europe represents millions of direct and indirect jobs, and essential economic benefits in many sectors. Tourism ensures the transmission of craftsmanship, contributes to the vitality of local cultures. Tourism allows local producers to find markets, restaurateurs to attract passing clienteles, local recipes to endure. Tourism can be a discreet and cross-sectoral economic booster, an opening to the world, an amplifier of national pride.

Too often considered as the fruit of chance, tourism development in the 21st century requires, on the contrary, a strategic approach, a commitment from all stakeholders, and targeted investments. Defining a tourism policy is a complex exercise. Public authorities play a pivotal role in this respect. It involves taking into account the diversity of situations of each activity, each region, and almost each company, raising awareness to include residents, guarantees, and financial aid.

# ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS TOURISM POLICY »

## **Patricia Chagnon**

- French Member of the European Parliament
- Former President of the Abbeville Tourist Office
- Awarded the Tourism Medal
- Member of the Identity and Democracy Foundation



While tourist activity is a daily affair, the tourism strategy must necessarily be part of a long-term vision, a vision that goes beyond the deadlines for loan repayments, or the lure of quick profit...

Relocalized tourism can bring life back to small restaurants and cafes tucked away in rural areas that have all too often been victims of the closing of public services and general desertification in recent decades.

Because the desire for autonomy, sociability, and relaxation determines the choice of an increasing number of Europeans when they plan their leisure time, we can each, in our own way, make tourism the driving force behind the revival of the local economy.

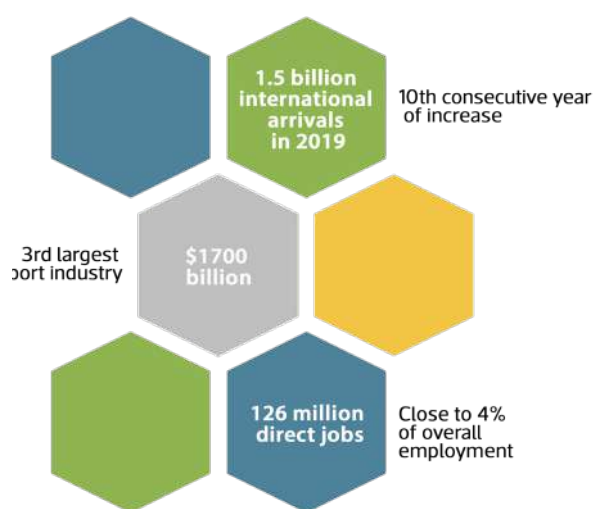
This study, conducted by the PROTOURISME agency, seeks to enlighten you on public policies, economic levers, and means that can be mobilized to implement a visionary tourism strategy. ♦



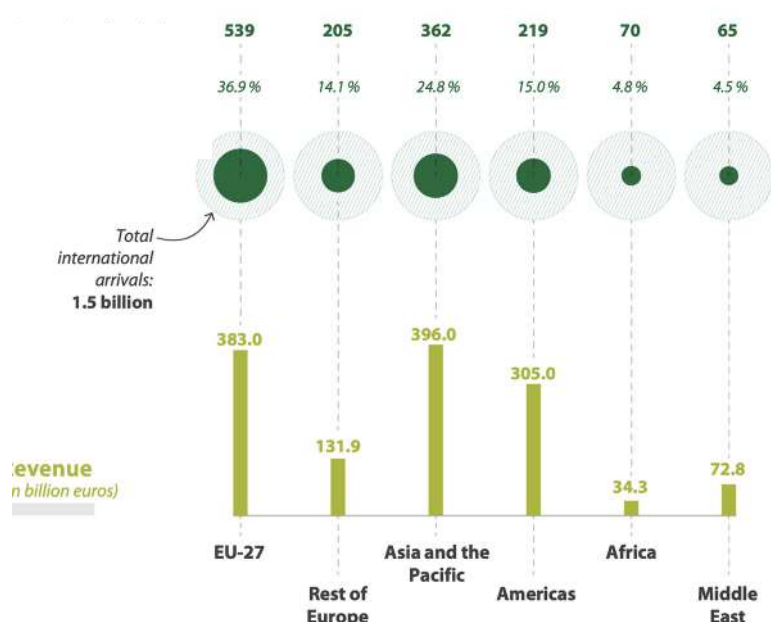
# INTRODUCTION

*In 65 years, the number of tourists across the world was multiplied by 45, with a market worth \$1500 billion in 2019, a figure that doubled in a decade.*

In the 1950s, there were only 25 million international tourists, and a mere five countries drew seven tourists out of 10 (United States, Canada, Italy, France and Switzerland). By 2019, international tourism had reached 1.5 billion arrivals and Europe accounted for half of that market, with 745 million arrivals. The European Union, which was the most visited region in the world, received close to 540 million tourists, or almost 37% of the worldwide total. Revenue from international tourism in the EU stood at €383 billion, or about 29% of the total revenue across the world. According to the WTO, four EU member states (France, Spain, Italy and Germany) were among the top ten countries in the world in terms of arrivals of international tourists and tourism revenue. Note that the USA alone generates 214 billion by way of revenue from international tourism. ♦



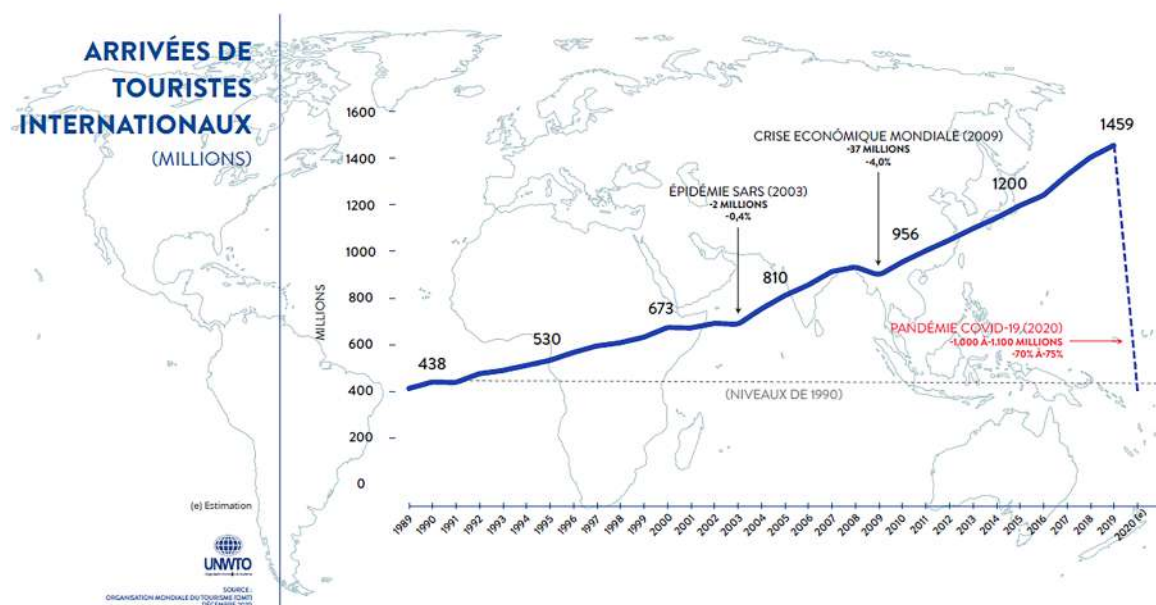
## INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS AND TOURISM RECEIPTS BY REGION IN 2019



Source: ECA, based on UNWTO, International Tourism Highlights, 2020 Edition.

# IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN THE EU

## INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS



*A historic regression that took worldwide tourism back 30 years.*

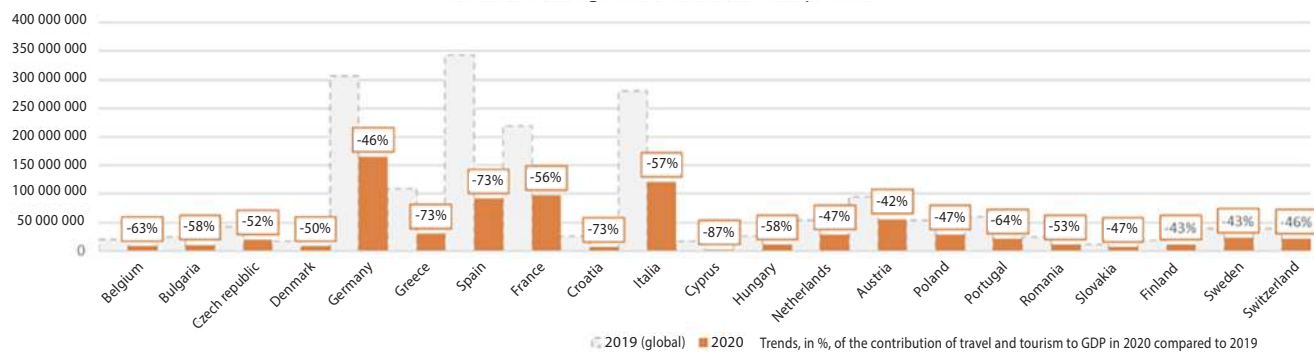


**680** million international tourists at the turn of the millennium, 1 billion in 2010, 1.5 billion in 2019, and the WTO had forecast 1.8 billion by 2030.

At the end of 2020, the number of international arrivals had dropped by nearly a billion, back to its level in 1990: 450 million arrivals.

As a comparison, the SARS pandemic in 2003 had driven down international tourism by 0.4%, and the economic crisis of 2009 had resulted in a 4% drop. After a 72% fall in tourist arrivals in the world in 2020 as a result of COVID-19, 68% in Europe, the strong recovery in 2022 made it possible to go back up to 80% of pre-pandemic levels, thanks to the dynamic driven by European tourists within Europe itself. The countries least dependent on international tourism were those that suffered least from the COVID-19 pandemic. These include the countries of northern Europe, quite unlike the tourist destinations of southern Europe, where the domestic customer base was unable to make up for the drop in international arrivals. Greece, Croatia, Cyprus and Spain lost close to three quarters of their tourist bed nights, and Portugal, Belgium, Italy, France and Hungary lost between 55% and 65% of their hotel bed nights (source Eurostat).

## HOTEL BED NIGHTS: 2020-2019 COMPARISON



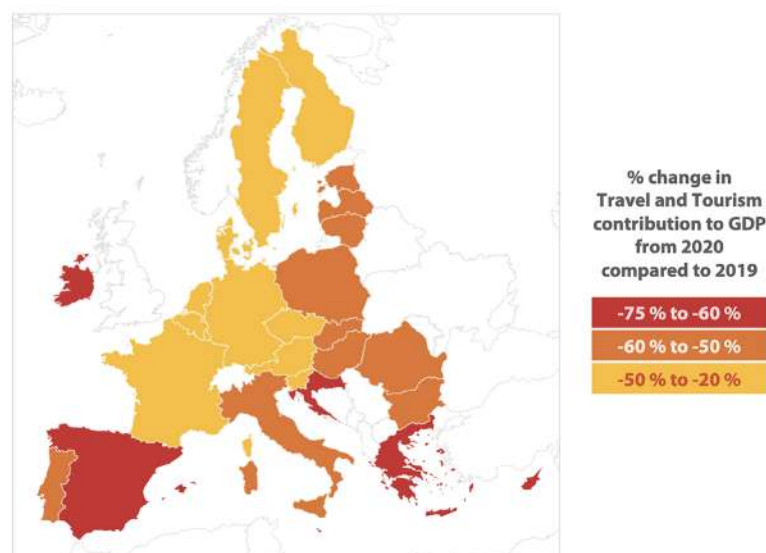
**ACCORDING TO THE WORLD TRAVEL AND TOURISM COUNCIL, ARRIVALS OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS IN THE EU IN THE FIRST THREE QUARTERS OF 2020 WERE 67.5% BELOW THOSE IN THE SAME PERIOD IN 2019. THE DROP VARIED FROM 46% TO 84% DEPENDING ON THE MEMBER STATE CONCERNED.**

All the industries that are directly or indirectly related to the tourism and leisure industry came to a standstill with the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a fall in the incomes of businesses and self-employed workers in the tourist industry. The indirect repercussions of the drop in tourism are considerable, because of the transverse nature of the tourism industry and its relations with the general business ecosystem and upstream and downstream industries such as farming, fishing, aquaculture, wine growing, terroir produce, transport, services to businesses, retailing etc.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, arrivals of international tourists in the EU in the first three quarters of 2020 were 67.5% below those in the same period in 2019. The drop varied from 46% to 84% depending on the member state concerned.

The collapse of international tourist flows and travel restrictions within countries resulted in a significant decrease in the contribution of tourism to the economy. "In 2020, the EU lost around two million jobs in the travel and tourism sector and its contribution to the GDP fell by half compared to 2019 (from around 10% to 5% of GDP). Traditional tourism destinations such as Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Spain suffered the largest reductions (more than 60 %), together with Ireland", according to a report of the European Court of Auditors.

## REDUCTION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF TRAVEL & TOURISM TO GDP IN EACH MEMBER STATE, FROM 2019 TO 2020



Source: ECA, based on WTTC, Economic Impact Reports 2021.



“ **SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF INCOME FOR THE BUSINESS TOURISM INDUSTRY, PARTICULARLY HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, CONFERENCE CENTRES AND TRAVEL AGENCIES.** ”

The greater the dependence of a country or geographical and tourist area in the European Union on long-haul customers, the more its economy was impacted by the pandemic. Large European metropolises were the most affected, because they suffered from customers' wariness of crowded locations, a drop in long-haul pleasure tourism customers and a collapse of business tourism, both individual and MICE (Meetings Incentives Conventions and Events) tourism.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant effect on business tourism in the European Union. Travel restrictions, business closures and changes in working habits drove business travelling sharply down.

According to the data published by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), arrivals of business tourists in the EU-27 fell by 74% in 2020 as compared to 2019. That drop was even greater in 2021, when it was 78%.

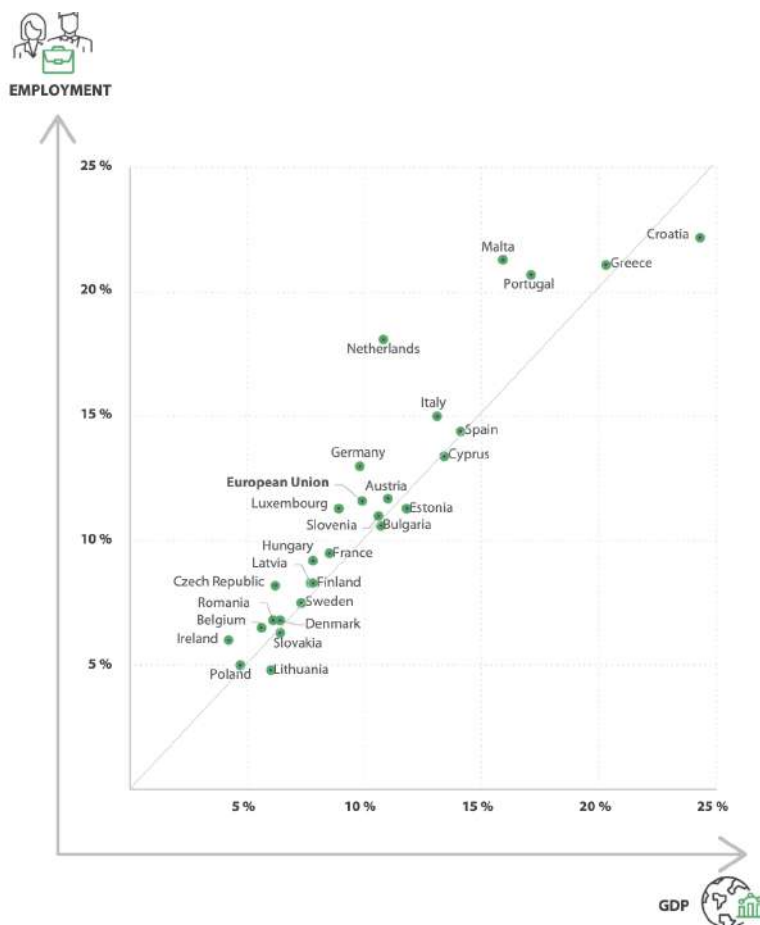
**The main consequences of the decrease have been as follows:**

- **Significant loss of income for the business tourism industry, particularly hotels, restaurants, conference centres and travel agencies.**
- **Loss of jobs in the business tourism industry.**
- **Decrease in the economic activity of towns and regions that depend on business tourism, particularly large European cities (Paris, Berlin, Madrid, Barcelona, Brussels, Vienna etc.).**

According to the European Commission, the direct and indirect contribution of the tourist industry to the GDP of EU in 2019 was estimated to be 9.9%, and 11.6% of the active EU population worked in the tourist industry, occupying 23.5 million jobs. Over 99% of the businesses in the EU tourist industry are small and medium enterprises.

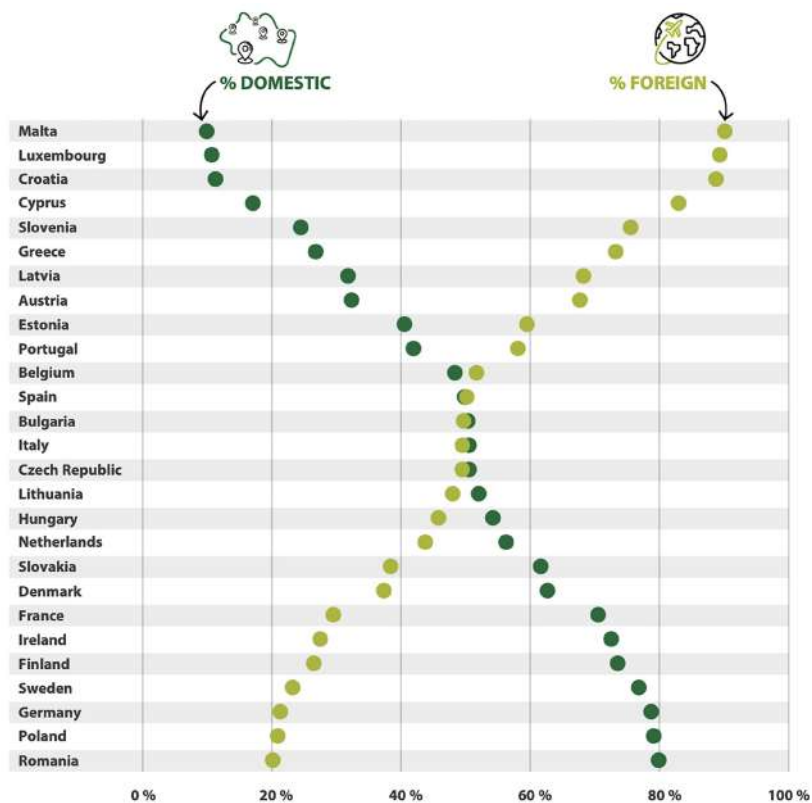
The weight of the tourist industry varies considerably from one member state to another, with 4% to 6% of GDP in Ireland, Poland, Belgium and Lithuania, more or less 10% in Germany, Slovenia, Bulgaria, as much as 12% to 15% in Italy, Cyprus and Spain and above 20% in Croatia and Greece. ♦

## CONTRIBUTION OF TOURISM TO GDP AND JOBS IN 2019



Source: ECA, based on WTTC, Economic Impact Reports 2021.

## DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM BY MEMBER STATE - SHARES IN 2019



Source: ECA, based on Eurostat, Arrivals at tourist accommodation establishments.

# RECOVERY OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

## INTERNATIONAL TOURISM HAD CLIMBED BACK TO 84% OF ITS PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS BY JULY 2023

*After reaching 80% in the first quarter of 2023, arrivals of international tourists were at 85% of pre-pandemic levels in the second quarter of 2023 and 90% in July 2023, driven by continuous total demand.*

It is estimated that 700 million tourists travelled overseas between January and July 2023, i.e. about 43% more than in the same months of 2022, but 16% below 2019.

In terms of regions, the Middle East recorded the best results in January to July 2023, with arrivals exceeding pre-pandemic levels by 20%. Europe, the largest destination in the world, reached 91% of pre-pandemic levels, supported by strong intra-regional demand.

Africa recovered 92% of its visitors before the pandemic in that seven-month period, and the Americas 87%. In the Asia-Pacific region, arrivals reached 61% of pre-pandemic levels.

By sub-region, North Africa (+8%), Central America (+2%) and southern Europe and the Mediterranean (+1%) exceeded pre-pandemic levels in January to July 2023.

Those results show that international tourism is on track to reach 80 to 95% of its pre-pandemic levels in 2023, as forecast by the WTO in its World Tourism Barometer of January 2023.

The outlook for September to December 2023 indicates a continuation of the recovery, according to the latest WTO confidence index, albeit at a more moderate pace after the high tourist season of June to August.

The difficult economic environment could weigh on spending habits during the remainder of the year, as tourists increasingly look for value for money, travel closer to home and make shorter trips.

International tourism went back to 84% of its pre-pandemic levels during the period from January to July 2023 (-16% compared to 2019), after a strong second quarter and the start of the summer season in the northern hemisphere.

# IN EUROPE, THE LEVEL OF BUSINESS IN 2023 OUGHT TO RECOVER TO ABOUT 90% OF ITS PRE-PANDEMIC BED NIGHTS VOLUME

at the same time approaching or even exceeding the turnover achieved before COVID-19, as a result of the price increases in some touristic regions and for some operators, particularly in the accommodation business. As the tourism industry seeks to rebuild its margins in order to make up for its production costs and the repayment of the loans and grants obtained, it has hiked up its prices. Consumers' desire to travel did not flag in the first quarter in spite of the higher prices, which did however make those with fewer resources to review their choices of stays and destinations.

While spending decisions in many countries favoured short stays and holidays in the first quarter of 2023, rising inflation and the economic slowdown could hamper the recovery of the industry, which is also facing an increase in its production costs as a result of the combined rise in the costs of materials, energy, personnel and interest rates, which affect the business models and investment capacity of tourism businesses.


All the same, the demand for travel continued to show remarkable resilience and a sustained recovery in 2023, against a backdrop of economic and geopolitical challenges, but the reduced purchasing power of European Union citizens could have significant repercussions on the holiday budgets of Europeans in 2024 if their non-discretionary expenses were to weigh more heavily on the finances of households.

Regarding business tourism, the recovery began in 2022, but was not as pronounced as that of pleasure tourism. Arrivals of business tourists in the EU-27 were up 37% in 2022 as compared to 2021. However, they were still 40% below what they were in 2019.

The recovery of business tourism is faced with several challenges, in particular:

- A reduction in travelling due to social and environmental responsibility requirements and a desire to reduce non-indispensable travelling budgets,
- Changing working habits, particularly due to the development of working from home, which leads to a decrease in business travelling,
- Growing competition from other regions of the world, which attract companies and international events.

Despite those challenges, business tourism ought to continue to recover in the years to come. The EU remains an attractive destination for business travel, thanks to its cultural and historic assets, its modern transport infrastructure and its central geographical location. ♦



**“ REGARDING BUSINESS  
TOURISM, THE RECOVERY  
BEGAN IN 2022, BUT WAS NOT  
AS PRONOUNCED AS THAT  
OF PLEASURE TOURISM. ”**

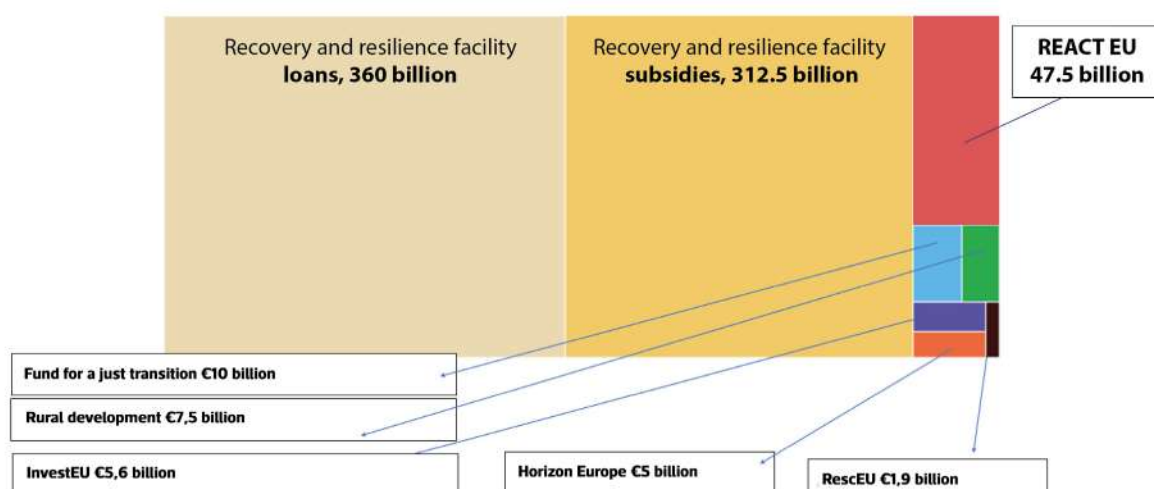
# EMERGENCY MEASURES TAKEN BY COUNTRIES AND BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

*In order to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, countries put measures in place to offer the tourism industry emergency support. Such aid was of different types:*

- Support to workers in the tourism industry to help maintain the income of tourism employees and also self-employed individuals during the lockdown. The aid was also aimed at maintaining the link between businesses and their employees, through a number of schemes, to allow businesses to resume operations without losing too many employees to other industries. These measures, which were certainly necessary but also expensive, saved jobs in a weakened industry suffering from structural employment pressures due to the low attractiveness of tourism jobs (in France, the short-time working scheme cost €10.6 billion). Nevertheless, it can be seen that since the end of the pandemic, the tourism industry continues to experience significant labour shortages, as employees moved towards other more stable and better paying industries, and/or those with working conditions that are more compatible with family life
- Support to businesses took the form of aid, subsidies, loans with or without guarantees, deferment or cancellation of welfare contributions, cash flow support, tax measures and the use of credit notes rather than refunds for deferred stays.
- Support to consumers took the form of programmes aimed at stimulating demand after the lifting of travel restrictions, with financial aid that was targeted to varying extents, concessionary travel vouchers, aid for transport at preferential rates, and guarantees for holidaymakers, particularly in the area of refunds.

For its part, the European Union adopted a recovery plan to address the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, allocating €750 billion.

## NEXT GENERATION EU: DISTRIBUTION OF €750 BILLION

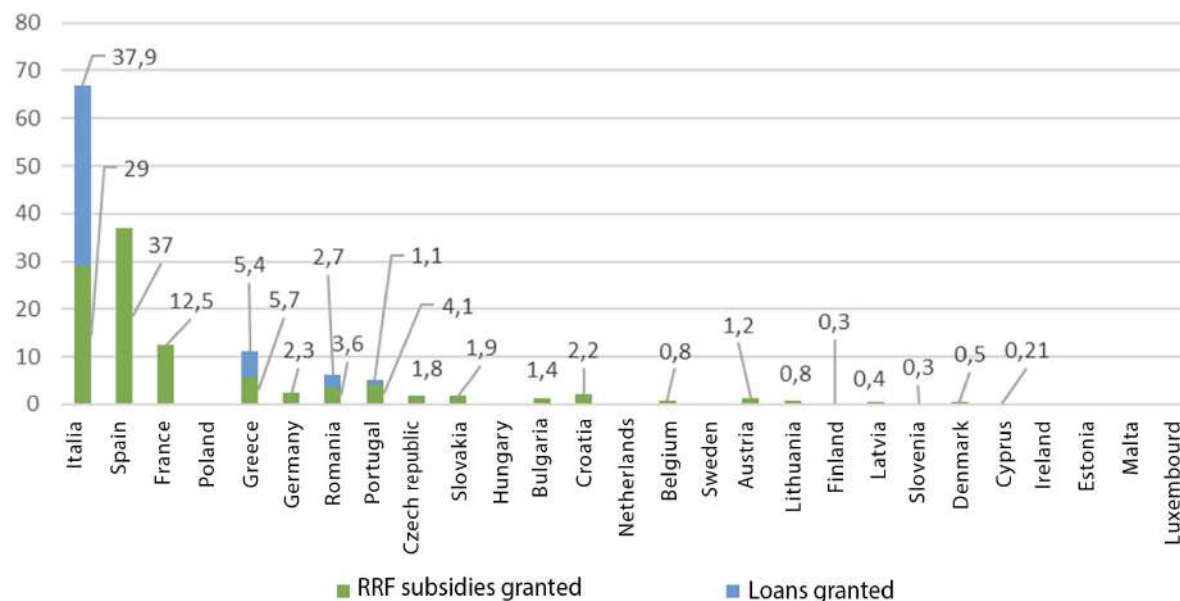


# THE EUROPEAN RECOVERY PLAN HAS A BUDGET OF €750 BILLION (€806.9 BILLION IN 2022 PRICES)

Spain is the largest beneficiary of RRF subsidies. In all, Madrid will receive €77.2 billion according to the European Commission. For its part, Italy will receive €69 billion. Then come France (€40.3 billion), Germany (€28 billion) and Poland (€22.5 billion).

The French plan was amended in July 2023, and increased from €37.5 to €40.3 billion.

## EUROPEAN RECOVERY LOAN: SUBSIDIES AND LOANS RECEIVED BY EACH MEMBER STATE



Out of the €360 billion in loans and €312.5 billion in subsidies as part of the RRF, the recovery and resilience facility, that is €672.5 billion, the amounts (in billion euros) received by each member state on 28 July 2023 are indicated in the table above.

Italy has already received €66.9 billion, of which €37.9 billion in loans. For its part, Spain has received €37 billion, whereas France has received €12.5 billion.

In all, €153 billion have already been disbursed, according to the European Commission.

Four countries amended their national plans in July 2023 (including France) ♦

Source: European Commission

# THE EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS HAS CARRIED OUT AN AUDIT TO ASSESS THE RELEVANCE OF THE MEASURES TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION TO SUPPORT THE TOURISM INDUSTRY OVER THE 2014–2020 PERIOD:

“ Tourism policy is primarily a Member State prerogative, with the EU complementing and supporting the actions of Member States. The EU’s action broadly involves promoting the competitiveness and development of the undertakings in the sector and fostering cooperation between Member States. The EU Treaty also allows establishing specific legislative measures to complement the actions of the Member States.

With its tourism policy, the Commission aims to “maintain Europe’s standing as a leading destination while maximising the industry’s contribution to growth and employment and promoting cooperation between EU countries, particularly through the exchange of good practice”.

In 2020, the Commission has defined tourism as one of the 14 industrial ecosystems in its industrial policy.

The main EU institutional stakeholders and bodies are:

- the European Parliament’s Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN), and its Task Force on Tourism;
- the Council of the European Union (where tourism topics are generally dealt with by the Competitiveness Council);
- the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC), chaired by the Commission (DG GROW), which is a forum for consultation and coordination, where
- representatives of the Member States and the Commission exchange information and discuss issues related to tourism policy and to the provision of services for tourists.

While numerous Commission services work on topics with direct relevance to tourism, the two main Directorates-General dealing with tourism policy and EU funding for tourism are:

- the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), as the service within the Commission responsible for tourism policy;
- and the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) managing the ERDF (which provides the bulk of the EU funding for tourism) together with Member States.

In addition, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) played a particular role as regards preparing the necessary conditions for re-establishing free travel within the Union.

Key international organisations in the field of tourism include the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the OECD and the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). The European Travel Commission (ETC), an association of national tourism organisations, also works to promote Europe as a tourism destination in third markets.

”

# FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS

*Overall, the European Court of Auditors found that during the period 2014–2020, the actions by the Commission in favour of the tourism industry in the EU were partially effective. In its report, the European Court of Auditors made the following observation and analysis:*

« **The Commission** defined the EU's current tourism strategy back in 2010. Since 2015, and until the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission has revised tourism priorities in the context of broader policy strategies, but it did not translate these priorities into a concrete action plan to support their implementation. As a reaction to the dramatic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the EU's tourism sector, the Commission initiated actions towards the definition of a tourism agenda for 2030. We consider this a step in the right direction, but certain elements have not yet materialised.

Within the ERDF Operational Programmes, the priorities for tourism investments were set with reference to existing EU, national and regional tourism strategies.

Our analysis of ERDF projects on tourism found mixed results: some projects were sustainable and contributed to fostering tourism activity in the region; others had only a limited impact. In several cases, shortcomings in the initial project planning and needs assessments as well as at the project selection stage resulted in reductions in the project scope, delays and cost overruns during project implementation. The ERDF legislation for the 2014–2020 period included one common output indicator for tourism investments funded by the ERDF. In addition, Member States could make use of programme-specific indicators. There were however no common results indicators used during the 2014–2020 period.



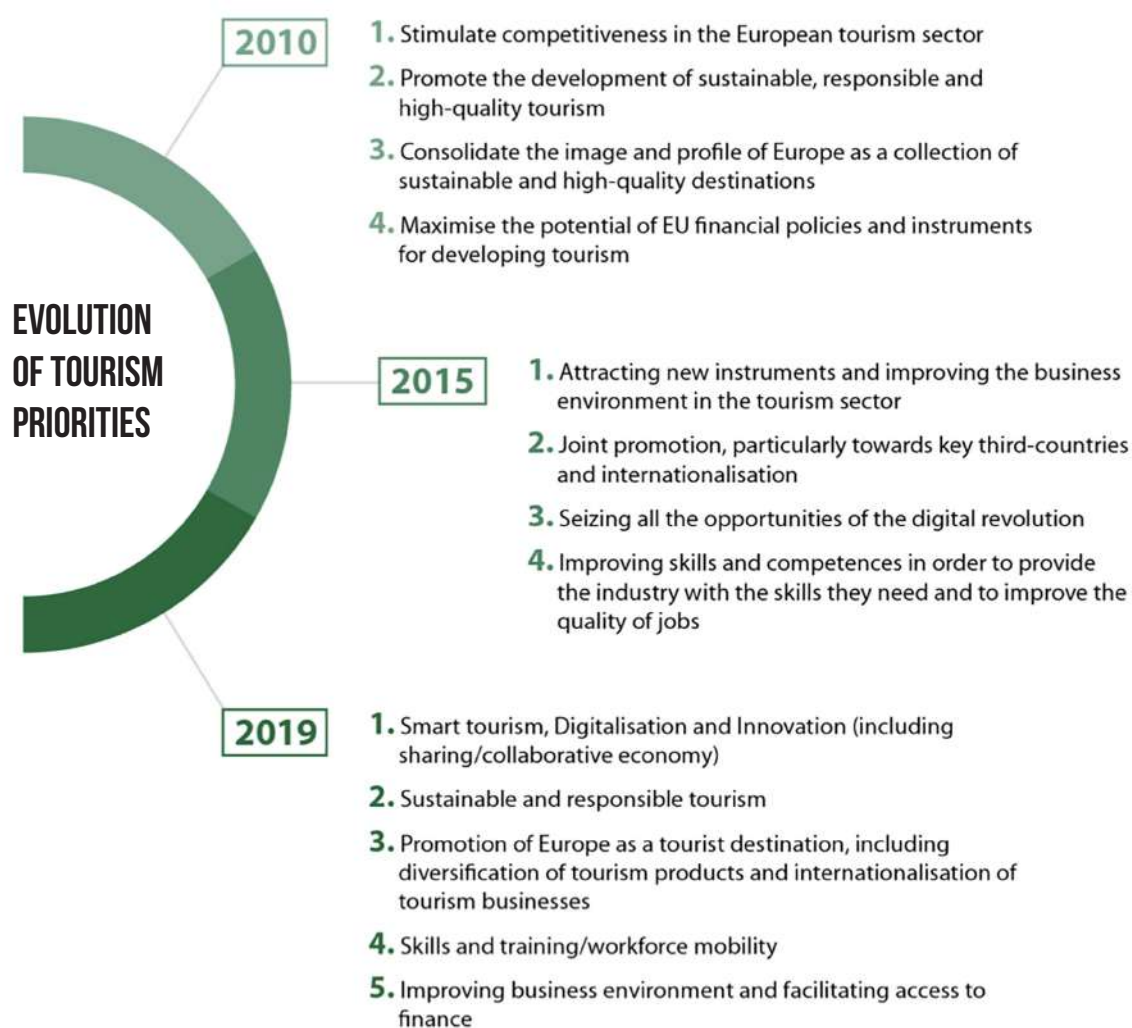
OUR ANALYSIS OF  
ERDF PROJECTS ON  
TOURISM FOUND  
MIXED RESULTS

The common output indicator does not allow to measure in all cases the intended achievements of the projects, even though they were stated in the project proposal. The Commission has to carry out an ex-post evaluation of the ERDF support for the 2014-2020 period by the end of 2024.

The EU's tourism sector has suffered an unprecedented shock following the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission has put forward measures and proposals to mitigate the impact of this crisis on the EU's tourism industry.

In this report, we recommend that the Commission should:

- set out a new strategy for the EU tourism ecosystem, which explicitly aims at supporting investments that contribute to a more sustainable form of tourism;
- and encourage Member States to apply selection procedures for ERDF-funded tourism investments to support this new strategic orientation”.



Source: ECA, based on Commission Communication 2010/352 and on minutes of the TAC meetings.

In June 2010, the Commission issued a Communication setting up the latest EU tourism strategy. It stated its intention “to encourage a coordinated approach for initiatives linked to tourism and define a new framework for action to increase its competitiveness and its capacity for sustainable growth”. It identified four broad priorities for promoting tourism and a set of specific Commission actions, but did not indicate any deadline for implementing them. Finally, the Commission strategy also did not specify how Member States and its own directorates-general should make use of the available EU funding to achieve these priorities.



**IN SUMMARY,**

## **THE EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS STRESSED IN RESPECT OF THE FUNDING ALLOCATED TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY FOR THE PERIOD 2007–2020 THAT:**

- *“2014-2020 ERDF financial support for public tourism investments has addressed EU and national tourism objectives, but shortcomings in project selection limited its effectiveness”,*
  - *“Not all completed projects had a positive impact on the tourism activity in the region”,*
  - *“Other projects only had a limited (or no) impact in stimulating tourism”.*
- Note that the ERDF budgetary funds allocated to the tourism industry in the period 2007–2020 reached €10.7 billion.

**ACCORDING TO THE EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION, AID WORTH OVER €4 BILLION  
WAS ALLOCATED TO THE TOURISM  
INDUSTRY TO FINANCE 3000 PROJECTS  
WITH AN AMOUNT OF €10 BILLION.**

### ERDF BUDGETARY FUNDS ALLOCATED TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY (2007-2013)

Intervention Code	Description	Declared amount (in million euros)
55	Promotion of natural assets	844
56	Protection and development of natural heritage	765
57	Other assistance to improve tourism services	4 830
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6 439</b>

Source: ECA, based on Commission's ESI Funds Open Data Platform.

### ERDF BUDGETARY FUNDS ALLOCATED TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY (2014-2020)

Intervention Code	Description	Declared amount (in million euros)
74	Development and promotion of tourism assets in SMEs	561
75	Development and promotion of tourism services in or for SMEs	1 140
91	Development and promotion of natural areas	1 180
92	Protection, development and promotion of tourism assets	830
93	Development and promotion of public tourism services	546
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4 257</b>

Source: Commission's ESI Funds Open Data Platform.

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) published a special report in 2021 on EU support to tourism. The report concluded that even though the EU had provided the tourism industry with significant funds, their use could be made more effective.

## THE REPORT IDENTIFIED THREE KEY AREAS IN WHICH THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EU MEASURES COULD BE IMPROVED:



**> Coordination of actions by member states.** The ECA found that member countries are not always well coordinated in their tourism policies. That has led to overlaps and the fragmentation of efforts. The ECA advised the EU to put in place coordination mechanisms to help member states work together more effectively.

**> Investment in research and innovation.** The ECA has stressed that the EU ought to invest more in research and innovation in the area of tourism. That would allow the development of new products and sustainable and innovative tourist services. The ECA has recommended the creation by the EU of a European research and innovation fund for tourism.

**> Consideration of the social impact of tourism.** The ECA found that the EU did not always pay sufficient attention to the social impact of tourism. That has led to the unequal distribution of the benefits of tourism and negative impacts on the environment and society. The ECA recommended the adoption by the EU of a European strategy for the social responsibility of tourism.

The ECA also stressed that the EU needs to make sure that its measures to support tourism comply with United Nations sustainable development goals. These goals include environment protection, the promotion of equality and the creation of decent jobs.

The European Commission has responded to the ECA report by agreeing to take measures to improve the effectiveness of its support to tourism. In particular, the Commission announced that it would set up a mechanism to coordinate tourism policies and would invest more in research and innovation in the area of tourism. ♦

# EXAMPLES OF TOURISM PROJECTS ASSISTED BY THE EU:

## SOME OF THE LARGER SCHEMES INCLUDE:



> The **EuroVelo** project, which aims to create a network of trans-European cycle routes. The project is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund.

> The **Maritime+** project, which aims to develop maritime tourism in the coastal regions of the EU. The project is financed by the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund.

> The **VisitEU** project, which aims to promote European tourism with young people. The project is funded by the Erasmus+ programme.

> The **Tourism Smart Cities** project, which aims to help European towns and cities to develop more sustainable and smarter tourism. The project is funded by the Horizon Europe programme.

*Here are a few examples of the large-scale tourist projects aided by the EU:*

### SPAIN:



> The **Galicia** project financed by the EU was a programme aimed at improving the competitiveness and attractiveness of the autonomous community of Galicia in Spain, a sustainable tourism destination seeking to promote sustainable tourism in Galicia. The overall programme for the 2007–2013 period received funds from the EU in the amount of €600 million. The project focussed on four key areas, including tourism, which reportedly received €15 million from the ERDF. The tourism part of the project aimed to develop sustainable products and services, improve the accessibility of tourist destinations and raise tourist awareness of issues relating to sustainable development. The outputs included the creation of a new national park of the Cíes islands, the improvement of tourist infrastructure, particularly financing for the renovation of tourist accommodation and the creation of roads and tracks allowing easier access to tourist sights.



> The **Andalusia, smart tourist destination** project aims to help Andalusia develop more sustainable and smarter tourism. The overall funding of the programme is €380 million, €120 million for innovation and technology, €100 million for sustainability, €80 million for accessibility and €80 million for governance. Out of the €380 million in the programme, €280 million came from the EU, of which apparently €20 million allocated to tourism by the ERDF. The project aimed to develop smart tourist infrastructure, promote digital tourism and reinforce cooperation between the different stakeholders of tourism.



> The **Madrid, accessible tourist destination** project aims to make Madrid more accessible to people with disabilities. The project received €10 million from the Cohesion Fund. The project aims to improve the accessibility of public transport, tourist accommodation and cultural sites.

## ITALY:

> The **Rome, accessible tourist destination project** aims to make Rome more accessible to people with disabilities. The project received €10 million from the Cohesion Fund. The project aims to improve the accessibility of public transport, tourist accommodation and cultural sites.



> The **Venice, sustainable tourist destination** project aimed at promoting sustainable tourism in Venice. The project received €15 million from the ERDF. The project aims to reduce the environmental impact of tourism in Venice, improve the quality of life of inhabitants and promote the participation of citizens in tourism governance.

> The **Sicily, smart tourist destination** project aims to help Sicily develop more sustainable and smarter tourism. The project received €20 million from the ERDF. The project aims to develop smart tourist infrastructure, promote digital tourism and reinforce cooperation between the different stakeholders of tourism.

## NETHERLANDS:



> The **Wadden islands, sustainable tourist destination** project is a regional development programme aimed at turning the Wadden islands off the coasts of the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark into a sustainable tourist destination. The project received €120 million from the ERDF and €30 million from the governments of the three countries concerned. Located in the Wadden sea, which is a listed UNESCO world heritage site and one of the main tourist destinations of Europe with 10 million tourists, tourism in the Wadden islands was up 25% from the start of the Wadden islands, sustainable tourist destination project in 2015 according to the tourist office. Tourism accounts for 20% of jobs and 30% of GDP of the Wadden islands. The project aimed to develop sustainable products and services, improve the accessibility of tourist destinations and raise tourist awareness of issues relating to sustainable development. The concrete outputs are the improved accessibility of the Wadden islands, improved governance of tourism through greater cooperation between players, and the development of digital applications. The programme has financed 120 products and services, including 20 hiking and cycling routes, 20 environmentally responsible accommodation units, 20 sustainable tourism activities.



► Note that projects financed in the 2021–2027 programme are still being conducted in the Wadden sea islands:

► The **Wadden Coastal Zone Management** project financed by the ERDF has a total budget of €1.5 billion. The part devoted to sustainable tourism development accounts for about 10% of the budget, or €150 million.

► The **Wadden Sea Seal Conservation** project financed by the EMFAF has a total budget of €2.5 billion. The part devoted to raising public awareness accounts for about 10% of the budget, or €250 million.

► The **Wadden Sea Awareness** project financed by the LIFE programme has a total budget of €200 million. The part devoted to sustainable tourism development accounts for about 50 % of the budget, or €100 million.

► Specific examples of the amounts of the financial aid granted by the EU for tourism on the Wadden sea islands:

► **In the Netherlands, Texel island** reportedly received €10 million from the ERDF for building a new visitors' reception centre.

► **In Germany, Norderney island** reportedly received €5 million from the EMFAF for creating a new walking and cycling path.

► **In Denmark, Rømø island** reportedly received €2 million from the LIFE programme for creating an interpretation centre on the culture and history of the island.



► The **Amsterdam, smart tourist destination** project aims to help Amsterdam develop more sustainable and smarter tourism. The project received €20 million from the ERDF. The project aims to develop smart tourist infrastructure, promote digital tourism and reinforce cooperation between the different stakeholders of tourism.

► The **Deltaplan Tourism** project aims to develop sustainable tourism in the coastal regions of the Netherlands. The project received €100 million from the ERDF. The project aims to reduce the environmental impact of tourism on coastal regions, improve the quality of life of inhabitants and promote the participation of citizens in tourism governance.



## POLAND:

> Building of a **conference centre in Katowice**: this modern conference centre ought to be completed in 2025 in Katowice in Silesia. It is designed to receive international business events and help make Katowice a choice destination for business tourism. The overall budget of the project is €360 millions, €270 million of which are funded by the EU. L

> **Restoration of the old city of Gdańsk**: the old city of Gdańsk, a listed UNESCO heritage site, was restored thanks to European funds. The restoration made it possible to conserve the historic and cultural heritage of the city and make it more attractive to tourists.

> **Creation of the national park of Góry Stołowe**: this national park was set up in the Stołowe mountains in south-western Poland. It aims to protect the unique natural landscapes of the region and promote sustainable tourism.

According to European Commission data, Poland received a total of €1.7 billion of European funds to finance tourism projects between 2014 and 2020. These funds were provided as part of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

European funds were used to finance a variety of tourist projects, particularly:

> **Promoting sustainable tourism**: €370 million were used to support projects such as the creation of hiking and cycling paths, the restoration of natural sites and the promotion of rural tourism.

• **Developing business tourism**: €250 million were used to support the construction and modernisation of conference centres, the promotion of Poland as conference destination and the improvement of transport infrastructure.

• **Promoting cultural and historic heritage**: €100 million were used to support the restoration of historical monuments, the creation of museums and other cultural sights and the promotion of Poland as a cultural destination

As part of the regional development programme of Poland for the 2021–2027 period, the European commission approved a €2.2 billion budget for tourism. These funds will be used to finance projects similar to those funded during the previous period.



## FRANCE:

### > The Loire valley, a global destination

The Loire valley, global destination project is funded as follows:

- The total budget for the project is estimated to be €1.5 billion.
- European funds, via the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), represent €750 million, or about 50% of the total budget.
- The French state has provided €500 million, or about 33% of the total budget.
- Local authorities, namely the Centre-Val de Loire, Pays de la Loire and Normandy regions have provided €250 million, or about 17% of the total budget.

The project includes a series of actions to enhance the attractiveness of the Loire valley, in particular:

- Promotion of the Loire valley as a tourist destination
- Restoration of the cultural and historical heritage of the Loire valley
- Development of tourist infrastructure of the Loire valley

Some more details about project funding:

European funds were granted as part of the regional operational programme (POR) of the Centre-Val de Loire, Pays de la Loire and Normandy regions for the 2021–2027 period.

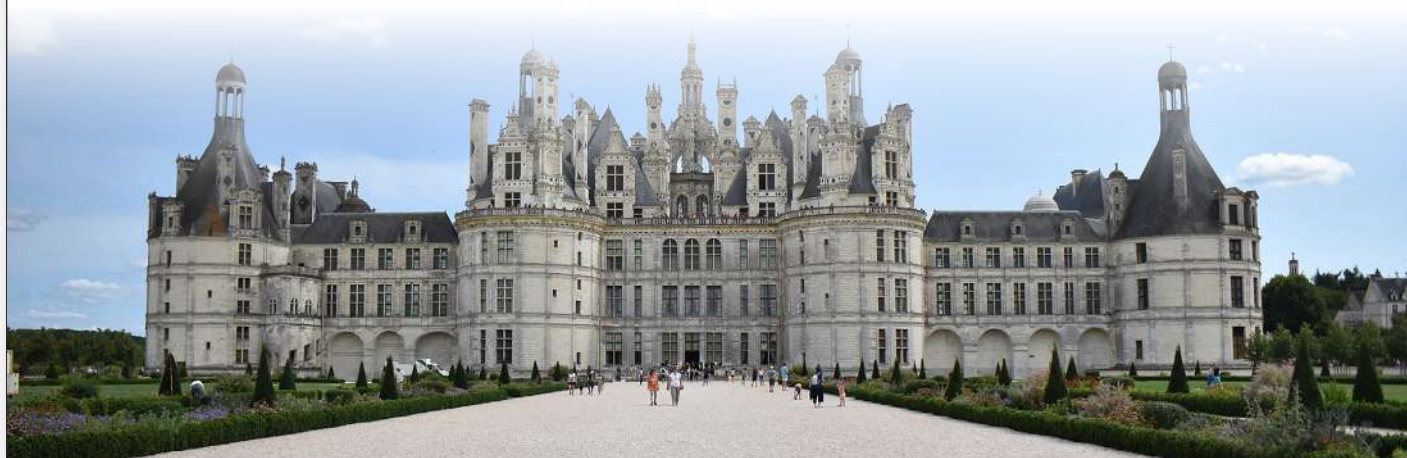
The French state financed the project via its future investment support fund (FSIA).

Local authorities funded the project from their investment budgets.

The Loire valley, a global destination project ought to generate a positive economic effect of €2 billion per year (hypothesis based on a 50% increase in visitors by 2030, an increase in the average duration of stay from 2.5 to 3 days and an increase in the average spending of visitors from €150 to €200 per day according to the firm EY). It ought to create 10,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Other concrete examples of projects funded as part of the Loire valley, a global destination project include:

- Restoration of château of Chambord.
- Creation of a new heritage interpretation centre in Orléans.
- Development of a network of hiking and cycling paths along the Loire.





> **Construction of the conference centre of Paris-North:** this modern conference centre has been built in Paris, in the north of the city. It is designed to receive international business events and help make Paris a choice destination for business tourism.

> **Restoration of Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris:** Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris is one of the most iconic monuments of France, and requires restoration after the 2019 fire. The restoration was funded by a combination of public and private funds and European funds.

> **Creation of the Calanques national park:** this national park is located in the Calanques, a rocky massif located on the shores of the Mediterranean. It aims to protect the unique natural landscapes of the region and promote sustainable tourism.

As part of the regional development programme of France for the 2021–2027 period, the European commission approved a €1.7 billion budget for tourism. These funds will be used to finance projects similar to those funded during the previous period.

Examples of French tourism projects financed by European funds in the 2021–2027 period:

- Creation of a network of hiking and cycling paths in Brittany
- Restoration of the historic city of Carcassonne
- Promotion of rural tourism in the Alps

The financial package for restoring the historic city of Carcassonne is as follows:

- The total budget of the restoration is estimated to be €380 million.
- European funds, via the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), represent €200 million, or about 53 % of the total budget.
- Local authorities, namely the Occitanie region, the département of Aude and the city of Carcassonne account for €100 million, or about 26% of the total budget.
- The private sector, via the contribution of owners of historical monuments, accounts for €80 million, or about 21% of the total budget.

The restoration of the historic city of Carcassonne is an ambitious project that aims to conserve unique historical heritage. The project began in 2018 and is expected to be completed in 2028.

The restoration work relates to a wide variety of historical monuments, in particular:

- The ramparts of the city
- The towers and gates of the city
- Medieval houses
- Churches



# LACK OF VISIBILITY OF THE ALLOCATION OF EUROPEAN FUNDS FOR TOURISM



*It is crucial to address the problem of the visibility and traceability of the allocation of European funds for tourism.*

**W**hile the European Union (EU) has indicated that it has put in place measures to improve the transparency of its policies and programmes, many obstacles remain, firstly for knowing the amount of European aid actually allocated to the tourism industry and secondly for assessing the effectiveness of the resources allocated so as to improve the competitiveness and results in the diminution of the environmental impact of the tourism industry.

The EU has said that it has adopted several measures to improve the transparency of its policies and programmes, particularly:

- The publication of information about the programmes and projects funded by the EU, including the allocated amounts, recipients and goals of projects.
- An obligation for recipients of European funds to account for the use of the funds.
- The implementation of control and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the funds are used in accordance with EU rules.

It would appear that these measures have improved the transparency of the allocation of European funds to tourism. **However, it is extremely difficult to have the assurance that the funds are used effectively and efficiently.**

Data about the impact of EU-funded projects are not always available or accessible to the public. That can make it difficult to assess the effectiveness of projects and their contribution to sustainable development. **The amounts allocated to the energy transition do not undergo any quantification as regards the reduction of CO2 emissions, greenhouse gas emissions, water saved, reduction in waste production and the impact on biodiversity.**

**We found no studies of the economic and social impact covering the three dimensions of direct, indirect and induced effects that would make it possible to calculate the reality of the leverage provided by the funds invested** in the tourism industry in respect of job creation and the increase in added value for businesses.

Further, the data about the impact of EU-funded projects could be biased since the most publicised projects and those with the highest profile can be overrepresented or hyped on the websites of the European Union.

Lastly, transparency can be hindered by conflicts of interest. For instance, the businesses or local authorities that receive European funds may be reluctant to disclose information that could be harmful to their reputation or simply call into question the grounds for the subsidies paid out by the European Union.

Unlike local authorities or major groups that are organised for preparing applications for European funds, smaller players have difficulty accessing European finance for several reasons:

- Size of the enterprise: small and medium enterprises initiate smaller projects, which puts them at a disadvantage in the project selection process and in the motivation of the processing departments, which can explain the fact that the administrative complexity is such that they fear they will waste too much time, when they have limited staff for processing such applications.
- Human and financial resources: the human and financial resources available to smaller players are often not as extensive as those of large companies, and the former can be prevented from preparing and executing projects that comply with the eligibility criteria for European financing.
- Knowledge and experience: small players may have less knowledge and experience of European funding, making them less competitive in the project selection process.
- Complexity of procedures: the procedures for applying for European funding are complex and difficult to understand, and can put off a number of smaller project initiators, not many of whom even know about European funding mechanisms.
- Administrative requirements: projects funded by the European Union must follow very strict administrative requirements, which are even harder to apply for small players without sophisticated organisations.
- Competition: European funds are often highly competitive and sometimes already pre-directed by the processing authorities, making it difficult for small players to find a toehold. ♦

**IN THE NEW TOURISM FUNDING MECHANISMS, WE DID NOT FIND CONCLUSIVE INFORMATION TO GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROJECT FUNDING PROCESS; SIMILARLY, THE ADMINISTRATIVE MINEFIELD FOR ACCESSING EU AID PENALISES SMALL PROJECT INITIATORS WHO ARE OFTEN BASED IN LESS DEVELOPED AREAS. THE END RESULT COULD BE HEIGHTENED INEQUALITIES BETWEEN REGIONS, WITH EVER LARGER NUMBERS OF TOURISTS IN THE MOST DEVELOPED AREAS.**



# TRANSITION PATHWAY FOR TOURISM

(Source: Transition Pathway for Tourism - EUROPEAN COMMISSION)

*On 10 March 2020, the Commission adopted a new industrial strategy.*

**T**he aim was to help EU industry lead the green and digital transformations and to boost the EU's global competitiveness and open strategic autonomy.

As the tourism ecosystem was the hardest hit by the pandemic and is faced with major challenges due to the twin transition, it was the first industrial ecosystem for which a transition pathway was developed jointly.

**A report titled the “Transition pathway to tourism” was thus prepared (June 2021) to describe the measures and outputs needed to accelerate the green and digital transitions and improve the resilience of the tourism ecosystem.**

## ► 27 topics were selected in all (below):

### REGULATION AND PUBLIC GOVERNANCE (Topics 1 to 5)

#### Topic 1: Fair measures for short term rentals (STR)

##### ACTIONS :

- Strengthening the EU framework for short-term rentals to enhance transparency and improve market access.
- Implementing STR policies which support balanced, fair and transparent short-term rental services

#### Topic 2: Regulatory support for multimodal travelling

##### ACTIONS :

- Reinforcing the EU framework to facilitate multimodal journey planning and ticketing through digital services.

#### Topic 3: Improving statistics and indicators for tourism

##### ACTIONS :

- Revising harmonised data collection rules on tourism statistics to include elements on economic, social and environmental sustainability.

- Improving access to data for producing official statistics.
- Including key sustainability indicators on destination level in the harmonised tourism data collection framework.
- Implementing the EU Tourism Dashboard to support follow-up of environmental, digital and socioeconomic aspects of tourism.

#### **Topic 4: Comprehensive tourism strategies development or update**

##### **ACTIONS :**

- Developing comprehensive national or regional strategies taking account of economic, environmental and social sustainability of tourism.
- Guidance and best practice exchange for strategy development on national, regional and local level.

#### **Topic 5: Collaborative governance of tourism destinations**

##### **ACTIONS :**

- Establishing collaborative and data-supported destination management models.
- Providing awards for smart destination management (Smart Tourism Capitals).
- Studying and sharing best practice on destination management.

### **GREEN AND DIGITAL TRANSITION (Topics 6 to 27)**

#### **Topic 6: Sustainable mobility**

- Passenger transport companies to develop greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction plans in line with the Climate Law goals.
- Including the visitor perspective in sustainable mobility plans of cities and regions, even in smaller destinations.
- Improving the appeal of railways for visitors.

#### **Topic 7: Circularity of tourism services**

- Developing the use of locally supplied ingredients with low environmental footprint to reduce the environmental impact of food services.
- Reducing food waste in the hospitality industry.
- Reducing and separating overall waste of tourism services.

#### **Topic 8: Green transition of tourism companies and SMEs**

- Tourism companies, including SMEs, to register to EMAS.
- Tourism accommodations, including SMEs to apply for the EU Ecolabel or other EN ISO 14024 type I ecolabels or equivalent voluntary labels, which are independent, multi-criteria based and third party verified.
- Tourism operators to use relevant EU Green public procurement (GPP) criteria where applicable.
- Capacity-building programmes, technical and financial assistance for SMEs to engage in environmentally friendly practices and schemes.

#### **Topic 9: Data driven tourism services**

- Stakeholder cooperation to agree on common practices (Code of Conduct) and to actively share tourism-related data in a European data space for tourism.
- Increasing use of data sharing in developing personalised tourism services and destination management, monitoring and service provision, including the creation of new platforms among SMEs.
- Use of artificial intelligence and data-based innovation, such as local digital twins for predictive planning to accurately meet demand and increase resource efficiency of services.

#### **Topic 10: Improving the availability of online information on tourism offer**

- Improving the online availability of validated information on sustainable, accessible, or specifically targeted tourism offers
- Developing partnerships with on-line portals and booking platforms to provide more visibility to certified accommodation providers
- Ensuring information is available on consumer rights and dispute resolution mechanisms for tourists via the European Consumer Centre Network's digital channels.

#### **Topic 11: Easily accessible best practices, peer learning and networking for SMEs**

- Establishing a collaboration platform for tourism SMEs and destinations that supports their access to information, specific tools, best practice and knowledge sharing opportunities to support their engagement in the twin transition.

#### **Topic 12: Research and innovation projects and pilots on circular and climate friendly tourism**

- Tourism stakeholders engaging in public-private co-operation to prepare research proposals for funding calls that accommodate circular tourism-related R&I projects and pilots.
- Developing models and transferable practices for sustainable tourism.
- Establishing large-scale pilots on sustainable tourism, e.g. on islands and remote regions, including the outermost regions.

#### **Topic 13: Promoting the use of the PEF and OEF methodology and the development of sectoral category rules for the tourism ecosystem**

- Supporting the uptake of PEF/OEF methods in tourism industries to collect baseline data for sectoral category rules development.
- Developing category rules for typical tourism products and services with considerations for different tourism contexts (e.g. remote locations).
- Developing tools to support tourism companies to make PEF/OEF assessments of their products and services.

#### **Topic 14: Technical implementation for tourism data space**

- Stakeholders to implement a preparatory action for tourism data space, considering interoperability with all European data spaces and alignment with the Data Act.

#### **Topic 15: R&I for digital tools and services in tourism**

- Data-driven destination management models and mechanisms.
- Innovative tourism services using advanced technologies (virtual reality, augmented reality, AI) and digitized cultural heritage.

#### **Topic 16: Support for digitalisation of tourism SMEs and destinations**

- Raising awareness of tourism SMEs on the benefits of digitalisation and on existing European, national and regional digitalisation programmes for SMEs.
- Developing a searchable inventory on existing transferable digital tools and practices for SMEs and destinations.
- Establishing a community of practice and a shared toolbox for data-driven destination management.

#### **Topic 17: Seamless cross border travelling**

- Digitalising of Schengen visa procedures for non-EU nationals.
- Digitalising travel documents for EU citizens for improved and faster border processes.

#### **Topic 18: Coordinated management and updated information on travelling**

- Implementing and extending the EU DCC framework as needed.
- EU Member States to provide up-to-date information on their travel rules via 'Re-Open EU'.
- Drawing lessons from COVID-19 to better respond to future exceptional events.

#### **Topic 19: Awareness raising on skills needs for twin transition in tourism**

- Preparing information materials on skills needs for different types of tourism actors.

#### **Topic 20: Awareness raising on changes in tourism demand and the opportunities of twin transition for tourism**

- Dissemination campaign on the tourism transition pathway to destination authorities, tourism management organisations and SMEs as to promote the relevance of actions linked with the twin transitions and resilience.
- Awareness-raising activities to increase the uptake and visibility of sustainability tools, as well as consumers' demand of sustainable options.
- Supporting networking and best practice sharing by award-winning cities in Europe on smart tourism, culture, sustainability, innovation, accessibility and European heritage.

#### **Topic 21: Educational organisations to engage in developing and renewing tourism education**

- Incorporating new skills profiles in vocational education and training policy and curricula, through cooperation between education authorities, social partners and institutions for vocational and higher education.
- Developing tourism curricula through cooperation partnerships with the support of the second key action of Erasmus+
- Developing skills and capacities of tourism education staff and students through Erasmus+ mobility opportunities for vocational and higher education.

#### **Topic 22: Pact for skills in tourism**

- Establishing of national, regional and local skills partnerships in major EU tourism regions.
- Engaging tourism companies, education providers, trade unions and other organisations to commit to jointly agreed training targets for their workforce.
- Fast training courses, apprenticeship schemes and blended models for the unemployed and job seekers.

#### **Topic 23: One stop shop for learning opportunities for tourism SMEs**

- Providing a user-friendly digital access point for tourism SMEs on payable/free self-learning resources and updated announcements of upcoming training events from different providers.
- Providing an online space where tourism SMEs can connect with each other to share learning from one another.

#### **Topic 24: Fairness and equality in tourism jobs**

- Tourism companies to offer stable and decent employment, with fair and equal pay, full social security coverage, respect of workers' rights to organise and to bargain collectively, working contracts and gender equality.
- Public tourism organisations to lead by example in employing fair employment practices.
- Competent authorities to carry out inspections and controls on working conditions in the sector.

#### **Topic 25: Enhancing accessible tourism services**

- Raising awareness of the importance of accessibility in tourism.
- Improving the supply and visibility of accessible tourism services.
- Applying EU rules on accessible public procurement.

#### **Topic 26: Tourism services for visitors and residents alike**

- Diversifying and developing tourism services so that they benefit both residents and visitors
- Taking into account different types of customers, such as families or individuals, or people with different religious, spiritual or sexual orientations

#### **Topic 27: Support visibility of funding opportunities for tourism actors**

- Enhancing the 'Guide on EU funding for tourism' by providing information on recently funded projects and upcoming calls.
- Providing a one-stop-shop that links to key support resources and funding opportunities for tourism SMEs on European, national and regional level.
- Ensuring effective communication on the direct SME support provided under COSME (Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs) actions in the Member States.

(Source: Transition Pathway for Tourism - EUROPEAN COMMISSION)

## EUROPEAN UNION FUNDING PROGRAMMES FOR TOURISM

Source: European Commission – Transition Pathway for Tourism

	EU funding programmes for the 2021–2027 period in the Guide on EU funding for tourism	CFP	NextGenerationEU	Total in billion euros
1	Recovery and resilience facility		723.8	723.8
2	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund	274		274
3	European Social Fund plus (ESF+)	99.3		99.3
4	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)	87.4	8.1	95.5
5	European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)	6.1		6.1
6	Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)	5.4		5.4
7	Horizon Europe	86.1	5.4	95.5
8	Creative Europe programme	1.8		2.5
9	Erasmus +	24.6		26.5
10	Just Transition Fund (JTF)	8.5	10.9	19.3
11	Digital Europe programme	7.6		7.6
12	Single market programme	4.2		4.2
13	InvestEU fund	3.1	6.1	10.3
14	REACT-EU		50.6	50.6
15	European global adjustment fund (EGF)			1.5
	<b>Total budget in billion euros</b>			<b>1,422.2</b>

Care must be taken to not confuse the announced budget of €1,422 billion allocated to the tourism industry along with other economic sectors and the actual amount of the aid allocated to the

**CARE MUST BE TAKEN TO NOT CONFUSE THE ANNOUNCED BUDGET OF €1,422 BILLION ALLOCATED TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY ALONG WITH OTHER ECONOMIC SECTORS AND THE ACTUAL AMOUNT OF THE AID ALLOCATED TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY. DETAILED DATA ABOUT THE FUNDING OF TOURISM PROJECTS CANNOT BE OBTAINED, SINCE THERE IS A MULTITUDE OF MECHANISMS AND NO INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC FUNDING.**

[https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility\\_fr#map](https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility_fr#map)

# WHAT TOURISM STRATEGY FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION, WITH WHAT DEDICATED RESOURCES?

*There is a need for a true European strategy with a European budget dedicated specifically to tourism.*

But **there is no European budget dedicated specifically to tourism for the 2021–2027 period**, and financial support is distributed over several EU programmes (under direct or shared management).

Even though the tourism work group of the TRAN commission has repeatedly asked for a separate budget for tourism and a true European strategy for that industry, the **EU funding programme for tourism remains fragmented**.

Member states are responsible for managing European funds and the cohesion policy. This is known as shared management. The funds are managed by countries or regions.

The individuals queried say that European funding for tourism is segmented for several reasons:

- **Diversity of tourism players:** the tourism industry is highly diversified, with players of all sizes, private companies and public authorities. That diversity makes it difficult to set up a single funding mechanism that addresses the needs of all players.
  - **Multiple goals of tourism:** tourism has multiple goals, such as creating jobs, promoting cultural or natural heritage or sustainable development. Those multiple goals call for different funding mechanisms.
  - **Priorities of European policies:** European tourism policies are ever changing, depending of the political priorities of the time. Any developments can result in changes in how tourism is funded.
- The result is that funding may be granted:
- **By type of player:** the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funds tourism projects initiated by private companies, public authorities or voluntary organisations.
  - **By goal:** the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) funds rural tourism projects, while the Erasmus+ programme funds educational tourism projects.
  - **By political priority:** the Horizon Europe programme supports sustainable tourism projects, whilst the Creative Europe programme funds cultural tourism projects.

Admittedly, the segmentation of European funding for tourism makes it possible to address the specific needs of the different member countries and support the multiple or even conflicting goals of tourism. However, it generates great complexity and a loss of effectiveness.

# TOURISM TRENDS IN 2024

THE PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION MUST  
TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE ENDURING TRENDS OF TOURISM.



## *Search for meaning and new experiences*

- Experience tourism continues to drive the choice of regions, sights, accommodation, activities etc., with travellers who are increasingly looking for unique and authentic experiences. They want stays that enable them to explore the local culture, meet people and dive into nature.
- Interactive tourism is for visitors who want to participate and not just be onlookers.
- They seek stimulation of all five senses in tours, interactive and fun offers etc., with sites that are increasingly like stages, to allow complete immersion.
- Creative tourism is driving the revival of cultural tourism. This form of tourism help develop personal creativity by being connected with others, a place, a local culture etc.
- There is a search for authentic heritage destinations with a strong image of preserved and active regions. And an increasing interest for what is local and authentic, with emphasis on local culture.



## *Personal development, well-being, family experiences and a stronger sporting culture*

- Consumers are showing hedonistic concerns, with a need for well-being that is heightened by the ills of modern society: logging off, recharging one's batteries, slowing down or taking time to discover a region from the land or the water, etc.
- There is a rush towards practices to be enjoyed with the family, friends or other aficionados, particularly through hiking.
- Electric bicycles and activities that involve roaming (on foot or by bicycle) are gaining in popularity. Converted vans and camper van rentals are hugely successful.
- Sport is being used as a catalyst for well-being and health.
- Sport can also provide thrills and sensations, as with trekking and adventure tourism.

Sliding sports are developing.

- There is a search for fun and experience in activities with choices that are heavily influenced by social media.
- Others prefer two or three-day long immersion stays in nature, not far from home. Micro adventures. Light adventures.





## *More responsible tourism*

- 'Identity' tourism is for visitors who want to soak in the local culture and meet regions and their inhabitants.
- Eco-mobility or green mobility is a major need, with a taste for transport and mobility with a small environmental impact.
- There is a preference for labels and marks that are seen as green, and efforts are being made to minimise the impact of tourism on the environment.
- Short-loop products showcase local producers, organic, reasoned and responsible farming.
- People are looking for values and meaning in consumption, and developing values of solidarity and commitment (eco volunteering).



## *Accommodation is less standardised, more personalised, with larger rentals*

- Accommodation and catering continue to be 'themed', with a search for exclusivity and extreme personalisation.
- There is a rise in the popularity of furnished rentals, for holidays with one's tribe in ever larger spaces.
- Infrastructure is being reinvented so as to open onto other horizons, with a visual and architectural component, an eye for design and décor, atmospheres and themed travelling (eco habitat, floating homes), which are becoming fundamental for effective immersion.
- Holiday accommodation is now more sustainable and responsible. It is also more virtuous and more innovative, using more environmentally friendly concepts.



# PRIORITY TASKS FOR ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TOURISM POLICY

## Task 1): Reviewing tourism governance on the European level:

> The **European Union**, in consultation with the member countries, needs to support large projects that facilitate travelling within Europe and to define the funding mechanisms that enhance competitiveness and the transition to sustainable tourism.

> **States** need to define their tourism strategies and enter into agreements with the European Union on clear funding rules and mechanisms for tourism projects.

> **Local authorities** need to implement strategies for large infrastructure projects that serve the local interest and promote mobility (road, rail, air, sea and inland waterways, environmentally friendly travelling etc.), energy transition programmes and programmes to conserve resources and the natural environment,

> **Private businesses** using European aid need to initiate projects that add value, in collaboration with the tourism ecosystem, and take account of the need to heighten quality and promote sustainable tourism. Private players must be funded when they address a need that is unmet in their area.



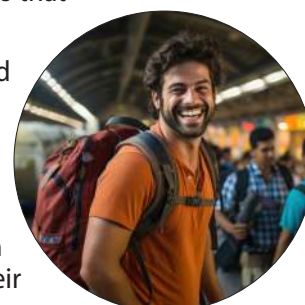
## Task 2): Funding a major mobility transition plan:

According to a study by the European statistics institute (Eurostat) published in 2022, on average, 51% of the population of European capitals do not have a car.

The capitals of the countries of northern and western Europe have the highest percentage of inhabitants without cars. These capitals are marked by high population density, developed public transport infrastructure and public policies that favour non-motorised transport.

On the other hand, the capitals of central and eastern Europe, medium-sized towns and rural areas have the lowest percentage of inhabitants without cars. These areas are marked by lower population density, less developed public transport infrastructure and public policies that are less favourable to non-motorised transport.

But people living in the denser and richer cities account for most tourism consumption. These are the cities from which airlines carry passengers to their holiday destinations in southern Europe.



As a result, if tourists are to access destinations that are not as common but have tourism potential, access to such regions must be facilitated via a Europe-wide mobility plan. That would drive down CO<sub>2</sub> and greenhouse gas emissions, which mainly come from conventional transport in the tourism industry. Besides, any local tourist development must be required to provide mobility solutions up to the last kilometre.

Support for innovative travel and transport that saves energy and emits less greenhouse gases, since 75% of tourism emissions are transport-related.

**That is why a major mobility transition plan should be funded:**

- by speeding up the **implementation of a single European railway network** (including by addressing rail-road issues), and by jointly funding links with secondary rail networks to cover the whole of Europe.
- by developing **pilot operations for advanced modes of land transport** that emit zero or close-to-zero emissions.
- by reinforcing the services and points of interest on **major European routes**.

### **Task 3): Making tourism funding programmes more effective**

**The European Commission needs to go back to the drawing board for all its funding interventions and also its engineering solutions:**

- By prioritising the funding of projects that extend or diversify the tourism offer, heighten the competitiveness of undertakings and have an actual influence on the tourist economy and job creation, based on a logic of sustainable development and social effectiveness.
- By differentiating, in its funding plans, what relates to:
  - aid to local authorities that fund infrastructure, governance, digital transition
  - support to private players in the development of their offer by separating green transition mechanisms from funding for the improvement of the quality of services.
- By favouring a policy that is geared for small and medium tourist enterprises (i.e. 99% of European tourism enterprises), and clarifying the rules of intervention and funding for project initiators.

### **Task 4): Creating a European fund to finance investment by tourism enterprises with preferential interest rates.**

Small and medium enterprises are facing rising interest rates and the increasing wariness of lenders towards the tourism industry. They are thus unable to fund their projects for development, upgrading, or the improvement of the quality of their establishments.

The creation of a special fund for such players, to fund 20% of the project over 15 to 20 years with preferential interest rates as a complement for conventional bank loans and grants and subsidies, would help make the European tourism fabric more competitive, particularly the hospitality industry in rural areas and tourist resorts.

If aid is not directed towards these players who are located far away from major cities, Europe would risk the disappearance or a weakening of the diversity of the tourist offer, particularly as regards hotels, and accelerate the loss of offers in economically fragile areas, particularly rural areas.

Such a mechanism would be appropriate for projects costing €1 to €10 million, which could generate at least ten full-time equivalent jobs.



### **Task 5): Acting in favour of the development of more inclusive, responsible and balanced tourism:**

- By defining objective green criteria including energy efficiency, protection of resources and the development of the local economic fabric as conditions for obtaining European funding.
- By redesigning tourist flows towards more fragile areas and building up alternative offers.
- By developing an offer of products and services sourced from the local productive community.
- By showcasing the intangible heritage, local know-how and themed nature activities.



### **Task 6): Implementing a Europe-wide plan for training in tourism trades.**

A major European plan for training in tourism trades is required to address the needs of the industry, which is a major contributor to the economy and employs over 10 million workers. The plan must be designed for the following:

- increased attractiveness of tourism trades, by raising their profile and making them more appealing to the young,
- easier access to training, by offering courses that address the needs of the different candidate profiles, particularly those undergoing retraining,
- development of the skills of tourism professionals by training them in the latest advances in the industry,

The plan could include several components, particularly:

- Initial training, aimed at offering high-quality courses that address the needs of the different candidate profiles. That could involve the creation of new training courses, the extension of existing ones and the development of cooperation between training institutions.
- Continuing training aimed at offering tourism professionals opportunities for lifelong learning and career development.
- Promotional efforts in favour of tourism trades, to make them more appealing to the young.



### **Task 7): Creating a tourist visa at European borders, valid for 1 year, costing €50 per visitor from outside the EU, to partly fund the European Tourism Fund and boost investment.**





# ***PATRIOTS***

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