

UNWTO launches its first Online Education Committee

The First meeting of the Online Education Committee took place today, online, with the presence of high-level representatives from the public and private sector, with the objective to make education a key pillar for tourism's recovery.

As online education and access to digital skills is becoming remarkably necessary for the population, the Online Education Committee was created in the framework of the 112th session of the Executive Council held in Georgia in September 2020. The main objective is to provide the Secretary General and the Executive Council with advice and recommendations on education matters, as one of UNWTO's fundamental priorities. UNWTO Secretary-General, Zurab Pololikashvili said: "Investing in the tourism workers of today and tomorrow is more relevant than ever. Online tourism education can unlock opportunities for many, especially for those that otherwise will be left behind"

The members of the Committee comprises the following Member States : Portugal and Greece as Members from Europe; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as representant from the Middle East; Chile and Brazil from the Americas, Kenya and the Kingdom of Morocco from the African continent, Iran from the Commission of South Asia and Korea from the Commission of East Asia and the Pacific.

In addition, the Government of Andorra was the Member State proposed to participate as observer of the Committee.

From the private sector, the Committee counts on the valuable participation of international recognized educational entities such as IE University, Bella Vista Institute of Higher Education Switzerland, CETT- University of Barcelona, Sommet Education, Les Roches Marbella and École Ducasse. Highly reputed International Experts as Megan Epler Wood, CEO of Epler Wood International, Barbara Oakley from Oakland University and Joan Gaspart president of HUSA had also an important role on this session.

In this first meeting, the election of the Chair and Vice-chair of the Online Education Committee was one of the remarkable items of the agenda. Once the online voting procedure came to an end, Mohammed Alghamdi, Human Capital Development Advisor for the Ministry of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Ana Paula País, Director of Training of Turismo de Portugal were finally elected Co-Chairs of the Online Education Committee after receiving the same number of votes.

“Tourism recovery will start with us. We’ll empower Online Education to give opportunities to people who want to create professional-quality careers in tourism” affirmed Natalia Bayona, Director of Innovation, Education and Investments of UNWTO .

The second meeting of the Online Education Committee will be held in Madrid in the framework of the 113th session of the Executive Council 17th January 2021