

GREECE WELCOMES UNWTO SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM GROWTH

Madrid, 18 February 2020 - *The Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) paid a high-level visit to Greece to meet with the Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism and offer the United Nations' specialized agency's support as the country works to grow and diversify its tourism sector.*

Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili was in Athens for high-level talks with political leaders, as well as high-level representatives from across the private sector. The discussions focused on the key issues of harnessing tourism as a driver of education and opportunities for all, encouraging entrepreneurship and promoting tourism investment.

Mr Pololikashvili said: "Greece is one of the world's true tourism leaders. They also chair the UNWTO Regional Commission for Europe, highlighting the country's commitment to international cooperation and to sustainable and responsible tourism." Looking forward to returning to Greece in the very near future, he added: "I am delighted to be further strengthening our partnership and look forward to working more closely with Greece to make sure as many people as possible, including rural and coastal communities, are able to enjoy the many benefits tourism can bring."

Greece Committed to Working with UNWTO

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis welcomed UNWTO's visit and support of the national tourism sector and showed a sincere interest for prospects of the cooperation with the Greek tourism sector. At the same time, Minister of Tourism for Greece Harry Theocharis expressed his thanks to the UNWTO for the official visit and welcomed its readiness to work alongside Greece in promoting year-round tourism and digital transformation.

He added: "Working with UNWTO gives Greece the chance to learn from the lessons of other countries, share positive experiences and build useful partnerships in the areas of education, innovation and sustainable development."

European context

UNWTO welcomed Greece's commitment to sustainable tourism development, making the case for tourism as pillar of stability in uncertain times.

The visit of UNWTO to Greece comes as UNWTO assumes leadership of the global tourism sector's response to the climate challenge. Later this week, Secretary-General Pololikashvili will address the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN). The intervention in Brussels will be made against the backdrop of the first meeting of the Tourism Task Force, with its Members to discuss the place of tourism in the European Green Deal, including both the opportunities and challenges.