

Albanian Prime Minister Welcomes UNWTO Leadership and Embraces Shared Goals

Tirana, Albania, 4 April 2023 – UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili has met with His Excellency Edi Rama, Prime Minister of Albania, to explore shared priorities for boosting tourism's role in economic development and social opportunity.

On his first official visit to Albania, Secretary-General Pololikashvili reaffirmed his vision for a tourism transformed around the priorities of jobs, education and investments, and met both Prime Minister Rama and from Minister of Tourism Mirela Kumbaro to explore common goals and potential areas of greater collaboration. In the area of investments, the two parties identified the possibility of producing a new set of Investment Guidelines for Albania with the aim of supporting tourism projects focused on sustainability.

Advancing a shared commitment to youth empowerment through tourism, Prime Minister Rama joined the Secretary-General in presenting certificates of participation to the Albanian delegation at the first UNWTO Global Youth Tourism Summit held last year. The With Mayor of Tirana Eeion Veliaj, the UNWTO leadership discussed the opportunities of innovation and smart tourism, against the backdrop of 'Tumo Piramide', one of the biggest startup hubs in the Balkans. The Secretary-General Pololikashvili confirmed UNWTO's interest in working with the Government and Albanian innovators to boost innovation across the wider region.

Tourism delivering for Albanian people

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili says: "I am extremely pleased to be in Albania and witness the Government embracing tourism as an economic and development driver to offer a brighter future for people in both cities and rural areas. UNWTO will continue to work closely with Albania to ensure the enormous potential is fully realized both here and across the wider region."

Secretary-General Pololikashvil also commended the Albanian Government for their strong support for the sector, both during and the pandemic and as tourism recovers. Albania enjoyed one of the strongest increases in international tourist arrivals in the region, outperforming all the European Union countries in 2022 with a 19% rise in visitors.

UNWTO to join Sustainability Forum

The high-level UNWTO delegation will also join tourism leaders from across the region for the Future of Environmental and Sustainable Tourism in Albania (FESTA, Tirana, 3-5 April). Themed “Harnessing the power of South Eastern Europe through regional cooperation in tourism”, UNWTO will emphasize the vital importance of jobs, education and investment to build a more sustainable and inclusive tourism sector.

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