

City Leaders From Around the World Meet to Re-Imagine Urban Tourism

Porto, Portugal, 9 July 2021 - *The mayors of some of the world's leading destinations have met in Porto to rethink urban tourism in the post-pandemic age. Organized by UNWTO, the Government of Portugal, Turismo de Portugal and the City of Porto, the Mayors Forum on Tourism and the Future of Cities highlighted the opportunity to restart urban tourism with a focus on sustainability, innovation and inclusion.*

Formed in April 2019, the Mayors Forum provides a unique platform for cities and other key players to share tourism policies and best practices. The international forum works to advance tourism's role in the urban agenda and harness the potential of the sector to provide economic opportunity and promote cultural links. The Porto meeting was embraced as a chance to rethink urban tourism and keep delivering on its proven potential to benefit both residents and tourists.

Return of tourists 'brings hope for cities'

Urban tourism has been among the hardest hit parts of the sector and may be the last to recover. For this reason, "the return of tourists to cities around the world will bring more than just jobs and economic recovery", said UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili. "It will bring hope, confidence and help revive what makes urban life so exciting, from culture to gastronomy to entrepreneurship and new ideas." In this context, the Secretary-General also commended Portugal's National Support Plan for Tourism recovery as well as its recently launched Sustainability + Strategy.

Pedro Siza Vieira, Minister of State, Economy and Digital Transition of Portugal said: "Now is the time to reflect on how important management of flows of tourists is in our cities. Digital technologies and continued investments in new attractions will allow us to provide a better experience for the millions of people who are eager to resume travel and who will come to visit our cities in the future."

As host of the Forum, the Mayor of Porto Rui Moreira said: "Cities must know how to transform themselves, turning the old into new, rehabilitating and promoting their heritage, material and immaterial, and simultaneously creating new poles of interest to serve and welcome residents and visitors."

Organized by UNWTO, the Government of Portugal, Turismo de Portugal and the City of Porto the Forum welcomed mayors and vice-mayors from Athens, Belgrade, Braga, Bruges, Brussels, Budapest, Dubrovnik, Florence, Madrid, Moscow, Podgorica, Prague, Samarkand, Sao Vicente, Skiathos, Tirana and Venice. Joining them were leaders from UN Habitat, the European Committee of the Regions and the Unión Ciudades Capitales Iberoamericanas (UCCI), as well as representatives from key private sector stakeholders, including Expedia Group, the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) and Airbnb.

Porto Declaration on Future of Cities

Participants adopted the Porto Declaration on Tourism and the Future of Cities, which reaffirms cities' commitment to growing tourism sustainably and responsibly. This includes placing tourism on the urban recovery agenda, with policies aligned with the United Nations New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Declaration also states that signatory cities will promote multi-stakeholder cooperation for fostering innovation and using digitalization and big data to enhance both the tourist experience and the sector's positive impact on residents. Furthermore, the Declaration recognizes the importance of cities building bridges with rural areas so that the benefits of tourism are employed more widely.

Related Links:

[Porto Declaration: Tourism and the Future of Cities](#)