UNWTO and Greece to Collaborate on Maritime Tourism Research Centre

4 June 2021, Athens – *UNWTO is to collaborate with the Greek Ministry of Tourism in establishing a first research station dedicated to measuring the sustainable development of coastal and maritime tourism across the Mediterranean.*

The new monitoring centre will be based at the University of the Aegean in Greece. From here, experts will **capture and collate measurement data and analysis** relating to the environmental, economic, and social impact of tourism.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "Coastal and Maritime tourism is one of the most important economic drivers within the Mediterranean basin. This new research centre can provide key data to guide the restart and future development of the sector, ensuring it fulfils its potential to provide opportunity for coastal communities and to protect and celebrate natural and cultural heritage."

The United Nations specialized agency and the Ministry of Tourism confirmed their collaboration on the initiative during the **UNWTO High-Level Conference on Coastal and Maritime Tourism**, held in Athens and co-hosted by Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) and Celebrity Cruises.

The Tourism Minister of Greece Harry Theoharis said: "I express my immense gratitude for UNWTO's support in this endeavour. The Research Center will soon become a reference point for the study and protection of our coasts and seas."

Pierfrancesco Vago, Global Chairman of CLIA and Executive Chairman of MSC Cruises added: "CLIA is pleased to support the UNWTO research and monitoring centre on sustainability and coastal maritime tourism in the Mediterranean. As part of the cruise industry's commitment to responsible travel, we are pursuing carbon neutral cruising in Europe by 2050, and we work closely with cruise destinations and coastal communities to support economic growth in a sustainable manner."

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