



CPMR INTERMEDITERRANEAN
COMMISSION
30th ANNIVERSARY

Final Declaration

CPMR Intermediterranean Commission General Assembly

October 26, 2020 – Online

This document constitutes the Final Declaration approved by the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission General Assembly, gathered online on October 26, 2020.

This Declaration has been drafted in the framework of the 2020 worldwide pandemic situation resulting from the propagation of the SARS-CoV-2, and the impacts of the adaptative measures undertaken by governments to tackle it over the tourism sector in the Mediterranean. It is intended as a CPMR Intermediterranean Commission contribution to the current debates on the socio-economic and environmental recovery of the sector for the EU and the Mediterranean basin.

The Declaration includes reflections on how to adapt the tourism sector towards more sustainability and a smart socio-economic recovery in Europe and in the Mediterranean basin.

Its references are based on the late and current Mediterranean state-of-the-art regarding the listed issues, as well as on the previous and current CPMR General Secretariat's and CPMR Intermediterranean Commission's works, including as well, those of partner institutions, networks and programs.

In Europe and for the European Union, tourism is one of the major economic activity with wide-ranging impacts on economic growth, employment, and social development.¹ More particularly in the Mediterranean, tourism can be a powerful tool in fighting economic decline and unemployment, mostly among the youth, in peripheral areas and fragile territories as islands. Nonetheless, in its long-lasting existence, this sector and destinations have been facing a series of challenges in terms of demographic pressures, the use of resources, data, waste and water management or seasonality (to cite a few). Sustainability is therefore a key concept and way of developing touristic activities, transports and services in general that should be exploited to a much further extent at all governance levels and in a transversal way.

Luckily or not though, throughout most of 2020, the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and the measures implemented at national, regional and local levels to tackle its progression have shaken the bases of our political, climatic, social and economic systems worldwide. This has been particularly true for the tourism sector in Europe and the Mediterranean. On the one hand, tourism numbers in terms of GDP, employment, and travelers have plummeted as an aftermath of the lockdown, while on the other, opportunities towards a recovery of the sector have arisen for it to “start over” and implement much more sustainable socio-economic practices.

Moreover, important though it is, the health crisis must not relegate to the background the major crisis of climate change, whose impacts, already particularly marked in the Mediterranean, will be of a long-term civilisational nature. The tourism sector is closely related to the issue : greenhouse gas emissions, and the pressures it exerts on environments and resources are aggravated by the effects of change [2].

With this in mind, and building on its previous Declarations³ and on the implementation of its Political Agenda “[Promoting Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean regions](#)”, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, addressing European, Euro-Mediterranean and International institutions, as well as Mediterranean stakeholders, hereby:

- 1. Expresses** its support to local, regional and national communities in the Mediterranean and worldwide, in their efforts to tackle the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic crisis and secure sanitary environments allowing populations to live safely and in good health.
- 2. Reminds** multi-level governance stakeholders throughout Europe and the Mediterranean that cooperation, empathy and social responsibility are key to resolve this worldwide crisis and move towards more sustainable ways of life and consumption, whether it be at economic, social or environmental levels, in line with the European Green Pact, which makes the fight against climate change a cross-cutting priority. Tourism being one of the most important sectors of the Mediterranean, operators and stakeholders should particularly integrate these three levels of the sustainability concept into their practices.
- 3. Acknowledges** the strategic conclusions of the [SEARICA](#) Intergroup Event held last July 2020, **welcomes** and **fully supports** the “[13 Guiding Principles for the Future of Tourism](#)” presented then, and jointly elaborated by the Travel Foundation and partners.
- 4. Acknowledges** and **supports** NECSTouR’s initiative calling for a “[Marshall Plan](#) towards a sustainable recovery of the [tourism] sector”,⁴ and **advises** that, should such Plan be put in place by the European Union, the fulfillment of sustainability indicators should be one of the key conditions

¹ European Parliament Resolution (2015), on “[New challenges and concepts for the promotion of tourism in Europe.](#)”

² It is estimated that tourism is responsible for around 8% of greenhouse gas emissions - Resolution of the European Parliament (2015), « [New challenges and concepts for the promotion of tourism in Europe](#) »

³ [Barcelona 2013](#), [Patras 2014](#), [Venice 2014](#), [Marseilles 2014](#), [Nafplio and Rabat 2015](#), [Venice 2016](#), [Barcelona 2017](#), [Naples 2017](#), [Patras 2018](#), [Marseilles 2019](#).

⁴ At the last NECSTouR Assembly, on October 2nd, all Member regions agreed "The Vision of European Regions for the Tourism of Tomorrow 2050", to be able to influence the European Agenda for Tourism 2050. (Gobierno de Baleares) - Recently NECSTouR Marshall Plan for tourism was also mentioned within the outcomes of the EU Tourism Convention cited in the following point.

to the allocations of funds to any kind of project proposed in this regard. This, in order to generate a real impact at destination level and in relation to the fight against climate change and adaptation to its impacts.

5. **Welcomes** the initiative of the Committee of the Regions in preparing the Opinion entitled “[Towards more sustainable tourism for EU cities and regions](#)” which already invites us to consider the need to review the results of the policies implemented up to now. The opinion faces the impact of the crisis generated by COVID-19 and emphasizes the need to give greater weight to sustainable tourism in European policy, commensurate with its contribution and potential for growth.
6. **Congratulates** the European Commission for the organization of the [European Tourism Convention](#) addressing “safe and seamless tourism experiences”, “greener holidays” and “data management.” The IMC **acknowledges** the “30 smart actions” stemming from all three workshops. The IMC also **underlines** the need to integrate them in a proper way and in a multi-level governance dimension, should they be developed and implemented in the future as part of the forthcoming European strategy and action plan on tourism.
7. **Looks forward** to seeing the conclusions of the European Tourism Convention debates evolve to nourish the elaboration of a concrete strategy for European tourism with a horizon up to 2050. This strategy should be co-built and co-implemented through a participatory approach, by local, regional and national authorities, the civil society, citizens, and the private sector alike, while including short, medium- and long-term objectives.
8. **Underlines** that both the upcoming strategy and action plan on EU tourism should include appropriate coordination mechanisms with Neighborhood and Pre-accession countries, as most of tourism and climate related challenges have no boundaries and are so closely related in the Mediterranean basin. In this sense, **recommends** that synergies be sought with the works of institutions, public and private partnerships, European strategies, and international initiatives such as the Union for the Mediterranean, EUSAIR, WestMed or BlueMed, territorial cooperation programs and instruments, etc. This, in order to coherently concentrate and address the sustainable recovery actions of the sector and optimize the impacts of all designated actions moving their efforts towards a common direction and common needs.
9. If so, **recommends** that such a Strategy for tourism in Europe includes the sustainability of the industry as a fundamental pillar to its recovery and further development with a focus on SMEs, considering as well peripheral and insular areas, following the SEARICA Intergroup’s meeting abovementioned conclusions, the “Future of Tourism” 13 Guiding Principles, and in alignment with the Green Deal and 2030 Agenda objectives.
10. **Worries** that the tendency to prioritize the “economic” dimension-for the short-term recovery of tourism without considering proper structural changes of the sector towards more sustainability already, may delay the implementation of sustainable practices on the medium-longer term in all meaning of the concept. The buffer time offered by the sanitary situation and lower worldwide economic rhythm should favor the creation of measures and innovation tools to support businesses and in particular SMEs, young people and people with difficulties, while incentives should be proposed, supported and implemented to seize the opportunity of working towards more reasonable and sustainable tourism models, and lower greenhouse gas emissions. With a key role for local and regional authorities, capitalizing on existing tools and practices that have showed a high rate of success regarding the development and implementation of sustainable tourism could facilitate the definition of relevant and impactful actions and innovative solutions.
11. Consequently, **asks** that the means EU instruments – as the Next Generation EU and therefore the Recovery & Resilience Facility, REACT EU, the new Multiannual Financial Framework and related funds (ERDF among others) – can provide, coherently address the needs of tourism and related

sectors at their respective levels of execution and in accordance to their respective primary missions. Considering the sector's recovery as well as its sustainability challenges from day one of their implementation already, starting with a short-term *vision* to ensure a medium-/long term actual *completion*, and consistent with the European Union's objective of carbon neutrality is key for a green transition. In this sense, including tourism notably in national recovery plans is fundamental, while local and regional authorities should be fully part of their elaboration, development and implementation processes, reflecting at the same time the diversity of territories, among which those in particular need of them.

12. **Recalls** that initiatives such as the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance should be fully exploited by European and Mediterranean stakeholders and institutions (the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Union for the Mediterranean, cooperation programs, etc.) to enhance the impacts of the different instruments identified for the recovery and sustainability of tourism over the territories of the Mediterranean, including peripheral and insular areas. As a platform able to mobilize a great variety of regional and local governments across all shores of the basin (from EU and non-EU countries alike), the “MedCoopAlliance” offers the capacity to ensure a concerted action for the building and implementation of joint solutions to common identified challenges starting from climate change and innovation in all the key sectors involved in the Med basin.
13. **Encourages** the tourism private sector to be proactive and take incentives regarding sustainable and innovative practices, for example by exploiting available public knowledge to strengthen their actions in this sense. Building up a recovery plan at European and Mediterranean levels and implementing it may take time, while the tourism industry at all levels may have the means to start or keep working towards more demonstrable sustainability of their own activities already, assuming at the same time their corporate social responsibility to a better extent.
14. **Seconds** the [Global Tourism Plastics Initiative](#) led by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with the vision of the tourism sector as a frontrunner in the race for a world without plastic waste or pollution. This Initiative aims to fully eliminate unnecessary plastic items bringing together businesses and governments in a joint action.
15. **Highlights** some of the key territorial cooperation [projects](#) that have studied and implemented actions for an enhanced sustainability of the tourism sector, and which results should be fully considered by multi-level governance stakeholders when building strategies at European and Mediterranean levels regarding tourism recovery and future:
 - [Bologna Charter](#) for the promotion of a common framework for strategic actions aimed at the protection and sustainable development of the Mediterranean coastal areas;
 - [Sustainable Tourism](#) Community (Interreg MED) aimed the capitalization of thematic projects results on sustainable tourism to enhance the integration of studies, pilots and solutions for better impacts on territories. Among this community of projects, one can find [CO-EVOLVE](#) (on the co-evolution of human activities and natural systems for the development of sustainable coastal and maritime tourism), [MITOMED+](#) (on competitiveness models for the sector), [WINTERMED](#) (on the transition from the current over-exploitation of insular tourist destinations during the summer to an alternative, sustainable, all-year round use of these territories), [DESTIMED+](#) (on the promotion of integrated planning for Mediterranean coastal tourism focusing on protected areas to create ecotourism itineraries), [HERIT DATA](#) (on sustainable and responsible tourism management towards cultural heritage by taking advantage of technology and innovation in management tools);
 - SMARTMED (Interreg MED) on the promotion of the Mediterranean as a smart and inclusive destination);

- [BEST MED](#) (Interreg MED) on the enhancement of MED Governance, addressing the key challenges of seasonality and lack of effective cooperation among main tourism actors on the Mediterranean basin;
 - [Co-Evolve4BG](#) (ENI CBC MED) on the co-evolution of human activities and natural eco-systems in touristic coastal areas, based on the principles of Integrated Coast Zone Management (ICZM) and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP);
 - [MedCoast4BG](#) (labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean) works to find common approaches and planning tools to boost sustainable coastal and maritime tourism in the Mediterranean, capitalizing on CO-EVOLVE and Co-Evolve4BG;
 - COM&CAP MarInA-Med (Interreg Med) on the capitalization of maritime projects results and promoting the integrated approach of activities in the Mediterranean.
 - [INCIRCLE](#) (Interreg Med) on supporting the development and transition towards a more circular tourism in the MED area.
- 16. Suggests** that European Territorial Cooperation Programs (Interreg MED, ENI CBC MED and then NEXT MED, ADRION, etc.), in the framework of the new MFF and in their implementation of the Green Deal and 2030 Agenda objectives, seek a real bridge between the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 programming periods. In particular, regarding the capitalization of projects results and their mainstreaming into EU, national, regional and local policies. Exploiting current available knowledge and data is key to aligning and adapting tourism sector practices towards more sustainability faster. Synergies and complementarity between these Programs should also be foreseen in order to make the most of relevant and efficient available tools and methodologies, through coordinated action.
- 17. Congratulates** the Union for the Mediterranean on unlocking a Technical Assistance dedicated to the adaptation of the IMC [Manual on Integrated Territorial Development](#) to the theme of sustainable tourism in the framework of the [MedCoast4BG project](#). One of the main ideas being that of providing state-of-the-art knowledge and tools to local and regional stakeholders, while raising awareness to Heads of States, for the integrated sustainable development of tourism over the Mediterranean.
- 18. Recalls** that tourism is an umbrella and transversal sector encompassing many peer-sectors that can contribute to improve its sustainability through a wider spectrum, whether it be in terms of sustainable transportation and improved accessibility for touristic routes, energy efficiency and savings in touristic and hospitality infrastructures, fuel alternatives for recreational maritime and coastal tourism, waste management, seasonal local or regional goods consumption with local-distribution networks, diversification of the tourism offer to tackle seasonality and therefore anthropogenic pressures and their cumulative impacts on maritime and coastal areas, etc.⁵ Each one of these sectors and related ones can bring their contributions to alleviate the pressures exerted by tourism.
- 19. Feels optimistic** when witnessing the great added value domestic tourism has brought back to the debate about traveling within shorter distances as a result of the sanitary measures put in place throughout Europe and the Mediterranean to tackle the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic progression, as witnessed in the framework of [DESTIMED+](#)'s activities for instance. Indeed, domestic visitors seemed to favor lower carbon-print transportation means, local/regional products and food consumption, local/regional well-known and original sites visits, natural sites, hence encouraging a shift towards

⁵ Again (and certainly not exhaustively), several territorial cooperation projects offer food for thoughts to be capitalized in the future to improve the sustainability of the tourism sector; for example, the [SHERPA project](#) has developed a full market place and funding scheme to implement energy efficiency measures in public buildings, that can be easily adapted to private touristic infrastructures. Another example would be the [MD.net project](#), promoting the Mediterranean Diet that could largely contribute to an improvement of consumption habits over the basin.

the diversification of tourism and a better repartition of visitors fluxes on the territory for the benefit of local communities.

20. **Encourages** multi-level governance public authorities and the private sector to take stock of these abovementioned dynamics and build upon them to support them in the future and increase domestic tourists' loyalty regarding local, regional, national, EU and Mediterranean destinations. These include the higher sustainability of short- and midrange trips, such as those within Europe, in comparison to long-distance destinations. Similarly, this would allow international visitors to experience a new way of "doing tourism," while reinforcing the quality and value of the tourism offer over quantity and tend towards a better "balanced" tourism.
21. **Welcomes** the global increasing will to digitalize the tourism sector and offer, notably with the aim of improving its sustainability. **Further encourages** the interoperability, transparency and capitalization of data in order to optimize their share, use and management across territories, related sectors and stakeholders. This, including the opportunity and the challenge the management of big data poses, and in the wake of an increased mainstreaming of artificial intelligence on the territories.
22. **Points** to the need to establish standardized tools that can guide the search for more sustainable tourism policies and the need to further explore big data as a source for tourism statistics, taking into account the challenges related to collection, independence, trustworthiness, access, quality and availability over time and the impact of data storage on climate change.
23. **Reminds** though that the elaboration and management of data, even if nimble for tourism in comparison to other sectors is not exempt of impacts on climate and the environment, notably regarding heating mitigation and cooling down of storage facilities. Coupled with the global use of digital tools and data management, this countereffect may render all efforts to improve tourism's sustainability useless, unless concrete solutions are developed simultaneously.
24. **Reiterates** that the digitalization of the tourism industry should also be inclusive for all, across all ages, and geographical areas, notably peripheral and insular territories, and in particular in the Mediterranean. Adapting and developing the necessary skills through specific training for both workers of the tourism sector and users is key to leave no one behind.
25. **Strongly recommends**, in relation to the EU Skills Agenda, the strengthening of awareness raising, education, training, capacity building and long-life learning, upskilling and reskilling about the sustainable development and implementation of tourism practices. To be effective, these actions should be directed to multi-level stakeholders including regional and local authorities, the private sector and tourists. Likewise, measures already in place to mitigate the impacts of tourism on coastal and maritime areas should be better enforced, hopefully counting on a better understanding and compliance of the targeted audience. Each one can bring a small contribution to the whole enterprise of tourism's sustainability resulting in bigger positive global impacts in line with the 17 United Nations sustainable development objectives.

*Declaration approved unanimously
by the Intermediterranean Commission General Assembly on October 26, 2020*