

XV ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN LEAGUE FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION -ELEC-

Promoting Blue Tourism in the Mediterranean

30-31 October 2019

Parliament of the Balearic Islands, Palma de Mallorca (Spain)

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade environmental economics have gone from being an incipient field of academic research to one of the main pillars in the local, national and international public agendas. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals adopted by all the United Nations Members States in 2015 has drawn a new path for the Mediterranean economies that shall help stakeholders to take action and ensure the promotion of more resilient and sustainable economies. Nevertheless, blue economy has gained steam in Europe as a long term strategy to support sustainable growth through the promotion of key sectors such as aquaculture, ocean energy or maritime biotechnology.

Amongst them all, costal tourism remains as the crown jewel for the countries around the Mediterranean basin for its capacity to create employment (11,5 % of the total) and wealth (11,3 % of regional GDP in 2015). Given its unique climate, geocentric position, rich history and culture and nature resources, the Mediterranean region is the world's leading tourism destination, with France, Spain and Italy as three of the top five most visited countries in the globe.

However, while it is clear that tourism brings high economic value, many challenges have arisen in the last decade such as pollution and environmental damage, climate change impacts and resource depletion, rise of social

With the collaboration of

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inequality, territorial imbalance or alteration of cultural heritage. Tourism flows are also affected by terrorism and natural disasters that have had a strong impact on the basin countries in the last decade.

These challenges affect the Mediterranean region transversally and go beyond borders, thus they need to be tackled jointly. But how can we foster stronger partnerships and better resource allocations? How can we increase tourism competitiveness and resilience? Which public policies should be put in place to support private sector and citizens with the aim to reduce the negative externalities that come along with tourism?

With the strong commitment to keep developing dialogue and exchange among prominent actors of the Mediterranean, the European League of Economic Cooperation (ELEC) and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) will devote the XV Annual Conference of the ELEC Mediterranean Commission to exchange ideas on such challenges and to offer practical solutions.

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Wednesday 30, October 2019

15.30 **Participants arrival and accreditations**

16.00 **Welcome address**

Vicenç Thomas i Mulet, President, Parliament of the Balearic Islands

Francesc Homs, President, Spanish Committee of the European League of Economic Cooperation (ELEC)

Xavier Bernard-Sans, Director General, Euroregion Pyrenees Mediterranean

Senén Florensa, President, Mediterranean Commission of ELEC.

President of the Executive Committee, European Institut of the Mediterranean, IEMed. Ambassador Permanent Representative to UN and the International Organizations in Vienna

16.15 **Opening session**

Francina Armengol, President, Government of the Balearic Islands

Nasser Kamel, Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean

16.45 **Session – The role of tourism in the Mediterranean economies**

What are the main trends and figures of the sector? What are the positive and negative externalities of tourism in the Mediterranean region? How can the first be promoted and the last be mitigated? What is the role of the public sector in this endeavour? How can seasonality be dealt with? What is the solution to the precarious work in some tourist activities?

Chair

Alfonso González, Director General of European Affairs and Mediterranean at Generalitat de Catalunya

Speakers

Mohammed El Razzaz, Business Development and Employment Division, Union for the Mediterranean

Davide Strangis, Executive Director of EU Programmes, Partnerships and Geographical Commissions, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CRPM)

Asma Hamza, Lecturer and Researcher, Tunisian National Institute of Sciences and Technologies of the Sea

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First Comments

Roger Albinyana, Director of Mediterranean Regional Policies and Human Development, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Radu Deac, President of the Romanian National Section, European League for Economic Cooperation

18.00

Coffee Break

18.15

Session – **The Transformations of the Mediterranean Tourism Sector in the Digital Era**

What is the impact of the Digital economy in the tourism sector? How can the private sector and more specifically MSMEs benefit from the digitalisation of their economic activities? What is the real impact of Digital platforms of hospitality and transport services in the economy and how are they coexisting with the traditional sector? How can the informal sector be transformed into a creator of shared wealth?

Chair

Joe Holles, Cercle d'Economia de Mallorca. President, Tramuntana XXI

Speakers

Patrick Torrent, President, Network of European Regions for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism (NECSTouR)

Santiago Camps, Co-Founder & CEO, Mabrian

Antoni Riera, Director, Fundació Impulsa Balears. Full Professor of Applied Economy, Balearic Islands University

First Comments

Jordi Xuclà, Former Member of Parliament. Professor of International Relations, Ramon Llull University

21.00

**Dinner offered by the Euroregion Pyrenees Mediterranean
(By invitation only)**

Thursday 31, October 2019

09.30

Session - The impact of climate change: building a resilient and sustainable tourism sector

How is climate change impacting in the blue economy in the Mediterranean? How shall the main challenges be combatted? How can the depletion of natural resources be tackled while promoting sustainable growth in the Mediterranean economies? Which are the best mid-term and long-term strategies and measures to reduce and mitigate the environmental impacts on tourism?

Chair

Antoni Vicens, Director General of Foreign Relations, Government of the Balearic Islands

Speakers

Jérémie Fosse, Co-Founder and President, Eco-Union

Irene Estaún, Managing Director, Menorca Reserva de la Bioesfera

Magali Outters, Team Leader of the Policy Area, Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan)

Rafael Guinea, Managing Director, TIRME

First Comments

Margarita de Cos, Board Member, World Wildlife Fund Spain

Luigi Bistagnino, Italian Coordinator, Zero Emissions Research and Initiatives Foundation (ZERI)

11.00

Coffee Break

11.30

Session - Promoting inclusive tourism strategic plans: cross fertilisation between coastal and rural tourism

What are the dangers of heavily investing and promoting certain tourist destinations? How can policymakers include tourism in a territorial development approach? How can the countries of destination create a differentiation and a solid tourist brand? What are the benefits of creating stronger cross fertilisation between coastal and rural tourism?

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Chair

Sébastien Pla, President of the commission of Tourism Economy,
Regional Council of Occitanie

Speakers

Josep Canals, Secretary General, MedCities

Brahim Abouelabbes, President, Association Marocaine pour
l'Ecotourisme et la Protection de la Nature

Manos Vougioukas, Secretary General, European Cultural Tourism
Network

David Rico, Managing Director of Hotels and Tourism, CaixaBank

First Comments

Maria-Àngels Roque, Director of Mediterranean Cultures and Civil
Society Department, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

13.00

Final remarks and closing session

Francesc Homs, President, Spanish Committee of the European League
of Economic Cooperation (ELEC)

Rosana Morillo, Director General of Tourism, Government of the Balearic
Islands

13.30

**Lunch Offered by the Regional Ministry of Economic Model, Tourism and
Labour of the Government of the Balearic Islands (By invitation only)**

16.30

Visit to CaixaForum Palma (By invitation only)

Simultaneous translation in English and Spanish will be provided

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