UNWTO and WHO to Build Coalition of Health and Tourism Partners

Madrid, Spain, 17 June 2022 - UNWTO will work with the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) to strengthen ties between tourism and public health in Europe's smallest states.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of building more sustainability and resilience into both economies and public health systems. Recognizing the need to learn from the lessons of the crisis, the two UN agencies will further develop their collaboration and strengthen cooperation. In the eighth high-level meeting of the WHO/Europe Small Countries Initiative (SCI), held in Bečići, Montenegro, UNWTO set out the case for promoting health and sustainable tourism in small countries, including the 11 European countries with fewer than 2 million people.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili told the meeting: “COVID-19 showed that any crisis that threatens the health, safety and security of people, communities and the environment is also a risk to tourism itself. I am confident that strong cooperation at all levels will place health high on the tourism agenda. It will make for healthy tourists, healthy communities, a healthy environment, and healthy economies for current and future generations.”

Montenegro Statement on health and tourism

Organized around the theme “Towards better health and well-being in small countries of the WHO European Region”, the ministerial event focused on two issues currently at the top of the agenda for small countries, namely emergencies (long-term prevention, health system preparedness, response and recovery) and developing healthy and sustainable tourism. On the occasion of the meeting, the “Roadmap towards better health in small countries in the WHO European Region 2022–2025” was presented and the “Montenegro Statement” was unanimously adopted.

The “Montenegro Statement” recognizes that health and tourism are deeply interconnected in the globalized world, and the reopening of travel and tourism is crucial for economic recovery, jobs and livelihoods in small countries. It highlights that cooperation and collaboration are required and welcomes and supports the creation of a coalition of partners on health and tourism, jointly coordinated by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the UNWTO to elaborate the evidence for policy measures and facilitate country dialogue.
Long-standing collaboration

UNWTO and WHO have kept regular coordination since the outbreak of the pandemic and WHO has participated in the Global Tourism Crisis Committee, created in March 2020 to guide the tourism sector and formulate a sector-wide response to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and restart tourism with data-driven decisions based on scientific evidence.

Related Links:

WHO Europe Small Countries Initiative