UNWTO Unites South East Europe Tourism Ministers Around Shared Sustainability Goals

Tirana, Albania, 5 April 2023 - UNWTO celebrated the Future of Environmental Sustainable Tourism in Albania (FESTA), setting the foundations for unprecedented high-level collaboration among Tourism Ministers in the region (Tirana, 3-5 April).

Advancing UNWTO’s work on promoting collaboration across borders, Secretary-General Pololikashvili hosted the first ever meeting of Ministers of Tourism from South East Europe. Here, Ministers from eight countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) explored opportunities for greater cooperation on projects in the region. Participants agreed on plans to hold annual meetings of Ministers and State Secretaries to deliver better regional collaboration for tourism in the region.

Governance and cooperation

Organized by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of the Republic of Albania in partnership with UNWTO, the three-day forum brought together public and private sector leaders to focus on the challenges and opportunities of sustainable travel. Opening the Forum, UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili underscored the great progress that tourism has made in becoming more sustainable, while stressing that much more needs to be done: “We must first focus on two priorities, namely people and investments, because without the right people or the proper investments, our plans for a transformed tourism will not get off the ground.”

Further emphasising this policy priority, UNWTO’s leadership joined the Mayor of Tirana Erion Veliaj and Albania’s Minister for Tourism Mirela Kumbaro to lead high-level discussions focused on more and better-targeted investments in tourism. Expanding on the importance of strong and clear governance for advancing plans for greater sustainability across the tourism sector,

Tourism and the European Green Deal

Within the framework of FESTA, Secretary-General Pololikashvili met with Executive Vice President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans to discuss tourism’s role in advancing the European Green Deal, which he leads. UNWTO is spearheading tourism’s shift to greater sustainability, including through the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism and the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative.
Related Links

Future of Environmental Sustainable Tourism in Albania (FESTA)

UNWTO Regional Department for Europe

Albanian Prime Minister welcomes UNWTO leadership and embraces shared goals