

## **UNWTO Delegation in Rome to Boost Partnerships with Italian Government**

***Rome, Italy, 31 March 2023** - The UNWTO Secretary-General, Zurab Pololikashvili, has concluded an official visit to Italy, strengthening key partnerships and advancing tourism for education, rural development and peace.*

During the three-day official visit to Italy and the Vatican City, the UNWTO delegation met with:

- Minister of Tourism of Italy, Daniela Garnero Santanchè
- Deputy Prime Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, Antonio Tajani
- Director-General of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Mr Qu Dongyu.
- Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See.

In a productive meeting with Minister of Tourism Daniela Garnero Santanchè and her Cabinet, the UNWTO leadership focused on the timely topic of tourism education and youth empowerment, recognized as a key priority for tourism. In July 2022, Italy hosted the first [UNWTO Global Youth Tourism Summit](#) in Sorrento, a flagship initiative aimed at making youth a part of the decision-making process for the sector. Building on this, the meeting explored more ways of collaborating around the theme of education, while also advancing joint work on other priorities designed to rethink and transform tourism, both in Italy and globally.

Minister Santanchè said: "We are ready to continue cooperating with the UNWTO in order to make the tourism industry stronger, more sustainable, innovative and inclusive. We want tourism to contribute more and more to the development of nations and to become a real vehicle for personal professional and social growth, in particular for the youth and women."

### **Close partnerships with Italy**

In a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Antonio Tajani, the UNWTO delegation commended Italy's commitment to enhancing tourism's status as a pillar of rural development. Sauris Zahre and Isola del Giglio are now

recognized as [UNWTO Best Tourism Villages](#) and Italy has also worked with UNWTO on promoting wine and gastronomy tourism for job creation, economic empowerment and the protection of heritage.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili says: "Italy is one of the world's top destinations. It's also a strong supporter of UNWTO's mission to make tourism matter: here, tourism is growing as a force for rural development, and, through a focus on education and training, as a force for youth empowerment."

Looking ahead, the Italian Government's representatives highlighted upcoming events and initiatives which may benefit from further collaboration with UNWTO. These include a new project on diaspora tourism, "Turismo delle Radici", the Jubilee Year 2025 in Rome, and the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milano-Cortina. UNWTO Secretary-General Pololikashvili expressed his full support for Italy's bid to host EXPO 2030 in Rome.

### **Tourism for rural development and peace**

Building on a [Memorandum of Understanding signed between both UN agencies](#) in September 2020, the UNWTO delegation also undertook an official visit to the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

FAO Director-General Mr Qu Dongyu recognized the importance of tourism and the two UN agencies identified several areas for deeper collaboration, including around the UNWTO Best Tourism Villages initiative and in developing capacity-building programmes to improve the tourism potential of FAO Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIHAS) sites and its Digital Villages pilots.

Also in Rome, UNWTO Secretary-General Pololikashvili met with Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See. The Holy See holds Observer status within UNWTO and Pope Francis has championed tourism as a bridging force for peace and understanding, particularly among global youth.

### **Related Links**

[UNWTO: Regional Department for Europe](#)

[Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO](#)

[UNWTO and FAO strengthen partnership as leaders meet in Rome](#)