



6TH UNWTO WORLD FORUM ON GASTRONOMY TOURISM

CONCLUSIONS - FLANDERS'S CALL TO ACTION ON GASTRONOMY TOURISM AS A DRIVER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The development of gastronomy tourism represents valuable opportunities in rural areas to build inclusive economies as it can boost local businesses, social and economic integration, personal fulfilment, and social development.

Gastronomy tourism adds vitality to rural communities, connected via marketplaces, festivals, stories, recipes and memories. It supports small, local food producers and strengthens their position in the market contributing to add value to the tourism experience while promoting the preservation and development of local produce, culinary traditions and know how.

The 6th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism in Bruges, Flanders, Belgium focused on the role of Gastronomy Tourism in Promoting Rural Tourism and Regional Development, closely aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Topics related to the role of gastronomy tourism in enhancing the image of a destination, empowering local community, as well as strategies that can be used by farmers and small scale rural food producers in using their culinary heritage to promote tourism and thereby make a positive economic contribution at the local and regional level will were discussed throughout the event.

Ensuring that gastronomy tourism can indeed be a driver of rural development the following actions are to be considered:

1. STRENGTHEN THE POLICY COORDINATION

between tourism, agricultural and rural development policies at global, national, and local levels.

2. INCLUDE GASTRONOMY TOURISM AS PART OF TOURISM RECOVERY STRATEGIES

to support jobs and inclusive economies in view of its multipliers effects.

3. PROMOTE GASTRONOMY TOURISM

as a tool to effectively spread tourist flows over time and space towards rural areas and therefore contribute to their development and the reduction of pressure on destinations with high concentration of demand.

4. **PROMOTE GASTRONOMY TOURISM STRATEGIES**

and practices that ensure the sustainable use of resources, the valorisation of local products and know-how and responsible consumption.

5. **UNDERPIN THE CULTURAL IDENTITY OF DESTINATIONS**

by promoting gastronomy, local produce and knowledge and its full integration in the tourism value chain and its promotion as a pillar of tourism and socio-economic development.

Together with this infrastructure network, it is essential to also facilitate the possibility for tourists to have appropriate and economically accessible accommodation in real terms.

6. **ADVANCE INITIATIVES THAT PROMOTE INNOVATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

for gastronomy and tourism linkages in rural areas creating conditions for investment, the attraction and retention of talent and the links between rural and urban areas..

7. **INCENTIVIZE THE DIGITIZATION OF GASTRONOMY TOURISM**

in rural areas to promote market reach and impact and increase the economic impact of tourism in these destinations.

8. **SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF AFRICAN GASTRONOMY**

as a key asset to enhance the image of Africa and create value and jobs in the tourism sector as a means of socio-economic development of the continent.

Bruges, Flanders, Belgium, 2 November 2021

