

# **Ten green commandments for a sustainable model of tourism in the Mediterranean**

**EFGP, Mediterranean Network**  
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1. The tourist industry is an increasingly crucial sector of the economy for the economic and environmental future of the Mediterranean. Any sustainable tourism policy must look to a horizon of at least a generation and ensure the conservation of a distinctive landscape, with basic natural ecosystems, while also promoting the human development of local populations and protecting traditional cultures and languages. To achieve this, it is essential to promote, as a matter of urgency, the stabilization - with a downward trend - of mass tourism (although slight growth may be allowed in unexploited or underexploited areas), before its impact on the survival of the Mediterranean ecosystem becomes irreversible.
2. To avoid any danger of an economic monoculture, tourism must be converted into an industry which operates in symbiosis with other sectors such as agriculture, stockfarming, small-scale fishing and local industries and businesses. Far from representing a threat to economic diversification and the creation of prosperity for local populations once a rapid increase in living standards has been achieved, tourism can, if transformed in an environmentally-friendly direction, act as a catalyst and help sustain agriculture, stockfarming and local fishing. It should also boost demand for local and regional industrial and craft products. It should therefore involve local populations in its economic benefits and preserve regional economic autonomy.
3. It is impossible to replace mass tourism with green tourism, whatever the marketing efforts of the industry may claim. The EU and United Nations must ensure maximum transparency regarding information and lay down rules on the supply of luxury, environmental and green tourism which will prevent the major tour operators from using the few virgin or preindustrial areas of nature which remain as a new seam to be mined for uncontrolled tourist activities.
4. There is a need for regulation at world and EU level on minimum environmental standards to be met by tourism plans and projects before they are allowed to go ahead. These should be scrupulously observed if they are to receive financing and subsidies to expand tourism from Brussels (e.g. under Objectives A and B or programme 5b), from the IMF or from the World Bank. It is also vital to ensure that tourism policy has a coherent administration. In addition, it is essential that a type of environmental impact assessment should be devised which is mandatory and carried out by experts who are independent (i.e. not paid by the promoters).
5. Among the principal environmental factors to be taken into account must be the following:
  - a. whether or not a network of protected landscapes and ecosystems exists in the area and the impact thereof, including the natural conservation of beaches;
  - b. compatibility with the local landscape, including materials, distinctive features and technologies;
  - c. the degree of protection for flora and fauna, including the marine environment, especially local and rare species;
  - d. the use of clean energy, and energy saving and efficiency techniques;
  - e. the existence of strategic medium-term water resources and the compulsory introduction of savings and efficiency techniques and local programmes for the purification and tertiary re-use of waste water;

- f. the amount of waste generated, together with the existence in the area of reduction, re-use and recycling programmes;
- g. whether or not a local or regional public transport network exists which would minimize the environmental impact of tourist development.

6. Legislation on sustainable tourism must take into account the hidden environmental costs, i.e. the 'carrying capacity' of an area: the increase in energy consumption and the effect thereof on climatic change (air and land transport, use of fossil fuels), desertification, the disappearance of local agriculture and stockfarming in favour of non-native residential colonies, the use of protected parks and areas as a mere tourist resource, etc. Thus, legislation on sustainable tourism must promote the use - adapted to the circumstances of each region - of conservationist methods of managing protected areas, regional democracy and the practical evaluation of environmental costs, such as:

- the creation of a basic framework for the management of protected natural areas and reserves, geared to the conservation of these areas and species, which will prevent their 'touristization' and deterioration. This management must involve environmental and citizens' organizations in addition to governments;
- a requirement for medium-term regional and local sustainable development plans, with the participation not only of governments, the tourism industry and property developers but also of environmental and citizens' organisations. These advance indicative plans should prohibit the creation of unsustainable supplementary facilities in the Mediterranean basin, such as golf courses, residential and tourist swimming pools, tourist developments isolated from local populations and a growth in the number of marinas in environmental risk areas. The priority should be an urgent transformation of the industry in an environmentally-compatible direction;
- the introduction at different levels, on the basis of social consensus, of a system of ecotaxes designed to finance the environmental transformation of the industry and prevent an exploitative form of expansion by the industry at the expense of the future of the region. Proposals such as that of the WWF for each tourist to pay one dollar, which would be used for environmental transformation and the conservation of biodiversity in the Mediterranean basin are good examples. In addition, the prices of resources such as water, energy and waste management should discriminate positively in favour of sustainable consumption by local people as against seasonal and residential consumption by tourists;
- the introduction of basic rules for responsible hotel management, to include measures and incentives to promote environmentally sustainable consumption and compatibility with the local landscape.

7. Planning for the tourist industry in the Mediterranean should include the enhancement of local human resources and protection of the latter in the face of mass tourism. To this end, the EU, the IMF and the World Bank should not subsidize or promote measures to expand tourism which ignore or act as an obstacle to:

- a. the preservation and the future of local cultures and languages, which are threatened by the momentum of uncontrolled urbanization and tourism on the pretext of a purely imperialist 'cosmopolitanism' and 'modernity';
- b. the survival of the Mediterranean rural world as a future activity, thereby giving rise to a subsidised class of 'landscape gardeners' and a Los Angeles style urban sprawl with no links to the local population, which acts as a powerful lobby for destructive infrastructure: motorways, increased and unsustainable consumption of energy and water, etc;
- c. the encouragement and enhancement of local employment. There has to be a code on the rights of workers in the industry based on the right to collective bargaining, decent wages and working hours and vocational training. In addition, the environmental reform and regional reorientation of tourism should be ensured via cooperation projects between tourism, agriculture and industry: tourism must guarantee a market (quality local food products, environmental conversion, crafts,

etc.) for these industries, which will disappear if attention is paid only to short-term financial viability;

d. public access to coastal and tourist areas in general.

8. The EU, the World Bank and the IMF must implement an information network on tourism, open to NGOs and promote periodic studies into the global consequences of tourist development in the Mediterranean, research into common environmental and social indicators and the transfer of responsible tourist technologies. The EU should devise a Mediterranean action plan to impose consistency on the chaotic and sometimes corrupt use of the Cohesion Fund and the ERDF. The United Nations should update its Mediterranean action plan and make funding for international organizations in the south of the Mediterranean basin conditional upon the existence of regional and local human development plans which take account of the factors referred to here. In all cases, the experience and technological know-how of the areas which have suffered most tourist development and deterioration should be made available to the authorities, local people and NGOs.

9. The future of tourism in the Mediterranean depends to a large extent on the promotion of a truthful information policy in the principal markets from which tourists come (Germany, the United Kingdom, France, etc.) and the appearance of a European tax policy which deters speculators from laundering money of dubious origin in the tourist industry and related facilities (golf courses, marinas, satellite developments, etc.). Institutional and private tourist developments should be regulated by the European Parliament and it should be possible to bring actions before the courts for fraud in connection with such developments. In addition, an effective European tax policy would make it possible to expose and penalize bogus companies and speculators.

10. The EU should implement, as part of its external and cooperation policies, in fora such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM), a plan to support tourism in the southern Mediterranean, based on respect for human rights and local cultures and languages, making consumption as environmentally sustainable as possible and promoting human development. It should also offer access to information networks (including tax information) to this part of the Mediterranean so as to prevent mass tourism from repeating the enormous errors perpetrated on the northern coast. The EU should adopt legislation which regards alleged environmental and social crimes committed by European companies and individuals in the southern Mediterranean and other expanding mass tourism destinations (the Caribbean, the Indian and Pacific Oceans, etc.) as crimes for which those responsible can be put on trial in their country of origin. This would prevent the continued impunity of speculation in countries where there is no political freedom or respect for human rights.

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