



Tourism eco forum

Cities/Climate/People

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FINAL REPORT



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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
GEOPOLITICS & TOURISM	
The State of Urban Tourism	5
GREEN & INCLUSIVE CITIES	
How to conciliate sustainability and tourism?	10
CLIMATE CHANGE & URBAN TOURISM	
The Road to Paris	15
GOVERNANCE OF URBAN TOURISM	
Cities Strategies	19
SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS	
Sustainable Tourism Scheme	24
CONCLUSION	27



INTRODUCTION



The nature of cities is heavily impacted by the paradigm changes in the production and consumption patterns and the mobility of capital, people and goods. In recent decades, “global” and “local” are connected in such a way that cities have not only become a dynamic vector for development and growth but also as the locus for change (Habitat III, 2015).

Tourism is a **global mass phenomenon** that attracts millions of tourists annually to the Mediterranean coastal countries, regions and cities. In addition to its positive economic contribution, this activity has significant impacts on culture, urbanism and environment. It therefore requires collective reflection and concrete solutions to reduce negative externalities and enhance positive benefits.



International Tourism Arrivals (UNWTO, 2016)

This first edition of the **Tourism Eco Forum that took place in Barcelona the 14th of October 2016** aimed at enriching reflections and actions about the transition into a more sustainable urban tourism. More concretely, it emulates constructive discussions on how policies should respond to environmental, social and economic challenges such as climate change, social inequalities, gentrification and fair jobs. Consequently, the Forum promotes new forms of governance in European and Mediterranean cities to reconcile competitiveness and sustainability, hospitality and inclusiveness, local development and globalization.

1. GEOPOLITICS & TOURISM: State Of Urban Tourism



Tourism is one of the most powerful forces of globalization. It drives a continuous flow of people to visit places around the world. In this context, the cities are playing a fundamental role as international destinations. Tourism patterns are getting disrupted as travellers can visit entire regions through means of mobility technologies and transport getting faster, better interconnected and more affordable. This introductory chapter aims at highlighting the current state of urban tourism and the challenges to be addressed by European and Mediterranean cities.

A. THE DEBATE

ALESSANDRO SCARNATO, ARCHITECT

As an unprecedented situation in human history, cities concentrate nowadays more than 50% of global population. A significant part of this population is regularly travelling to different places for leisure, professional or personal reasons. This increasing freedom of mobility creates **dynamic and complex tourism patterns**. It also complicates the characterization of hosting communities and local territories. The specificities of urban tourism are indeed very diverse around the Mediterranean region. Some places are desperately calling for more visitors while others are wishing to reduce the tourism intensity.



Debate on Geopolitics and Tourism, TEF16

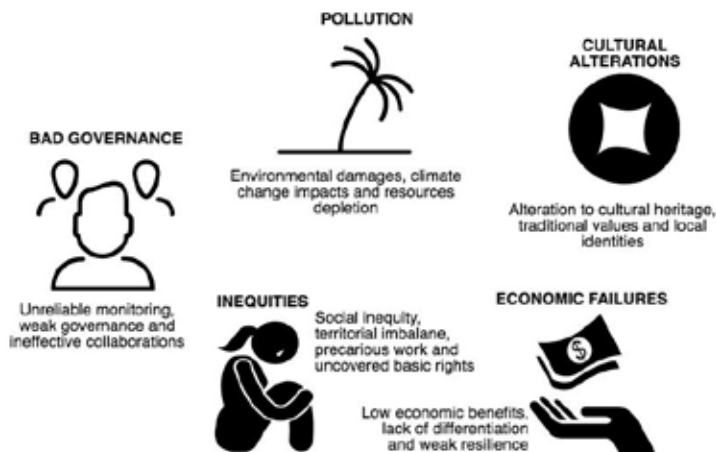


ESENCAN TERZIBASOGLU, DIRECTOR, DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME, UNWTO

Tourism is growing just like people are travelling. As a major economic activity, policy-makers must carefully consider its spatial and social impact. The main challenge of urban destinations remains to improve the quality of life of local communities. Urban tourism management should **recreate a sense of place** because many touristic areas have lost their identity and authenticity over time.

ANNE-FRANCE DIDIER, DIRECTOR, PLAN BLEU

Policy makers must recognize the links between environmental and social problems. A clear international framework is needed to take sound political decisions. The recently published **Guidelines towards a Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Tourism (MSST)**¹ promotes Integrated Coastal Management Zone ² (ICZM) as a key tool to improve tourism governance in coastal cities. It aims at reducing environmental externalities and increasing socio-economic benefits for local communities. The final goal is to develop a sustainable Mediterranean tourism where visitors and hosts enjoy balanced, respectful and fruitful relationships.



Main Issues in Mediterranean Tourism

Source: Plan Bleu, 2015

¹ <http://planbleu.org/en/publications/promoting-sustainable-and-inclusive-tourism-mediterranean-guidelines-sustainable>
² http://www.pap-thecoastcentre.org/about.php?blob_id=56&lang=en

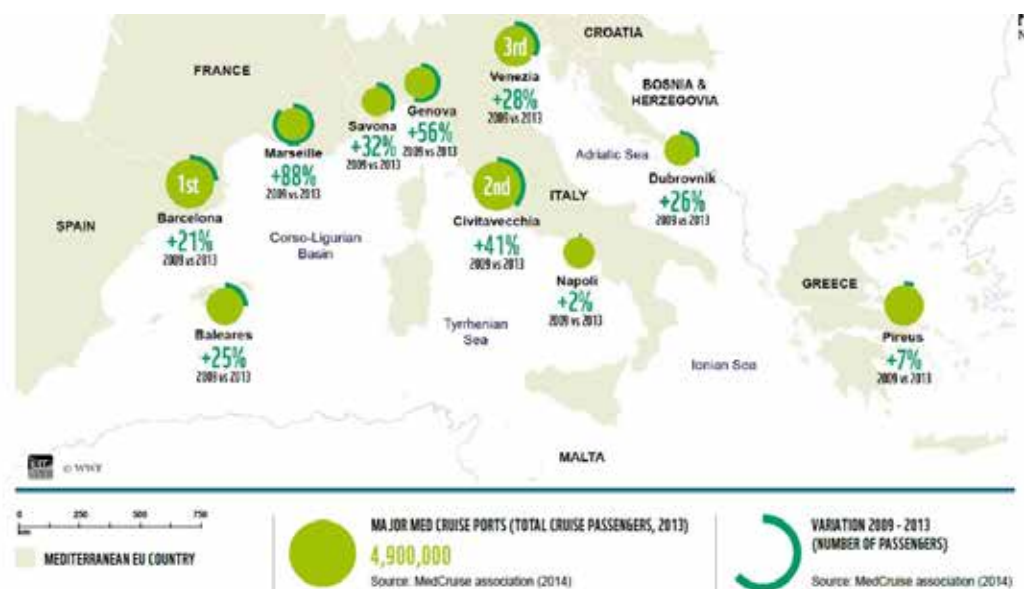


PAOLO RUSSO, PROFESSOR, GRATET, ROVIRA I VIRGILI UNIVERSITY

Tourism is a global social phenomenon that promotes intercultural dialogue and creates jobs. But nowadays, populations are so mobile that they use places instead of inhabiting them. Consequences are **people displacements, economic pressure and the overcrowded cities**. The proposed solutions are mainly environmental and are not solving social problems. It should be regulated through taxes and price mechanisms. The opportunity cost of other activities that could have been developed in place of tourist businesses should also be carefully evaluated. It will help to develop more effective and efficient public policies.

PAOLO COSTA, PRESIDENT, PORT AUTHORITY OF VENICE

In the tourism economy, destination is a fixed supply whereas demand can be in excess. The market should therefore be regulated as it cannot naturally maintain the balance between attractions and attractors. In this context, urban destination ports should **evaluate their carrying capacity (CC)**. The community of stakeholders must be defined for every place. Tax mechanism can support heritage sites under threat by mass consumption of icons. Policy-makers must also define the intersection of the physical, economic, and social limit, and control the pressure of flows. The supply and the demand should then be constrained to maintain local community activities and infrastructures.



International Tourism Arrivals (UNWTO, 2016)



Debate on Geopolitics and Tourism, TEF16

POLICIES FOR OVERCROWDED DESTINATIONS

Tourism is a complex phenomenon that requires a systemic approach to understand the consequences of a large concentration of people in a limited temporal and geographic space. Tourism must be seen in a broader context of human mobility. It generates transformation of places, in contrast to the quotidian mobility. In this regard, the quality of information that tourists have about destinations and their impact on local communities is essential to manage urban tourism.

CC indicators must be developed to prevent social and environmental conflicts and conserve fragile heritage sites. Tax and planning mechanisms also help managing tourist flows in destinations. It might yet be difficult to develop strategies of de-growth, because we cannot (physically) or should not (morally) prevent people from visiting locations. But innovative policies can influence and redistribute tourism into a more sustainable geographic and time scale.

Policy Making for a Sustainable Destination

Business diversification

Promoting the diversification of local businesses into alternative economic services aimed at local communities

Long-term planning

Planning transport infrastructures at long-term to include benefits for local communities as well as tourists

Inclusive Governance

Regulating the use and demand of public spaces and services through participative and inclusive processes integrating all relevant stakeholders

De-concentration & Re-distribution

Promoting regional alternative destinations to redistribute visitors into a larger geographical scale



GOVERNANCE OF URBAN DESTINATIONS

Sound governance requires **a common vision towards sustainable tourism and inclusive development**. Authorities at different departments and territorial levels should plan together sustainable policies that assure benefits for local communities while maintaining heritage conservation. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and all relevant stakeholders must be involved in decision processes, effectively and transparently.

Policy innovation must focus on mitigating the negative impacts of tourism and promote territorial development. A **clear roadmap and action plan among different relevant administrations** have to be collectively designed, politically approved and practically implemented. The evaluation and monitoring of related activities should be open to all affected stakeholders.

Public-private partnerships including travel operators, transport agencies, local authorities and CSOs must be reinforced to redistribute tourist flows around the whole region.

Comprehensive long-term scenarios must be developed and discussed with key actors to promote integral and robust strategies.

SUMMARY

Short-term views jeopardise tourism sustainability by underestimating environmental and socio-cultural changes at local level. Consequently, economic objectives should be balanced with **destinations carrying capacity and quality of visitor experiences**.

Tourism **de-growth policies** should be considered in overcrowded destinations through accessibility and capacity constrain instruments. This must be accompanied with active policies for developing alternative urban economies.

Political coordination at local and regional levels is necessary to establish and adopt a **common vision and strategy**. Redistribution of the tourism concentration on a regional and temporal scale is needed to reduce pressures on local communities and natural environments.



2. GREEN & INCLUSIVE CITIES: How to conciliate sustainability and competitiveness?

The chapter explores the role of sustainability in destination marketing, how urban tourism should contribute to the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) and how the city reputation can benefit from sustainability strategies.

A. THE DEBATE

NATALIA FERRER ROCA,
THE PLACE BRAND OBSERVER

A city cannot be economically competitive if it is not environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive. The development of the city is directly linked with its **image and reputation**, which in turn is strongly influenced by its environmental, economical and social performance. In other words, the more sustainable a city is, the better its reputation, and the higher its competitiveness.



Debate on Green and Inclusiveness cities, TEF16



Sustainable Development Goal n°11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

A city is not good for tourist if is not good for its citizens. Sustainable tourism has the potential to advance urban infraestructura and universal accessibility, promote regeneration of areas in decay and preserve cultural and natural heritage, assets on which tourism depends. Greater investment in green infraestructura should result in smarter and greener cities from which not only residents, but also tourist, can benefit.

LUIGI CABRINI, CHAIR, GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COUNCIL (GSTC)

Sustainability certification schemes do not imply by themselves environmental or social sustainability of destinations, products or services. Instead, they support actions and initiatives to develop **long-term sustainable tourism strategies** by involving all stakeholders. It also helps monitoring the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism activities.



Drivers for sustainable destinations

Greening tourism has a good return on investment, considering the high consumption of natural resources such as energy, water or land.

Social inclusiveness helps to reduce negative reactions by involving local communities and sharing fairly economic benefits

Marketing and communication campaigns highlights the benefits of green tourism for the planet and society, but also for visitors.

Public policies must support the private sector with green investments, tax incentives, subsidies to encourage sustainable practices.

JOAN TORRELLA, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS AND TOURISM, BARCELONA CITY GOVERNMENT

Sustainability is not a temporary state: **it should last and persist overtime**. It is very much related with the meaning of competitiveness. Despite of the fact that Barcelona is a world class destination, there is an unfair situation with locals in the use of public space and housing, local commerce gets expelled, and cultural identity commoditized. Consequently, tourism is perceived as the second problem of Barcelona citizens. This unbalance between high private interests and low social benefits is questioning the durability of the destination, and its competitiveness. Consequently, Barcelona government is leading a new tourism strategic plan where sustainability and inclusive governance are core principles³.

PETRA STUŠEK, DIRECTOR, LJUBLJANA TOURISM BOARD

Ljubljana is a multicultural city that recently planned for a sustainable city, being European Green Capital⁴ in 2016, thanks to the leadership of the mayor. It mixed top-down initiatives (closing motorised traffic in the city centre) with **bottom-up approaches** (incentives to local hospitality and gastronomy). The future scenarios demonstrated the beneficial outcome for communities and tourism stakeholders. Communication **campaigns** targeted specific groups to involve them. Ljubljana's over-night stays increase by 16% in the last two years was balanced by promotion of regional tourism to de-concentrate city visitors.

³ [Turisme 2020 Barcelona](#)

⁴ <http://www.greenljubljana.com/>



GRAEME JACKSON, PARTNERSHIP DIRECTOR, TRAVEL FOUNDATION

Unsustainable tourism threatens to degrade what tourists come for to see, endangers communities, changes ways of life, and affects a city's competitiveness. These challenges must be managed through **innovative policies and initiatives**; by avoiding gentrification and in general, by promoting more responsible destinations and positive tourism.



Barcelona protest against tourism





FROM DESTINATION PROMOTION TO SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

Destination Promotion Organizations (DMOs) need to shift into **Sustainable Destination Management Organizations** (SDMOs). This transition needs strong long-term public and private support. Local stakeholders need to be engaged in the development of the strategy through a common vision. Measuring a destination success must now include social and environmental performance at the same level like economic growth.

Re-defining Tourism Management

- Developing **Green and social accounting** to measure true progress
- Supporting **new Business models** based on social and eco-innovation
- Moving from short-term benefits to long-term **Sustainable leadership**
- Enhancing quantitative targets with **qualitative objectives** (citizen-based)
- Upgrading Destination Marketing Plans to **Sustainable Tourism Strategies**



SUSTAINABLE URBAN TOURISM STRATEGIES

Sustainable urban tourism should rely on **mobility management** to avoid gentrification and overcrowding. The capacity of cities to manage sustainable tourism highly depends on public leadership and negotiation power.



SUMMARY

Tourism should contribute to a sustainable urban development. The sustainable city can promote a remarkable image as **attractive places** to visit and live in. Investments in green infrastructures and sustainable mobility are therefore key drivers for tourism success. **Coordination** among national governments and local authorities is necessary in a global mobility context. **Public policies and communication campaigns** must develop a shared vision among stakeholders. Citizens should be much better involved as key actors through transparent and inclusive processes.

3. STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY: How urban destinations can contribute to the Paris Agreement and SDGs?



Urban destinations in Europe and the Mediterranean are facing environmental challenges that need political ambitions and commitments of urban actors. Tourism contributes significantly to climate change due to intensive mobility and consumption patterns producing large carbon emissions. But at the same time tourism is suffering the impact of climate change by temperature fluctuations, water scarcity, natural disasters and landscape changes. Therefore, if the tourism is considered as a sustainable development tool, how could urban destinations reduce carbon emissions and contribute to the Paris Agreement on climate change?



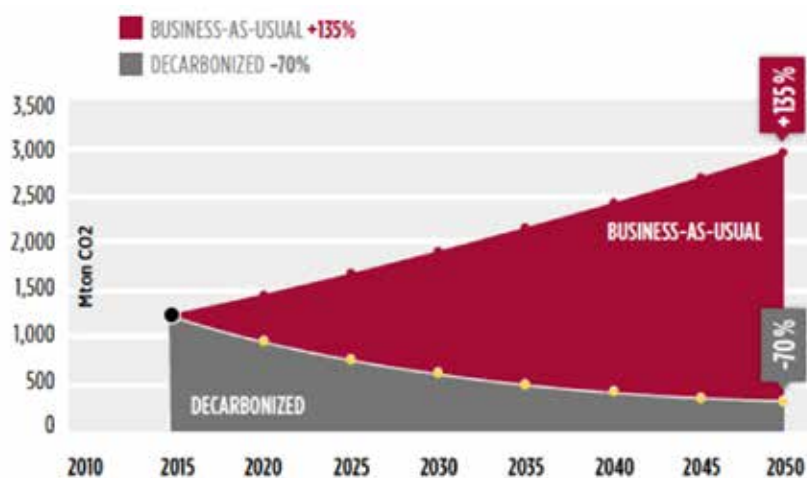
Sustainable Development Goal n°13: Climate Action

Tourism contributes to and is affected by climate change. It is, therefore, in the sector's own interest to play a leading role in the global response to climate change. By lowering energy consumption and shifting to renewable energy sources, especially in the transport and accommodation sector, tourism can help tackle one of the most pressing challenges of our time.

A. THE DEBATE

SANDER LAUDY, B01 ARCHITECTS

Mobility is the biggest problem in terms of climate change. Managing the carbon foot print at destinations is a wicked issue as most of them depend on international visitors coming by plane.



Global Tourism CO2 Emissions Pathways

Source: Goosling and Peeters (2015) Assessing tourism's global environmental impact 1900-2050. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 23(5)



GEOFFREY LIPMAN, PRESIDENT OF GREEN GROWTH AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

There is no silver bullet for climate change but instead many pieces to the solution. The tourism industry has not approached climate change in the right way yet.

SUN Programme⁵

The Sun programme (**Strong Universal Network**) is designed to bring Sustainable Tourism initiatives together on climate change. It is a global bottom-up initiative to share ideas worldwide implemented at local level. The initiative develops centres (low-cost, solar-powered and web-connected), distributed in different world regions, to serve as learning exchange that will hook in community schools, business colleges, universities and vocational systems with integrated training and skills development.

NADA ROUDIES, GENERAL SECRETARY OF TOURISM, MOROCCO

A balance between positive effect and negative impacts has to be found, in particular on economic growth, job creation, natural resources consumption, and cultural wealth preservation. Tourism needs to be recognized as an integral sector in climate agendas to advocate for the reduction of CO₂ emissions.



Approach for Sustainable Tourism in Morocco

Long Term for all touristic regions

Lifecycle Approach with
Indicators + Regulation + Incentives

Empowering and supporting **energy efficiency**

Communication for Responsible Tourism

Advocating for **CO₂ Reduction** in Tourism Sector

⁵ www.thesunprogram.com



BILL HEMMING, DIRECTOR OF AVIATION AND SHIPPING, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

The tourism sector accounts for more than 5% of the total global emissions, international aviation being the principal contributor. However, **the aviation sector (as well as cruises) is not included in the Paris Agreement**. Meanwhile, the increase of international flights from OECD and developing countries in coming decades makes it very difficult to mitigate CO2 emissions.

International Aviation and Carbon Emissions

40-50% of CO2 emissions of tourism sector;
accounting for 80% of total greenhouse of tourism sector

2% of global CO2 emissions, but contributing by 5% to global warming

European departure flights account for around 25% of overall CO2;
75% of them are long-haul travels

5% of the world's population flights annually, but an exponential growth for coming decades

Most of global emissions come from OECD countries,
but in coming years developing countries will increase their balance

THE AIRLINES INDUSTRY VOLUNTARY PLEDGE

ICAO is delivering a voluntary global deal in 65 countries (of 192), to regulate emissions from 2020 levels⁶. The agreement from 2021 to 2035 will regulate 20% of emissions through offsets, with a total cost about 2€Bn per year. Poor progress in aviation, technology solutions for aircrafts will come in medium-/long-term. So, this scenario puts the aviation out of the emissions target for 2050⁷.

Failed European railway network

Only 6% of cross-border travels are made by train

Many night trains are being closed in Europe

Global booking systems are non-existent

Cross-border aviation in Europe is exempted from VAT, while trains are not

Road freight receive 40% subsidies, about 17€bn per year in Europe

VAT-free aviation accounts for 60€bn benefits per year

In Europe aviation fuel tax and VAT exceptions accounts for 40€bn per year

⁶ Corsia

⁷ [Transport & Environment](#)

B. RECOMMENDATIONS



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SYSTEM

The reduction of long-haul travel is necessary to make tourism more sustainable, by increasing taxes for travel aviation. At European level, an individual carbon tax could be charged when flying. However, this is a controversial issue because developing countries rely heavily on international tourism. Furthermore, cities need to put pressure on national governments to improve railways systems and reduce emissions of transport.

SUMMARY

Adapting urban destinations to climate change mitigation needs a strong public leadership. The private sector has not committed to the Paris Agreement yet, especially the principal polluters, aviation and cruise sectors. Air transport is forecasted to increase making the aviation and shipping sector out of the reduction targets. Consequently, public policies must invest in sustainable transport as in an interconnected train system.

Long-haul travel is going to be much more expensive as energy and taxes are going to rise up in coming years. Popular destinations must re-think their growing expectations and integrate mitigation measures. Longer stay and shorter distance markets should be promoted. Mediterranean southern destinations should have a specific strategy and support to reduce negative environmental impacts as they heavy rely on international tourism.



4. GOVERNANCE OF URBAN TOURISM: Case studies



How to identify and share key drivers for success of urban tourism policies and sustainable development in Mediterranean and European cities? The workshop introduces **four city case studies** to show how different destinations approach tourism planning and policies.

A. INTRODUCTION

RAQUEL SANTOS LACUEVA, RESEARCHER, GRATET-URV UNIVERSITY

Most tourism policies have been justified by their economic impact, in terms of number of jobs, expenses and GDP contribution. Recently, environmental, cultural and social issues are becoming more important in the agenda. Citizens of “saturated destinations” claim for a better quality of life with higher environmental, social and cultural standards.

On the other hand, the transition to sustainable tourism policies is also related to new perspectives of understanding the tourism phenomenon. Traditionally, it is used to differentiate between tourist and non-tourist districts. In a globalised and hyper-mobile urban environment, this differentiation is not relevant anymore. Consequently, cities and tourism should be managed in a more integrated way.

LJUBLJANA (PETRA STUŠEK, LJUBLJANA TOURISM BOARD)

Recently, Ljubljana was awarded as European Green Capital and Best Sustainable Destination by Tourism for Tomorrow, WTTC's Award. The urban green policy based on reducing car traffic around the city centre, zero waste and public water fountains programmes, have a big positive effect on the reputational image, quality of local life and stakeholder engagement. Furthermore, investment in green spaces in suburbs increase outdoor opportunities for locals and visitors, also de-concentrating visitor flows to green spaces. Economic benefits grow in the hotel sector, in the last two years bookings increased by 16%.

Benefits of reducing cars in Ljubljana City Centre

- Improve accessibility for visitors and locals
- Clean air and low noise city centre
- Increase local business revenues
- New public relationships: Transit users become “citizens”
- City centre becomes more attractive for locals and visitors



BERLIN, GERMANY (PROF. JOHANNES NOVY)

In 2011 Berlin's tourism strategy was based on a business growth approach. Recently, socio-cultural issues have provoked protests and resistances to tourism. Consequently, the city has changed the political perspective to approach sustainable tourism:

- Berlin statistics show that up to 40% of inner-city residents think their quality of life is impacted by tourism.
- Reasons for residents' discontent is a complex set of issues, but a large one is short-term renting (such as Airbnb).
- In 2014, Berlin's government legislated against Airbnb.

Tourism Strategy in Berlin

Communication

Public debates, publication of a tourist guide - "Going local Berlin"

Tax policy

Tourist tax collected by accommodation sector for general tourism budget

De-growth

Restricted zoning plan in over-concentrated districts

Regulation

Non-licence tourist apartments and private rooms can operate only 2 months

Experimentation

"Fair Kiez" is an umbrella term to set up small activities before launching main stream actions.

VENICE (PAOLO COSTA, VENICE PORT AUTHORITY)

Visitors come to Venice to find signs of historical civilization. Hotel capacity has been increasing exponentially in the last 30 years, buying existing buildings and provoking a displacement of other economic activities. Nowadays, there are more than 9 million tourists per year. Daily visitors represent a higher share than locals in the historical centre. Consequently, alternative economic activities and the local population have been displaced from the city centre in the last 50 years. More than 75% of the population has left the historical city.

Heritage sites cannot be maintained as only 1/10 visitors enter museums and pay their entrance fees. It cannot assure the survival of non-tourist activities. The tourist experience in Venice is enjoying the urban landscape, which is highly gentrified for the tourists.



Venice as a Polymorphic City

Historical city

Cultural heritage to be passed down to future generations

Lagoon city

Environmental heritage to be passed down to future generations

Functional city

Wider area of the daily urban system grown beyond the “historical city”

Metropolitan city

European Urban Node (airport, seaport) of global centrality.

BARCELONA (ALBERT ARIAS, BARCELONA TOURISM)

Tourism is not just an economic sector or industry: it is a **political issue**. It is necessary to move from this “sectorial” view into a manifold of heterogeneous practices where tourism happens. The Tourist City shares spaces with other kinds of livings in the city. The urban destination experience has changed: most tourists spend their time as locals do in their leisure time in the city. Consequently, urban tourism management needs to be approached from a city perspective: city with tourists, not tourist as a part of the city.



Barcelona Strategic Plan

Source: Barcelona Council (20016) Barcelona Strategic Plan Criterias

URBAN TOURISM POLICY: A CROSS-CUTTING APPROACH

Tourism is the second problem for Barcelona citizens. A reaction to mass tourism, in a global and hyper-mobility world, where tourists, visitors and locals are embed each other, producing interlinked positive and negative impacts. City governments must therefore consider urban tourism as a political challenge, going beyond tourism economy. This view implies to involve different administrative and technical departments, and to think of different city users (citizens, day visitors, tourists ...).



Barcelona Tourism Policy: A Cross-cutting Approach

Government-wise: beyond stakeholders

Tourism is a **public and collective** issue

For the **city's stake**

Managing power relations

Ensuring plural and diverse voices

Cooperating with other administrations

(metropolitan and regional levels)

Cross-cutting policy

Making other departments think of tourist users

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

SOCIAL LIABILITY

Tourism must be integrated in a broader urban context through sustainable city development policies. Examples around European cities demonstrate that tourism can be a vehicle for community-based development. City governments have to support bottom-up initiatives and participative approaches.

City tourist destinations should develop long term policies to balance visitor and resident benefits, managed as a whole. Overcrowded destinations might carry out targeted de-growth strategies to prevent local residents from leaving their hometown.

A De-growth Path for Social Liability

Maintaining a balance between tourist/non-tourist use of public space and heritage

Assuring a fair pressure of tourist visitors

Reconcile and balance local communities' needs and visitor needs

Tourism businesses have to be constrained



RESPONSIBLE BUSINESSES

Social initiatives are coming from entrepreneurs who become part of new inclusive realities that destinations must promote. Successful business initiatives should be identified to scale them up through adapted policies. The competitive environment in the tourism industry makes it difficult for a social approach in terms of employment and jobs. But tourism businesses can be involved through voluntary agreements.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Waste reduction, collection and recycling is a key issue for a sound environmental management. Local governments must closely monitor their carbon emissions and their impacts on the climate change due to increasing mobility patterns, both within and outside the city.

TAXES AND FISCAL POLICIES

Applying the polluter pay principle, the tourist tax should support the environmental management of cities, instead of going for promotion for attracting more people. But tourists should not pay more than residents for local services (such as transport,..) to avoid social tensions and injustice.



5. TAKING ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS



This final session discusses about the application of sustainable tourism criteria in urban destinations. It reflects on the responsibility of tourism businesses in promoting sustainable development in cities.



Taking actions for sustainable destinations, TEF16

A. THE DEBATE

LUIGI CABRINI, CHAIRMAN, GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COUNCIL (GSTC)

GSTC⁸ establishes and manages global sustainable tourism standards to increase sustainable knowledge and good practices among public and private stakeholders. There are guiding principles and requirements that destinations and tourism businesses should reach to protect and sustain natural, social and cultural resources.

Currently, there are many labels and certifications generating much confusion, consequently inhibiting action and false claims. GSTC pretends to reduce this saturated market of certificates by supporting those ones which respect the global standards.

⁸ <https://www.gstcouncil.org/en/>



GUY BIGWOOD, SUSTANABILITY DIRECTOR, MCI GROUP.

MCI launched a sustainability initiative for the event industry called Global Destination Sustainability Index⁹. It helps destinations (Convention Bureaux – CVB's) to adopt sustainable practices in their city and in the events industry.

It is a benchmark and assessment tool in three key areas: knowledge sharing, co-innovation and communication. Currently, 39 cities in five continents are participating, most of them in Europe. 2016 outcomes showed 60% of CVB's have established and are implementing a sustainability strategy, and 100% now provide information about their sustainability programs, suppliers and practices.



Barcelona Destination Sustainability Index

Source: GDS-Index (2016) Barcelona

ANGEL DÍAZ, PARTNER AT BIOSPHERE TOURISM AND PRESIDENT OF ALS CONSULTING

The Biosphere certification¹⁰ is based on 100 indicators for evaluating progress. It is the first **certification integrating the SDGs**. Barcelona City and province, plus Catalonia Region have been certified, promoting a shared vision for sustainable tourism progress.

Under *Biosphere Discover* heritage sites are certified to monitor sustainable heritage management and improve the visiting experience. It increases local community and cultural engagement as well as it promotes sustainable mobility through public transport and universal accessibility.

⁹ <http://gds-index.com/about/>

¹⁰ <https://www.biospheretourism.com/en>



JORDI WILLIAM CARNES, DIRECTOR, BARCELONA TURISME

In a global context of complexity, the challenge is to manage complexity in a sustainable manner. Barcelona is the first world city to obtain a (city) sustainable destination certification. This certification, Biosphere Tourism, provides a set of standards for sustainable management of tourism, which implies the engagement of stakeholders in order to apply them. Barcelona Tourism wants to make practical these standards, as a way to keep tourism for the present and the future.

Barcelona Turisme develops a programme called “**Barcelona Sustainable Tourism**”¹¹, to promote responsible tourism businesses in the city. The programme supports responsible businesses in the market through custom guides and media sponsor.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementing sustainable tourism in cities is a shared responsibility of public governments and businesses along with a fairer community engagement. Existing standards and certifications support destinations and businesses to manage tourism for sustainable development. But it is not an end itself, it must be developed in a long term. Communication to visitors must increase their knowledge to consume more responsible services and products. Nevertheless, responsible consumption is a wicked issue, so all the stakeholders must be involved in promoting better tourism for communities.



¹¹ [Barcelona Sustainable Tourism](#)

CONCLUSION



Most speakers agreed on the idea “tourism kills tourism”. Key experts recommend moving from tourism growth promotion to sustainable tourism governance. Public leadership is seen to be an effective approach to engage other stakeholders and civil society for a sustainable city strategy. **De-growth strategies for overcrowded city destinations** are reclaimed by local citizens. Key speakers recommend develop policies to constraint accessibility, diversify tourism business, and explore alternative urban economies. Long term transition is necessary to engage stakeholders and regional/national governments.

Climate change is a major risk for destinations and wellbeing of present and future societies. Mobility should be managed more efficiently through transport and carbon policies. Marketing strategies should be focus on long stays visitors and attract low carbon markets. Those strategies strongly depend of regional, national and European governments to influence on transport systems.

Sustainable tourism schemes are a good tool to engage businesses in creating responsible practices with the environment, the community and the experience of visitors. Policies need to contribute giving incentives for responsible businesses and promote innovation for sustainability. Tourism governance needs to contribute to sustainable cities strategies. Consequently, normative urban instruments, price/tax strategies and cross-cutting policies are necessary for the development of sustainable tourism in cities. Inclusive governance is seen as a key principle for the city’s stake.



Global eco forum

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