

The Future of Tourism in Europe: Promoting Competitiveness Through Sustainability and Digitisation



Tuesday 30th May 2017

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre,
Brussels



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Overview

The tourism industry is of great socio-economic importance for the European Union, accounting for 10% of EU GDP and employing about 12 million people (Eurostat, 2015). According to the latest report by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNTWO), a market share of 40.3% of the global international tourist arrivals are directed to the EU-28, making Europe the most sought-after destination in the world. Eurostat data published in January 2017, further confirms the good health of EU tourism, indicating that the number of nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments rose by 4% in 2015, totalling 2.8 billion.

In recognition of the industry's significant role in driving pan-European job creation and economic growth, the European Commission has introduced various initiatives, particularly aimed at promoting sustainability, accessibility, culture, and at boosting low season and coastal tourism. The Virtual Tourism Observatory, the Digital Tourism Network, and the tourism managing tool, European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS), have been established to modernise European tourism and improve connectivity and competitiveness. In addition, the campaign 'Europe. Wonder is all Around' has provided an innovative platform for promoting a plethora of diverse, sustainable and high quality travel destinations across the continent.

As tourists become more independent, connected and conscious of sustainability issues, Europe needs to embrace, and adapt to, their changing profile and priorities, and become better at promoting so-called smart destinations. New technologies moreover offer challenges and opportunities for European tourism. Whilst businesses need to adopt the latest digital technologies to remain competitive, research demonstrates that the smaller the business, the lower the rate of adoption of digital technologies (Report of the Strategic Policy Forum on Digital Entrepreneurship, 2016). In addition to digitising the sector, Europe needs to take opportunities to integrate culture and technology in new and innovative ways, targeting strategic investment in areas where it can be a world leader, such as cultural tourism.

This symposium will provide delegates with an invaluable opportunity to analyse the strategic role for the tourism sector in supporting economic and employment growth in Europe, and consider how opportunities offered by cultural tourism can be capitalised upon. Attendees will also scrutinise the challenges and prospects associated with the digitalisation of the sector and explore how ICTs can be better integrated into tourism and travel related services. The symposium will promote the exchange of ideas and encourage delegates to engage in thought-provoking debate.

“...Destinations and operators have to be innovative and step up their game, by working together and collaborating closely with other sectors, like the cultural and the creative industries.”

- Tibor Navracsics, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport,
June 2016

Venue and Accommodation

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre
Avenue du Boulevard 17
1210 Brussels
Belgium



Why Attend?

- ✓ Examine initiatives implemented by the EU to promote and support tourism
- ✓ Consider the economic and non-economic challenges facing the European tourism industry
- ✓ Discuss the challenges and opportunities presented by digitisation and reflect on its implications for competitiveness and job creation
- ✓ Assess how to improve digital competency and foster digital literacy amongst operators within the sector
- ✓ Learn from successful projects on how to positively implement sustainability indicators systems such as the ETIS
- ✓ Analyse strategies to boost city tourism
- ✓ Engage in interactive discussions with stakeholders and trendsetters in the field of tourism
- ✓ Share best practice of successful innovation projects to increase tourism accessibility

Who Should Attend?

- Local Tourism Officers
- Culture, Heritage and Arts Officers
- Environment, Regeneration, Conservation and Communities Officers
- Local Authority Directors, Managers, Chief Executives, Leaders and Elected Members
- Project managers
- Hospitality Industry
- Hoteliers
- Regional Authorities
- Chairs of Local Strategic Partnerships
- Heads of Economic Development
- Heads of Policy and Performance
- Youth Arts Officers
- Sports Officers
- Arts Council Regional Directors
- European Tourism Associations
- European Heritage Regional Directors
- Directors from Regional Government Offices and Development Agencies
- Community Development and Community Service Managers
- Directors of Arts and Leisure Providers
- Creative Consultants
- Community Consultants
- Board Members and Directors of Arts and Creative Institutions
- Regeneration Developers

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Programme

- 09:15** Registration and Morning Refreshments
- 10:00** Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks
- 10:10** **Defining the European Approach to Cultural and Creative Industries**
- Promoting Tourism in Europe: Current Framework and Expected Policy Developments
 - Assessing the Trends and Challenges of European Tourism: Seasonality, Security, Competitiveness
 - Highlighting the Importance of Sector-Specific Competences and Skills Developments
- 10:40** **First Round of Discussions**
- 11:10** Morning Coffee Break
- 11:30** **Sustainable and Accessible Tourism as A Driver for Economic Growth**
- Determining the Economic Relevance of the Tourism Industry and Its Potential Impact on Tourism
 - Initiatives to Foster SMEs Development in the Tourist Sector in the Framework of the COSME Programme
 - Discovering Instruments and Actions in Place to Monitor Sustainability: The ETIS example.
- 12:00** **Second Round of Discussions**
- 12:30** Networking Lunch
- 13:30** **Embracing the Digital Transformation: Opportunities for the Travel and Tourism Sector**
- Promoting the Digitisation of the Industry to Expand Business Opportunities
 - Developing and Making the Most of the Potential Offered By Smart Destinations
 - Overcoming the Problem of Digital Competences: Fostering Digital Literacy in the Tourism sector
 - Examples of Current Initiatives and Best Practice
- 14:00** **Third Round of Discussions**
- 14:30** Afternoon Coffee Break
- 14:50** **Boosting Competitiveness with Investments in Cultural Tourism and Infrastructure**
- Reviewing Initiatives to Promote Europe's Cultural Heritage
 - Enhancing City and Cultural Tourism with the Help of New Technologies
 - Improving Europe's Tourism Accessibility: Infrastructure and Hotel Facilities
- 15:20** **Fourth Round of Discussions**
- 15:50** Chair's Summary and Closing Comments
- 16:00** Networking Reception
- 16:30** Close

** Please note that the programme is subject to change without notice **

Marketing and Exhibition Opportunities

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Event Details

- Date:** Tuesday 21st March 2017
Time: 10:00am – 4:30pm
Venue: Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre, Brussels



Speakers Include:

- ✓ **Eduardo Santander**, Executive Director, European Travel Commission
- ✓ **Graham Miller**, Executive Dean, Professor of Sustainability in Business, University of Surrey
- ✓ **Manos Vougioukas**, Secretary General, European Cultural Tourism Network
- ✓ **Voula Patoulidou**, President of the Thessaloniki Tourism Organization, Vice-Governor of the Region of Central Macedonia, Greece
- ✓ **Françoise Guaspere**, EU Policy/Communication Adviser, Île-de-France Europe
- ✓ **Nick Hall**, Founder and CEO, Digital Tourism Think Tank

Forthcoming Events

- ✓ E-Skills and Jobs in the Digital Age: Accelerating Europe's Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth
10th May 2017
- ✓ 7th Annual International Symposium on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling
17th May 2017
- ✓ The Future of Tourism in Europe: Promoting Competitiveness Through Sustainability and Digitisation
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