The Future of Tourism in the EU: Fostering Sustainability and Digitisation

Thursday 12th April 2018

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre, Brussels
Overview

The tourism sector in the EU is estimated to generate more than 10% of the EU GDP and approximately 12% of all jobs, many of which are within SMEs (European Commission, 2010). Tourism has proved resilient in these last decades, with the EU28 hosting 478 million international tourists in 2015, a notable increase from the 331 million in 2000 (UN World Tourism Organisation, 2016). However, the industry is faced with a number of challenges that will characterise its future development, such as sustainability, the capacity to fully take into account “current and future economic, social and environmental impacts” (UNWTO), and digitisation, since tourists are increasingly reliant on the flexible and often cheaper digital services of the sharing economy.

While policy making on tourism is a national competence, the Commission progressively developed the basis of a comprehensive strategy on European tourism, laid down in the 2007 “Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism”. In this framework, it launched an indicator for sustainability in the tourism sector, the European Tourism Indicators System for sustainable destination management (ETIS), and in 2017 it established the criteria for awarding the EU Ecolabel, a voluntary environmental performance certificate, to tourist accommodations. To boost competitiveness and digitisation, in 2015 the Commission launched the Digital Tourism Network, to discuss how to foster the innovation capacity of tourism entrepreneurs, and is currently redeveloping the Tourism Business Portal, a one-stop-shop providing information on digital technologies and innovative business practices. Finally, the EU plays an important role in financing tourism-related activities, as detailed in the 2016 “Guide on EU funding for tourism”, which highlights numerous funding schemes tailored on the needs of the different stakeholders.

Tourism sustainability is a very ambitious target: it often implies trade-offs between the needs and interests of the various stakeholders and a strong coordination among different policy areas. Any future development will not be inherently positive or negative, but its nature will be determined by a case-by-case assessment of the relevant factors. Similarly, the introduction of the sharing economy business model in the sector, whose most prominent example is AirBnb, should be assessed taking into account all pros and cons, since its advocates claim that it allows a more personalised approach to costumers and helps bringing tourists to destinations that were previously less popular or affordable, while critics underline a number of issues related to job and social security, compliance to standards, tax regimes and unfair competition.

This symposium will provide delegates with an invaluable opportunity to appraise the present of the tourism sector in the EU and explore future scenarios of sustainability. Delegates will scrutinise opportunities and challenges associated with the digitisation of the sector and the implementation of the sharing economy model, and will be presented with an overview of the relevant EU funding schemes for tourism.

Why Attend?

- Examine the present and the future of tourism at EU level achievement of gender equality at work
- Assess the prospects of improved sustainability and digitisation in the tourism sector
- Explore how to foster sustainability and derive best practice
- Discuss opportunities and challenges linked to novel business models in the digital age
- Appraise public and private funding opportunities to boost investments
- Analyse relevant EU activities on tourism sustainability, such as ETIS and EU Ecolabel
- Discover available tools to foster entrepreneurial innovation capacity
- Engage in interactive discussions with stakeholders and trendsetters in the field of tourism

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
- Leisure Developers
- Academics and Researchers
- Museums and Galleries

Venue and Accommodation

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

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Programme

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<td>Registration and Morning Refreshments</td>
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<td>10:00</td>
<td>Chair’s Welcome and Opening Remarks</td>
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<td>10:10</td>
<td>Assessing Priorities for Tourism at EU Level: Sustainability and Digitisation</td>
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<td>• The Tourism Sector in the EU: Current Situation and Future Prospects</td>
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<td>• Analysing the Three Dimensions of Sustainability in the Tourism Sector</td>
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<td>• Digitisation and Sharing Economy: Weighing Pros and Cons</td>
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<td>10:40</td>
<td>First Round of Discussions</td>
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<td>11:10</td>
<td>Morning Coffee Break</td>
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<td>Achieving a Sustainable Future for Tourism in the EU</td>
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<td>• Fostering the Adoption of Sustainable Tourism Principles: ETIS</td>
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<td>• Rewarding Good Environmental Performance: EU Ecolabel for Tourist</td>
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<td>• Examples of Current Initiatives and Best Practice</td>
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<td>12:00</td>
<td>Second Round of Discussions</td>
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<td>Networking Lunch</td>
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<td>Harnessing the Digital Transformation: Opportunities and Challenges for</td>
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<td>• Promoting the Digitisation of the Industry: Tourism Business Portal</td>
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<td>• Assessing New Business Models in the Digital Age</td>
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<td>• Reviewing Current Initiatives and Best Practice</td>
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<td>14:00</td>
<td>Third Round of Discussions</td>
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<td>Afternoon Coffee Break</td>
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<td>Financing Sustainability and Digitisation: Private and Public Funding</td>
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<td>• Determining Investment Needs in the EU Tourism Sector</td>
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<td>• Discovering Tourism-Related EU Funding Schemes: Who, What and How</td>
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<td>• Funnelling Private Equity Into Sustainable and Digital Tourism</td>
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<td>Fourth Round of Discussions</td>
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<td>Chair’s Summary and Closing Comments</td>
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<td>16:00</td>
<td>Networking Reception</td>
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* Please note that the programme is subject to change without notice *

Event Details

Date: Thursday 12th April 2018
Time: 10:00am – 4:30pm
Venue: Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre, Brussels

Speakers Include:

Katrine Dorosko, Policy Officer for EU Ecolabel, European Commission
Claudia Tapardel (video contribution), Member of the European Parliament
Ralf Pastleitner, Director International Public Policy & EU Affairs, Tui Group
Christoph Klenner, Secretary General, European Technology and Travel Services Association
Carole Rey-Pouliquen, Public Affairs Director and Head of Transport, Travel and Tourism Sector, Grayling
Spokesperson (to be defined), Spokesperson, European Holiday Home Association
Hannalore Akkermans, Project Manager for Sustainable Tourism, Via Via Tourism Accademy
Cinzia De Marzo, EU legal advisor & Tourism expert on sustainable destination management

Forthcoming Events

Updating the European Strategy on High Performance Computing: Developing Supercomputers and Quantum Computers in the EU 19th April 2018
Fostering the Digitisation of Public Services in the EU: A Stepping Stone to a Digitally Advanced Society 23rd May 2018

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