

Information Note 1

1. Place and dates of the meetings

Further to the Note Verbal sent on 22 October 2021 to the Members of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) will hold its twenty-fourth session from November 30 to 3 December in Madrid, Spain, at the hotel [Madrid Marriott Auditorium Hotel and Convention Center](#).

2. Contact details of the Organizing Committee

UNWTO coordinators	Host-country coordinators
<p>Ms. Zhanna Yakovleva Chief of Cabinet Office of the Secretary-General Tel.: +34 91 567 8100 E-mail: cose@unwto.org</p>	<p>Mr. Javier Fernández González Deputy Director General of Cooperation and Tourism Competitiveness State Secretariat for Tourism Tel.: +34 91 732 6456 E-mail: asambleaOMTmadrid@mincotur.es</p>
<p>Ms. Yolanda Sansegundo Conference Services Tel.: +34 91 567 8188 E-mail: ysansegundo@unwto.org assembly@unwto.org</p>	<p>Ms. Teresa Gancedo Nieto Chief, International Relations Area State Secretariat for Tourism Tel.: +34 91 732 6503 E-mail: mtgancedo@mincotur.es asambleaOMTmadrid@mincotur.es</p>

3. 43rd UNWTO Affiliate Members Plenary Session

The 43rd UNWTO Affiliate Members Plenary Session will take place on 30 November in Madrid as the first official activity of the General Assembly. The Plenary Session is the most important governing structure of the Affiliate Members and offers them an ideal setting to share initiatives and debate on the annual Programme of Work.

This year, the Affiliate Members Plenary Session will be held in the framework of the General Assembly, which provides the Affiliate Members with the opportunity to participate in the sessions of the General Assembly and other relevant events and activities, contribute to the UNWTO Programme of Work along with the Member States, hold bilateral meetings with high-level public sector representatives in order to discuss public-private cooperation issues, and be updated on the UNWTO's overall activity.

On this occasion, the agenda of the Affiliate Members Plenary Session will focus on the following priority topics:

- Joint Affiliate Member actions for tourism recovery;
- Review of the Programme of Work 2021 and proposals for the Programme of Work for 2022-2023; and
- Approval of the revised Legal Framework of Affiliate Membership.

In addition, the 43rd Plenary Session will take place prior to the election of the new Board of the Affiliate Members. Therefore, the Affiliate Members who will be presenting their candidatures will have an ideal opportunity to network and promote their candidatures a few days before the voting phase.

For further information, please contact the Affiliate Members Department: am@unwto.org

4. Thematic Session on “Building for the Future: Innovation, Education and Rural Development”

On 2 December, the Thematic Session on “Building for the Future: Innovation, Education and Rural Development” will focus on how to harness the contribution of digitalization, MSMEs, education and policy to drive inclusive recovery through tourism and leave no one behind.

- (I) **Launch of the UNWTO Digital Futures Programme for SMEs** created to accelerate economic recovery of the tourism sector by supporting Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Travel Tech and Mobility Startups to unleash digital technologies to create jobs and enhance future resilience in the linkages of the tourism value chain post COVID-19. The goal of the Programme is to digitalize 20 million SMEs by 2024.
- (II) **Restarting tourism through Innovation & Education for future generations:** This session will focus on how innovation can foster inclusion and support destinations resiliency and competitiveness and will include case studies presenting the 4 winning startups from the UNWTO Global Rural Tourism Startup Competition and 4 UNWTO Member States sharing insights on the impact of entrepreneurship on rural communities, offering insights and inspiration to stakeholders and destinations.
- (III) **2021 Global UNWTO Students' League:** This session will showcase how youth and the future tourism leaders of our sector are a powerful asset when creating sustainable solutions to build back better, as well give the audience an inspiring insight into their thoughts, through a debate with Ministers about the tourism, its future and their future within it. To get to this session, the winning Students of the 2021 Global UNWTO Students' League—from ages 11 to 29—have previously competed in the League to give their best sustainable ideas on how to address the Challenges set for this year: ‘Rural Development through Tourism’ and ‘Plastics Pollution’.
- (IV) **Policies to Foster Tourism for Rural Development:** This Ministerial session will focus on how to develop effective policies for rural development through tourism including whole of government approach, financing, national/local policy coordination and public-private partnerships.
- (V) **Official Announcement Ceremony of the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO:** villages recognized as “Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO” in the first edition of the initiative (pilot) will be announced.

For any enquiries about the session, please contact: Addaia Arizmendi aarizmendi@unwto.org

5. UNWTO Tourism Video Competition

The 24th session of the General Assembly will feature the [5th edition of the UNWTO Tourism Video Competition](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic has proven the relevance of multimedia communications within the new reality. The ongoing shift towards digitalization, changing viewer and user habits and the consolidation of mobile-first strategies have all accelerated since the pandemic broke. In addition, destinations around the world are preparing to restart tourism committed to seizing tourism’s unmatched contribution to people and planet.

The competition will feature two categories:

- Exceptional Stories of Tourism Resilience: This category looks for remarkable examples which showcase the importance of the human aspect of tourism as a sector and with a positive social impact that generates optimism and opportunities for all.
- Tourism Promotion and the Decade of Action. This category looks for remarkable examples of how Member Countries are linking their promotional videos either directly or indirectly to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through references to one or several of the 17 Global Goals.

One winning video will be chosen per region for both categories. This is an opportunity to position tourism as a key recovery sector to grow back better, stronger and building resilience.

Member States are encouraged to submit videos for both categories. Affiliate Members are encouraged to submit videos for the “Exceptional Stories of Sustainable Tourism” category.

The winners of the 5th edition of the UNWTO Tourism Video Competition will be announced during the 24th session of the General Assembly.

6. Official website

All official documents will be made available on the UNWTO website: www.unwto.org/event/general-assembly-twenty-fourth-session

The website of the event will provide detailed information on the host country, meeting venues, side and special events, technical visits, social programmes, transport, accommodation and tours.

7. Online registration and accreditation badges

Registration for the Assembly session will be carried out online until Monday, 22 November 2021. The participation form is available on the website: www.unwto.org/event/general-assembly-twenty-fourth-session

The online registration platform will be collecting all necessary information regarding the participation in the conference, visa information and technical visits.

Accreditation badges are issued to specific individuals and are not transferable. Participants should keep their badge and ID with them at all times during their stay in Madrid. The badge is the only document confirming a participant’s General Assembly accreditation that can be used to gain access to the venues of the different events.

Participants can collect their accreditation badges at the registration desk located in the Hotel Marriott Auditorium (venue of the event).

The registration desk will be open on the following days:

- Monday, 29 November: 10:00 a 19:00
- Tuesday, 30 November: 08:00 a 19:00
- Wednesday, 1 December: 08:00 a 19:00
- Thursday, 2 December: 08:00 a 19:00
- Friday, 3 December: 09:00 a 14:00

8. Access to the meetings

In light of the currently evolving situation of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related worldwide restrictions of gatherings, the access to the venue of the session is limited to the Head of Delegation plus 2 persons.

9. Submission of credentials and identification papers

The names of the delegates of Full Members and Associate Members, of the observers of Affiliate Members and of the invited representatives of the United Nations and other international organizations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, shall be communicated to the Secretary-General, if possible, at least fifteen days before the session of the Assembly opens. (Rule 12(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly)

The credentials of the delegates of Full Members and Associate Members, issued by the competent authority of the State, shall be handed to the Secretary-General, if possible, at least one day before the session of the Assembly opens. (Rule 12(2) of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly)

It should be pointed out that, ever since the tenth session of the Assembly, only formal letters or faxes bearing the signature of the competent authority are considered valid credentials. Please note that since the twelfth session of the General Assembly, only credentials from Heads of State or Prime Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs or Ministers responsible for tourism of the respective State or his/her equivalent are regarded as valid. Further, credentials can be accepted only if written in any of the working languages of the General Assembly or if an appropriate translation is attached. Please refer to the model credential letter (Annex 1).

Identification papers of the observers of Affiliate Members and invited representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental international organizations to attend as observers shall be handed to the Secretary-General, if possible, at least one day before the session of the Assembly opens. (Rule 12(3) of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly)

To facilitate the work of the Credentials Committee, delegations are kindly requested to submit a scanned copy of their credentials at least fifteen days in advance by e-mail to Ms. Shirin El Tayan (Protocol Officer) at seltayan@unwto.org, and to submit the original upon their arrival in Madrid prior to collecting their identification badges.

10. Procedure for proxies

If a Full Member is unable to participate in the General Assembly, it can be exceptionally represented by a member of another State's delegation, provided it submits a formal letter or fax signed by the competent authority designating the individual who will represent it and, if applicable, giving him/her the power to vote on its behalf. Please note that, unless the items for which the power to vote is given are clearly specified, it will be understood that the delegate has full powers to cast a vote on behalf of the government he/she is representing by proxy on any agenda item.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the General Assembly, at its twentieth session, adopted resolution 633(XX), which stipulates the following regarding mandates for representation:

- (a) A mandate for representation can be given only in exceptional circumstances, duly explained in writing by the State giving the mandate;
- (b) The Credentials Committee will assess the validity of these explanations;
- (c) Only one mandate for representation may be given to a delegate representing another State;
- (d) A mandate for representation may not be given to the Head of Delegation of another State; and
- (e) The mandate for representation is valid for the whole session of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly, at its twenty-first session in Medellín, Colombia, in 2015 (resolution 649(XXI)) decided the following:

- (a) The Credentials Committee will consider as invalid credentials in breach of the principle of secrecy of the vote;
- (b) Once the Report of the Credentials Committee is issued, no further credentials or proxy letters will be considered by the Committee except:
- When the Committee itself has invited the Full or Associate Member concerned to regularize its credentials or its proxy; and
 - When a State whose credentials have been accepted by the Committee does not have a representative for the remaining part of the session for reasons duly explained in writing by the State giving the mandate; in such case, the Committee will assess the existence of the exceptional circumstances justifying the proxy;
- (c) The Chairs of the Regional Commissions will verify that the credentials and proxy letters comply with the applicable rules.

Please refer to the model of credentials for representation (proxy format) in Annex 2.

11. Seating arrangements

Delegations will be seated in the plenary meetings in English alphabetical order, beginning with the Member that is hosting the session of the General Assembly.

12. Media

Spain-based media wishing to cover the General Assembly session should contact prensa@mincotur.es by e-mail.

International media wishing to cover the General Assembly meeting should contact the UNWTO Communication Department, at: comm@unwto.org.

13. Entry formalities

The Government of Spain will facilitate visa processing for delegates attending the 24th session of the General Assembly, upon presentation of the letter of invitation to the Assembly at the corresponding Spanish Embassy, in accordance with Spanish regulations.

Pursuant to European Union regulations, visas on arrival cannot be provided under any circumstances. Participants are kindly requested to make the necessary arrangements to process their visa in advance. For more information on visas, participants should contact the Spanish Embassy or Consulate responsible for their territory of residence.

The list of diplomatic and consular missions of Spain and their areas of responsibility can be consulted at the following link:

www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/ServiciosAlCiudadano/Paginas/EmbajadasConsulados.aspx

The list of countries whose nationals require a visa or are exempt from this requirement can be consulted at the following link:

www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/ServiciosAlCiudadano/InformacionParaExtranjeros/Documentos/listapaisesvisado.pdf

For any visa inquiries, participants can contact:

Ms. Shirin El Tayan, UNWTO Protocol Officer, e-mail: seltayan@unwto.org

14. Conditions of entry to Spain relative to health measures

The requirements for entry to Spain, according to country of origin, can be found at the following link: <https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov/spth.htm>

15. Status of participants

Spain will make the necessary arrangements to facilitate the arrival, stay and departure of all the participants invited by the Organization. During their stay, the participants will enjoy the privileges and immunities conferred to delegates at events of the UNWTO in Spain, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations.

16. Discounts on flights

IBERIA Airlines is offering exclusive discounts of 10% for participants of the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly travelling to Spain between 23 November and 10 December 2021. The discount is also applied if requested upon booking, seat reservation and check-in.

To book their flights, participants can visit the website: www.iberia.com and enter the code UNWTO21.



17. Transfers

Local transportation of delegation members will be provided between the hotels and the meeting venue.

18. Accommodation

The following hotels will offer special rates to delegates for a limited number of rooms.

Hotel Marriott Auditorium**** (meeting venue)

[Link for online booking with special rates](#)

Avenida de Aragón 400. 28022 Madrid

Tel.: +34 91 400 44 00

www.madridmarriottauditorium.com

Type of room	Tuesday 30/11/2021	Wednesday 01/12/2021	Thursday 02/12/2021
Premium Room			
Double room, single occupancy	130€	130€	130€
Double room	150€	150€	150€

10% VAT not included

Assisted buffet breakfast included

Hotel Meliá Castilla ****

Poeta Joan Maragall, 43. 28020 Madrid

Tel.: +34 91 567 50 77

<https://events.melia.com/en/events/melia-castilla/XXIV-UNWTO-General-Assembly.html>

Type of room	Tuesday 30/11/2021	Wednesday 01/12/2021	Thursday 02/12/2021
Room, single occupancy	125€	125€	125€
Room, double occupancy	140€	140€	140€

10% VAT included

Buffet breakfast included

Hotel Eurostars Madrid Tower*****

Paseo de la Castellana 259-B. 28046 Madrid.

Tel.: +34 91 334 27 00

reservations@eurostarsmadridtower.comsales@eurostarsmadridtower.com<https://www.eurostarsmadridtower.com/>

Type of room	Tuesday 30/11/2021	Wednesday 01/12/2021	Thursday 02/12/2021
Superior double room	150€	150€	150€

10% VAT included

Accommodation and breakfast included

Madrid Airport Suites Affiliated by Meliá***

C. de Lola Flores, 4-17, 28022 Madrid

Tel.: +34 913 29 70 50

Contact e-mail: asier.varela@melia.comPromo code: **MEL-UNWTO**

Type of room	Tuesday 30/11/2021	Wednesday 01/12/2021	Thursday 02/12/2021
Room, single occupancy	80€	80€	80€
Room, double occupancy	90€	90€	90€

10% VAT included

Accommodation and breakfast included

Hotel Madrid Chamartín Affiliated by Meliá***

Calle Mauricio Ravel, 10, 28046 Madrid

Tel.: +34 917 33 34 00

Contact e-mail: miriam.ramiro@melia.comPromo code: **MEL-UNWTO**

Type of room	Tuesday 30/11/2021	Wednesday 01/12/2021	Thursday 02/12/2021
Room, single occupancy	95€	95€	95€
Room, double occupancy	105€	105€	105€

10% VAT included

Accommodation and breakfast included

19. Climate neutrality

The UNWTO Secretariat is calculating its GHG emissions since 2009, and the Organization is climate-neutral since 2015 for its facilities and activities. The Secretary-General would like to

encourage all GA participants to apply to offset mechanisms, notably those proposed by transport companies.

20. Working languages

The documents for the Assembly session will be available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Simultaneous interpretation in these five languages plus Chinese will be provided at the plenary sessions.

21. Working documents

In compliance with the United Nations system's environmental protection policy, please note that no hard copies of the working documents will be distributed at the venue of the event. Delegates are kindly requested to bring with them copies of the documents they need. The documents will be posted at the following link: www.unwto.org/event/general-assembly-twenty-fourth-session. Delegates will also be notified by e-mail.

22. Assembly Daily

UN Tourism News – General Assembly Special Edition, is the official publication accompanying the UNWTO General Assembly, giving visibility to proceedings and key milestones.

Produced in English, it is featured prominently on www.unwto.org, it is also distributed electronically to Member States, Affiliate Members, partners and UNWTO's global media database.

Given its status as a global reporting vehicle on the Assembly, this publication remains as a fixed feature for future reference on the [UNWTO website](#).

Each of the four issues of the Daily will include a journalistic account of

- Key outcomes of the previous day's meetings;
- Main decisions reached;
- Meetings and events to be held during the day of publication and key items of discussion;
- Interviews and statements with delegates and experts;
- A selection of pictures after each day and
- Link to the official site with audio-visual material of the Assembly and its numerous side events and meetings.

This publication represents a key partnership opportunity for Member States, Affiliate Members, and other partners. It strengthens the overall outreach of UNWTO and allows partners to gain international visibility among key tourism stakeholders, the media and the general public.

UNWTO will be filming proceedings and sharing via social media channels and that by being part of the General Assembly, delegates automatically give their consent to this.

For enquiries, please contact comm@unwto.org

23. Practical information

Climate: In November and December, the average temperature in Madrid can range between 10°C during the day and 3°C at night. Winters in Madrid are cold and dry. However, completely clear days are very typical, so it is possible to enjoy sunny weather at midday.

Official language: Spanish

Madrid local time (winter): GMT +1

Local currency and exchange rates: The official currency of Spain is the euro (EUR). The applicable exchange rate in November 2021 is approximately USD 1.16 to EUR 1. Banks are open from Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Throughout Madrid there are foreign exchange offices that are clearly indicated. There is also a currency exchange service at hotels. The city has numerous ATMs, and shops accept major credit cards.

Electricity: The electric current in Madrid is 220 volts, 50 Hz AC. Outlets take round pins. In any case, most hotels have adapters for special plugs. Participants should ensure that their electrical devices (computers, mobile phone chargers, razors, etc.) work with this voltage or, if not, use transformers and batteries that allow different voltages.

Credit cards, shopping and tipping: There are ATMs throughout the city, and in the vast majority of establishments it will be possible to pay for goods and services with a credit card (in the metro you can pay with a card, but not in the urban bus network).

Visa and Mastercard are the most widely accepted types of card, while American Express and Diners are less commonly accepted. Information regarding possible commissions for using credit cards in Spain should be consulted with the issuing bank, because transaction fees will depend on the entity managing the corresponding bank account.

Almost all establishments accept card payments, although some require a minimum charge (between 5 and 10 euros). Also, before getting into a taxi when not carrying cash, the driver should be asked if the taxi is equipped with a card payment terminal. There are different applications such as Free Now through which it is possible to request a taxi and pay with a card using it.

The concept of tipping in Madrid is directly related to customer satisfaction regarding the treatment received. Tipping continues to be considered in its original meaning as being “voluntary” and at the discretion of the consumer, at least among the national clientele, and the personnel of the service sector are well aware that nothing is taken for granted.

In some restaurants it is customary to charge an additional 2 to 3 euros for serving bread or a small appetizer - which the establishment is obliged to disclose, and can be rejected if not desired - but, in general, what the customer decides is respected when it comes to expressing appreciation for the friendliness and quality of the service in the final bill.

This custom extends to other tourism services in which there is some type of personal treatment, such as hotels, taxis, beauty salons or hairdressers.

It should be noted that all establishments include the price of the service, but in hotels and restaurants it is common to see “VAT not included” on the menu. This means that a 10% surcharge will be added to the price of what was consumed.

Health regulations and precautions: It is not necessary to be vaccinated against any disease in order to travel to Spain.

COVID-19 situation: See updated information at: <https://cnecovid.isciii.es/covid19/>
If you need a PCR test for your return flight, ask at the reception of the Convention Center of the Madrid Marriott Auditorium hotel. They will inform you about the location of the mobile laboratory and its opening hours during the days of the Assembly.

Medical services: Madrid has a good network of health centres (primary care services) and hospitals.

Reference hospital:
Hospital Universitario La Paz
P.º de la Castellana, 261, 28046 Madrid
Emergency services: 24 hours
Tel.: +34 917 27 70 00

Reference hospital near the Hotel Madrid Marriott Auditorium (Event venue):
Hospital del Henares
Av. De Marie Curie, 0, 28822 Coslada, Madrid
Emergency services: 24 hours
Tel.: +34 911 91 20 00

Useful telephone numbers:

Emergency: 112
Police: 091 or 112
Ambulance: 112
Fire: 112

Callers can request to speak in English, German, French or Spanish.

In the event of any emergency during the days of the General Assembly, you can also contact the UNWTO Security Officer: Mr. Antonio García. Tel.: +34 699976040.

Local transport rates: The fare for the taxi ride between the airport and the city ranges between 20 and 30 euros. The price of a single local bus ticket ranges from €1.50 to €2 and tickets for 10 trips can be purchased for €12.20.

24. Tourism information

In Spain

Tourism information for Spain: www.spain.info/es/

In Madrid

Tourism in the Community of Madrid: www.turismomadrid.es/es/

Tourism in the city of Madrid: www.esmadrid.com/

Annex 1: Model credentials letter¹

Standard format letter

Official letter-headed paper²

Credentials

I, the undersigned, (name and full title of the competent authority³), hereby attest that the Government of (name of country) has authorized the following delegation to represent it at the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization, to be held from 30 November to 3 December 2021, in Madrid, Spain:

Head of Delegation: (name and full title)

Alternate Head of Delegation: *(name and full title)*

Members of Delegation: *(names and full titles)*

Done at *(name of city)*, on *(date)*

Name, full title and signature

¹ Only formal letters or faxes bearing the signature of the competent authority are considered valid credentials. Further, credentials can be accepted only if written in any of the working languages of the General Assembly or if an appropriate translation is attached.

² Including official logo of the Government, Ministry or Embassy.

³ Pursuant to resolution 591(XIX), only credentials issued and signed by Heads of State or Prime Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs or Ministers responsible for tourism of the respective State or his/her equivalent, as well as Ambassadors of States accredited to Spain, will be regarded as valid. Please also note that in accordance with resolution 649 (XXI), the Credentials Committee will consider as invalid credentials or proxies in breach of the principle of secrecy of the vote.

Annex 2: Model credentials letter for representation (proxy format)¹

Standard format letter²*Official letter-headed paper³***Credentials (for representation-proxy format)**

I, the undersigned, (name and full title of the competent authority⁴), will be unable to attend the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization, to be held from 30 November to 3 December 2021, in Madrid, Spain, for the following reasons⁵:
 Therefore, I hereby authorize (name and full title of delegate⁶) of the delegation of (name of Full Member) to represent and to cast a vote⁷ on behalf of the Government of (name of Full Member) at the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization:

Done at (*name of city*), on (*date*)

Name, full title and signature

¹ If a Full Member is unable to participate in the General Assembly, it can be represented exceptionally by a member of another State's delegation, provided it submits a formal letter or fax signed by the competent authority designating the individual who will represent the State and, if applicable, giving him/her the power to vote on its behalf.

² Only formal letters or faxes bearing the signature of the competent authority are considered valid credentials. Further, credentials can be accepted only if written in any of the working languages of the General Assembly or if an appropriate translation is attached.

³ Including official logo of the Government, Ministry or Embassy.

⁴ Pursuant to resolution 591(XIX), only credentials issued and signed by Heads of State or Prime Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs or Ministers responsible for tourism of the respective State or his/her equivalent, as well as Ambassadors of States accredited to Spain, will be regarded as valid.

⁵ In accordance with resolution 633(XX), (a) a mandate for representation can be given only in exceptional circumstances, duly explained in writing by the State giving the mandate, and (b) the Credentials Committee will assess the validity of these explanations.

⁶ In accordance with resolution 633(XX), (c) only one mandate for representation may be given to a delegate representing another State, and (d) a mandate for representation may not be given to the Head of Delegation of another State.

⁷ Please note that, unless the items for which the power to vote is given are clearly specified, it will be understood that the delegate has full powers to cast a vote on behalf of the Government he/she is representing by proxy on any agenda item. Please also note that in accordance with resolution 649 (XXI), the Credentials Committee will consider as invalid credentials or proxies in breach of the principle of secrecy of the vote.