

24/07/2019

**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 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.

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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.

Wednesday 30, October 2019

15.00 **Participants arrival and accreditations**

15.30 **Welcome address**

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, IEMed. Ambassador Permanent Representative to UN and the International Organizations in Vienna

15.45 **Opening session**

H.E. Francina Armengol, President, Government of the Balearic Islands

H.E. Nasser Kamel, Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean

H.E. Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General, World Tourism Organisation

16.15 **Key note speech by** H.E. Rania A. Al Mashat, Minister of Tourism, Egiptian Ministry of Tourism: “**Promoting blue tourism in the Southern Mediterranean countries**”

Introduced by: Isabel Maria Oliver Sagreras, Secretary of State for Tourism, Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism: “**Promoting blue tourism in the Northern Mediterranean countries**”

16.45 **First 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:

Sabina Fluxà, Vice-chairman and CEO of Iberostar Hotels & Resorts. Asociación para el Progreso de la Dirección (APD) Zona Baleares.

Speakers:

Rachid Maaninou, Deputy Secretary General in charge of Business Development and Employment, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

Firuz Bağlıkaya, Chairman of the Executive Board, the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies

Tim Fairhurst, Secretary General, European Tourism Association (ETOA)

Santiago Camps, Co-Founder & CEO, Mabrian

First Comments:

Valerio De Luca, President, Forum Med of Rome

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

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

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

18.00 - Coffee Break

18.15 **Second 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:

María Helena de Felipe, President, Euromed Committee, European Economic and Social Committee

Anna Athanasopolou, Head of Unit on Tourism, Emerging and Creative Industries, DG GROW, European Commission

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

Tomi Ilijaš, Founder and President, Arctur

First Comments:

Antoni Riera, Full Professor of Applied Economy, Balearic Islands University

Magda Antolini, Associate Professor of Economic Policy and Director of the Master of Economics of Tourism, Bocconi University

Miguel Picó, Full Professor, Balearic Tourism School (ETB)

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

Thursday 31, October 2019

09.30 Third 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:

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

Speakers:

Irene Estaún, Managing Director, Menorca Reserva de la Biosfera

Roger Garcia, Deputy Director, Regional Activity Center for Sustainable Consumption and Production

Abdeladim Lhafi, Haut-Commissaire, Haut-Commissariat aux Eaux et Forêts et à la lutte contre la Désertification, Ministère marocain de l'Agriculture, de la Pêche Maritime du Développement Rural et des Eaux et Forêts

Mohamed Ben Jeddou, General Director, Agence de Protection et d'Aménagement du Littoral, Ministère tunisien de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable

First Comments:

Xavier Pastor, Oceanographer, Former Director of Greenpeace Spain and OCEANA Europe

Margarita de Cos, Head Major Donors Relations, World Wildlife Fund. Chairwoman for Spain and IPC Member, Global Summit of Women. World Wildlife Fund Spain

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

Joan Carles Llurdés, Professor, Autonomous University of Barcelona

11.00 Coffee Break**11.30****Fourth 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?

Chair:

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

Speakers:

Carmen Planas, President, Confederation of Business Associations of the Balearic Islands (CAEB). President, Impulsa Foundation.

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

First Comments:

Vangelis Constantianos, Executive Secretary, GWP-Med Secretariat

Manel Adell, Founder and owner, Son Felip

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

13.15 Final remarks and closing session

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

H.E. Iago Negueruela, Minister of Economic Model and Tourism, Government of the Balearic Islands

13.30 Lunch Offered by the Government of the Balearic Islands (By invitation only)