

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE**  
**COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS**

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RECOMMENDATION No. R (94) 7

**OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES**  
**ON A GENERAL POLICY FOR SUSTAINABLE**  
**AND ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 5 September 1994  
at the 516th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Organisation is to achieve a greater unity between its members, *inter alia*, in order to foster their economic and social progress;

Having regard to the various activities carried out within the Council of Europe and other international organisations;

Bearing in mind the declaration of the ministerial conference held in Lucerne from 28 to 30 April 1993 on "Environment for Europe", which calls on the Council of Europe to pursue its activities to promote ecologically viable tourism;

Taking into account the declaration of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio from 3 to 14 June 1992;

Stressing that tourism constitutes one of the mainsprings of economic growth and is likely to become the foremost world industry;

Acknowledging that tourism is a factor in bringing peoples together, forging a European identity and heightening awareness of the value of their natural and cultural heritage;

Noting a growing interest in all forms of tourism associated with the discovery and knowledge of the natural and cultural heritage;

Convinced that the environment has an intrinsic value which is greater than its value as a tourism asset;

Underlining that the relationship between tourism and the environment is a delicate one;

Aware of the threats posed to the natural and landscape environment and local populations and cultures by the excessive and uncontrolled development of tourism;

Observing that levels of tourism development and fragility of the areas concerned vary from one country to another, and even from one region to another;

Convinced of the need to establish a general framework in order to safeguard and restore the quality of the environment, which is the prime resource of tourism,

Recommends that the governments of member states:

- a.* base their tourism development policy on the principles and measures set out in the appendix to this recommendation, tailoring them where necessary to the special features or fragility of certain regions;
- b.* ensure that the national, regional and local authorities, those institutions responsible for tourism and the environment, the tourist industry and all other sectors involved be duly informed of this recommendation and respect the principles contained herein;

Instructs the Secretary General to convey this recommendation to the international organisations and international financial bodies working in the field of the development of tourism.

#### Appendix to Recommendation No. R (94) 7

### **I. General principles**

1. The principles of prevention, precautions and remedial action allied with the need for sustainable development should underlie any tourism development policy.
2. Every planned tourism activity or development should be geared to sustainable development and its impact on the environment should be assessed; environmental considerations should be integrated into the decision-making process from the start of the project.
3. In principle, no permission should be given for any project having a significant environmental impact without evidence of its environmental, economic and financial viability. However, if this cannot be proven, other considerations may be taken into account, such as the project's contribution to socio-cultural development.
4. Tourism development should be totally or partially self-financing where possible, with the emphasis on achieving or building on sustainability.
5. Tourism development should be a gradual process and not outstrip infrastructure improvements. Tourism projects must be carried out within the limits of the local infrastructure.
6. Tourism should be developed so that in addition it benefits the local community, provides support for the local economy and takes account of the latter's ability to absorb development. Wherever possible, it should encourage employment of the local workforce and use local materials and traditional skills;
7. Tourism activities and amenities should be located in carefully chosen areas so as to restrict development in sensitive regions. Wherever possible, before building any new amenities, the possibility of using, modernising or rehabilitating existing infrastructures should first be considered;

8. Tourism activities and development must respect the scale, nature, character and capacity of the local physical and social environment of the place in which they are sited, as well as its natural resources, landscape quality, historic and archaeological heritage and cultural identity.

To this end, every project should be subjected to an environmental impact assessment. Where an environmental impact assessment (EIA) is required, due to the nature and size of the project and the character of the area to be affected, the following elements should be included:

- the impact on environment, landscape, fauna, flora, water, land and energy resources;
- the impact on local infrastructure, economy, society and employment;
- the direct, indirect, immediate and long-term effects of the project;
- the effects of secondary developments (transport, new infrastructures etc);
- adequate consultation with the local public and local communities;
- possible remedial or compensating measures.

9. Therefore, where appropriate, every tourism project should:

- avoid creating additional pressures on the environment;
- encourage the use of public and non-motorised transport, as well as the most suitable technology for saving water and energy, treating effluent and processing and recycling waste;
- be accompanied by a monitoring programme to ensure that once in operation, the project keeps to its environmental commitments, and that unforeseen negative impacts are detected and dealt with immediately. Eco-audits should be carried out on large-scale developments;
- strive to make visitors aware of the need to protect the environment and the constraints that this protection entails.

## **II. Implementation of the general principles**

The implementation of the general principles will be at the international, national, regional and local level.

### *A. National authorities*

1. In order to implement the general principles national authorities should:

- a.* develop national strategies for sustainable and environmentally-friendly development;
- a.* ensure that the various policies and decision-making levels are coherent and consistent. Tourism development is to be considered in terms of both the overall economy of a country and the local economy;
- b.* attempt to draw up an inventory of the country's cultural and natural resources and set up a legislative framework to enhance and protect them where necessary;

- c.* preserve areas designated as vulnerable by following a policy of land use control and through purchase, renting and management agreements;
- d.* draw up a framework for integrated planning and resource management;
- e.* draw up a national tourism policy taking full account of the environment and defining the role and importance of tourism in the national economy; such a policy should be tied in with overall planning policy;
- f.* ensure close collaboration between bodies responsible for providing reliable statistics on the tourist industry and monitoring the state of the country's environment;
- g.* provide environmental education and training for tourism professionals and ensure that training in the tourism sector builds awareness of the environment;
- h.* run campaigns to build awareness of the environment among local communities, elected representatives in tourist destinations and tourists themselves;
- i.* propose charters for the tourist industry establishing qualitative criteria for environment-friendly tourism;
- j.* control tourist demand and flow, in particular by staggering the tourist season and easing pressure on certain sites by developing other centres of interest, introducing admission fees at certain sites or for certain services, or limiting the number of tourists;
- k.* ensure that sites harmed by excessive tourism are restored as appropriate;
- l.* diversify what is on offer for tourists by encouraging new types of activities as alternatives to mass tourism, based on an interest in the country concerned and knowledge of its heritage, culture and way of life;
- m.* encourage the introduction of environmentally sound products and activities by relevant measures including the awarding of prizes and quality labels;
- n.* consider, where appropriate, the development of a tax incentive scheme to encourage environment-friendly tourism development projects;
- o.* consider the possibility of introducing sanctions penalising those responsible for activities harmful to the environment, geared above all to preventing harm ; these should include sufficient levels of compensation to be paid by developers for the repair of any damage caused during the development phase.

2. National authorities, acting through international organisations, should propose that these organisations:

- a.* adopt an integrated planning approach to future development of the tourism industry, emphasising the need to protect the social, natural and cultural environments;
- b.* promote international awards for sustainable tourism respecting the environment;

- c. publish international guides of good tourism practice *vis-à-vis* the environment, including databases of relevant documents and successful projects;
  - d. support training and awareness-building programmes on tourism and the environment;
  - e. support pilot projects for sustainable tourism and disseminate information about them.
3. National authorities, acting through international financial bodies should propose that these bodies:
- a. request environmental impact statements for all projects they finance and run impact assessment studies (EIA) themselves where appropriate;
  - b. ensure that all relevant procedures have been complied with;
  - c. ascertain the environmental viability of the project on the same footing as economic and financial viability of the project;
  - d. make suitable supervision arrangements to check that the project is properly run;
  - e. encourage the use of the most appropriate technology so as to minimise the impact on the environment.

#### *B. Local and regional authorities*

In order to implement the general principles local and regional authorities should:

1. exercise control over tourist development with potentially significant environmental consequences through regional, local and urban planning policy and a policy of nature and landscape protection;
2. establish local tourism plans, based on inventories of sites and biotopes and on their carrying capacity and social accommodation capacity as well as land use plans ; local tourism plans should be integrated into overall local development plans, and local tourism development funding should be provided in the framework of these plans where appropriate;
3. make the issue of building permits contingent on requirements such as a guarantee of quality development and respect for the environment, and ensure that these criteria are respected;
4. work closely with all public and private-sector operators to ensure co-ordination between different tourism development projects, and maintain a regular, two-way flow of information.