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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNWTO PROGRAMME OF WORK IN EUROPE 2022-2023

I. Overview of the international tourism trends and outlook in the Region Europe

1. In the first quarter of 2023, international tourist arrivals in Europe, the world's largest destination region, reached 90% of pre-pandemic levels. Europe was supported by robust intra-regional demand and benefited from travel from the United States, which showed steady growth at the start of the year. By subregions, Southern Mediterranean Europe recovered its pre-pandemic levels and Northern Europe (91%) came very close to their 2019 levels.
2. European destinations that saw international tourism exceed pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2023 included **Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, and Türkiye**. In terms of international tourism receipts, **Romania, Serbia and Türkiye** more than doubled their earnings, followed by **Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Portugal and Spain**, among others, also exceeding pre-pandemic levels.
3. The UNWTO Panel of Experts survey indicates that almost 70% of experts expect better performance for the May-August period covering the Northern Hemisphere, including Europe's summer season.
4. In 2022, Europe recorded 585 million arrivals to reach nearly 80% of pre-pandemic levels. By subregions, Western Europe (87%) came closest to their pre-pandemic levels. Europe had the best results in terms of international tourism receipts, reaching USD 550 billion, which was 87% of pre-pandemic levels. According to IATA, Europe (+144%) showed significant growth in international passenger traffic with buoyant international traffic within the region. According to STR, occupancy rates in Europe reached 58%.

II. Main challenges and opportunities affecting the tourism sector in Europe

5. The tourism sector in Europe is currently facing several critical challenges, including the residual effects of the coronavirus pandemic, climate crisis, war in Ukraine, energy market disruption and wider implications on national and regional economies. The pandemic has caused significant disruptions to the industry, leading to border closures, travel restrictions, and the closure of many businesses, ultimately generating a widespread workforce shortage. The climate crisis has raised concerns about the sustainability of the industry and the impact of travel on the environment. In addition to these challenges, the war in Ukraine has had a profound impact on the tourism industry in the region, with a decline in international visitors and a shift in travel patterns.

6. To address these challenges, stakeholders in the tourism industry must work together to develop resilient and sustainable strategies that prioritize safety, support local businesses, promote sustainable tourism practices, and respond to changing consumer preferences.
7. UNWTO, through the Regional Department for Europe, with the objective of providing Full and Associate Members as well as its Permanent Observer, with timely, relevant, and high-quality services to build a response to these challenges, continued to concentrate on the following pillars, identified at the beginning of the pandemic:
 - **political outreach**, including official visits, diplomatic relations with permanent representations in Madrid and visits of high-level officials to the UNWTO Headquarters,
 - **enhanced cooperation with the international community**, including regional and sub-regional cooperation and other partnerships,
 - **initiatives, services, projects and activities** to support members' priorities, including partnerships with the private sector.

III. Political outreach – official visits, diplomatic relations with permanent representations in Madrid and visits of high-level officials to the UNWTO Headquarters

8. The Regional Department has been working to bolster the efforts of the UNWTO Secretary-General to provide critical political support to European Members. The goal is to elevate the importance of tourism as a driver of socio-economic development and ensure that the sector receives the necessary attention and governmental support during the post-pandemic recovery.
9. To this end, the Department continues to scale up its efforts to call for financial and political support for recovery measures aimed at tourism to eventually include support for the sector in the broader recovery plans and actions of economies affected by the pandemic. Since June 2022, high-level bilateral meetings have been conducted with members across the region as part of these efforts.
10. Official visits and high-level bilateral meetings of the Secretary-General:
 - **Italy** (Sorrento, 27 June-3 July 2022), first Global Youth Tourism Summit, during which he met with the Minister of Tourism, Minister for Youth Policies and the Mayor of Sorrento, as well as with the Federal Government Coordinator for Maritime Industry and Tourism of Germany;
 - **Armenia** (Madrid, 7 July 2022), official visit to the UNWTO Headquarters of the Minister of Foreign Affairs;
 - **Uzbekistan** (Madrid, 21 July 2022), visit to the UNWTO Headquarters of the Uzbek Ambassador to Spain and Permanent Representative to UNWTO;
 - **Azerbaijan** (Madrid, 7 September 2022), visit to the UNWTO Headquarters of the Minister of Foreign Affairs;
 - **Spain** (Madrid, 14 September 2022), visit to UNWTO Headquarters of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism;
 - **Italy** (Alba, 19-21 September 2022), 6th UNWTO Global Conference on Wine Tourism, during which he met with the Minister of Tourism and Deputy Mayor of Venice, as well as the Minister of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication of **Serbia**;
 - **Austria** (Madrid, 13 October 2022) presentation of the credentials letter by the new Austrian Ambassador to Spain and Permanent Representative to the UNWTO;



- **Uzbekistan** (Samarkand-Tashkent, 4-7 November 2022), official visit during which he met with the President, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister – Minister of Tourism and Cultural Heritage, Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Mayor of Tashkent Region;
- **United Kingdom** (London, 8 November 2022), World Travel Market 2022, during which he met with **Croatia** (Minister of Tourism and Sports) and **Kazakhstan** (Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the United Kingdom);
- **Türkiye** (Madrid, 11 November 2022) presentation of the credentials letter by the new Turkish Ambassador to Spain and Permanent Representative to the UNWTO;
- **Azerbaijan** (Madrid, 18 November 2022), visit to the UNWTO Headquarters of the Chairman of the State Tourism Agency;
- **Georgia** (Marrakesh, 25 November 2022), 117th meeting of the UNWTO Executive Council, during which he met with the Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development;
- **Georgia** (Tbilisi, 6 December 2022), visit during which he met with the Prime Minister;
- **Spain** (Madrid, 17 January 2023), FITUR 2023, during which he met with H.M. King Felipe VI, the Minister of Economy, Commerce and Tourism, the President of the Autonomous Regions of Madrid and La Rioja, the Mayor of Madrid, as well as high-level authorities of **Croatia** (Minister of Tourism and Sports), **Georgia** (Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development and the Head of National Tourism Administration), **Portugal** (Secretary of State for Tourism, Trade and Services), **Israel** (Ambassador to Spain), **Ukraine** (Chair of the State Tourism Agency) and **Greece** (Mayor of Skiathos and the Deputy Governor of the Region of Central Macedonia);
- **Czechia** (Madrid, 24 January 2023), visit to the UNWTO Headquarters of the Czech Ambassador to Spain and Permanent Representative to the UNWTO;
- **Netherlands** (Madrid, 14 February 2023), presentation of the credentials letter by the new Dutch Ambassador to Spain and Permanent Representative to the UNWTO;
- **Slovakia** (Madrid, 16 February 2023), presentation of the credentials letter by the new Slovak Ambassador to Spain and Permanent Representative to the UNWTO;
- **Romania** (Madrid, 16 February 2023), visit to the UNWTO Headquarters of the Romanian Ambassador to Spain and Permanent Representative to the UNWTO;
- **Azerbaijan** (Baku, 2 March 2023), Summit of the Non-Alignment Contact Group in response to Covid-19, during which he met the President as well as the President of **Uzbekistan**;
- **Germany** (Berlin, 6 March 2023), ITB Berlin 2023, during which he met with the Federal Government Coordinator of the Maritime Industry and Tourism, as well as the prime ministers of **Albania** and **Georgia** and high-level tourism authorities from **Albania**, **Austria**, **Bulgaria**, **Georgia**, **Israel** and **Ukraine**; additionally, the UNWTO Director for Europe met with high-level tourism authorities from **Armenia**, **Hungary**, **Slovenia** and **Uzbekistan**;
- **Czechia** (Madrid, 22 March 2023), official visit to the UNWTO Headquarters of the Deputy of the Cabinet Minister of Regional Development;
- **Germany** (Madrid, 27 March 2023), presentation of the credentials letter by the new German Ambassador to Spain and Permanent Representative to the UNWTO;
- **Kazakhstan** (Madrid, 28 March 2023), visit to the UNWTO Headquarters of the Kazakh Ambassador to Spain;

- **Italy** (Rome, 29-31 March 2023), official visit during which he met with the new Minister of Tourism and Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- **Holy See** (Vatican City, 30 March 2023), meeting with the Archbishop Paul Gallagher (private audience with His Holiness Pope Francis was cancelled for medical reasons);
- **Albania** (Tirana, 2-4 April 2023), FESTA Forum, during which he met with the Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Mayor of Tirana, as well as ministers, deputy ministers and state secretaries responsible for tourism from **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia**, in the first of a kind multilateral meeting of South-Eastern European countries, focused on sub-regional development;
- **Bulgaria** (Madrid, 19 April 2023), visit to the UNWTO Headquarters of the Bulgarian Ambassador to Spain and Permanent Representative to the UNWTO;
- **Croatia** (Zadar, 26-27 April 2023), 2nd World Sports Tourism Congress, during which he met with the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs and Minister of Tourism and Sports, as well as the Minister for Economy, Tourism and Sports of **Slovenia**.

11. Official visits and bilateral meetings of the UNWTO Director for Europe:

- **Slovenia** (Bled/Ljubljana, 28-31 August 2023), 17th Bled Strategic Forum, during which she met with the Minister of Economic Development and Technology and the Mayor of Ljubljana;
- **Czechia** (Madrid, 9 September 2023), meeting with the Ambassador;
- **Croatia** (Šibenik, 6-7 October 2022), Croatia Tourism Days event, during which she met with the Minister of Sports and Tourism;
- **France** (Paris, 9-11 October 2022), official visit during which she met with the new representatives of the line Ministry;
- **Monaco** (Madrid, 14 October 2022), visit to the UNWTO Headquarters of the representatives of Ministry of Finance and Economy, for the signature of the Glasgow Declaration;
- **Lithuania** (Vilnius, 19-21 October 2022), 8th Lithuanian National Tourism Forum “Rethinking Tourism”, during which she met with the Minister of the Economy and Innovation, parliamentarians, members of the Committee of the Economy and presidents of the main tourism business associations;
- **Czechia** (14-16 November 2022), 21st European Tourism Forum, during which she met with the Deputy Prime Minister for Digitisation and Minister of Regional Development;
- **Albania / Italy** (5-8 February 2023), technical visit ahead of the official visit of the UNWTO Secretary-General, during which she met with the Ministers of Tourism of Italy and of Albania;
- **Israel** (Tel Aviv, 14-17 February 2023), Global Tourism Innovation Forum, during which she met with the Minister of Tourism;
- **Lithuania** (Madrid, 20 March 2023), meeting with the Lithuanian Ambassador to Spain and Permanent Representative to the UNWTO;
- **Czechia** (Madrid, 22 March 2023) and **EU Member States**, working lunch, hosted by the Czech Ambassador to Spain to present the candidature of the Czech Republic to the UNWTO Executive Council 2023-2027;
- **Bulgaria** (Sofia, 1-4 May 2023), technical visit ahead of the 68th meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe, during which she met with the Minister of Tourism;

- **Czechia** (Madrid, 22 May 2023), visit to the UNWTO Headquarters of the Director General for the Coordination of European Funds, International Relations and Tourism of the Ministry for Regional Development.
12. Other visits and bilateral meetings:
- **Monaco** (Madrid, October 2022), visit to the UNWTO Headquarters of the General Manager of the Monaco Government Tourist and Convention Authority;
 - **Spain** (Santiago de Compostela, October 2022), World Congress on Pastoral Care of Tourism;
 - **Spain** (Valencia, November 2022), FAO Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Sites Workshop on Innovation;
 - **Croatia** (Dubrovnik, November 2022), 34th Congress of Croatian Restaurateurs and Tourism Workers;
 - **Portugal** (Boticas, February 2023), VALSIPAM Project Closing Conference on Dissemination of Results.
13. To further support members in the region, the Secretary-General and the UNWTO Director for Europe participated in events virtually and provided pre-recorded messages for the Global Hotel Alliance media event (June 2022, **Spain**); Invest in Genoa (June 2022, **Italy**); Digital Transformation in Tourism webinar (June 2022); Velo-City (June 2022, **Slovenia**); Forum on the challenges of revitalising the manufacturing value chains (July 2022, **Italy**); SMARTMED Event (September 2022, **Spain**); Tourism365 event (September 2022, **Croatia**); World Youth and Student Travel Conference (September 2022, **Portugal**); Shopping Tourism Forum (September 2022, **Italy**); 8th World Trails Conference (September 2022, **Greece**); World Tourism Day celebration (September 2023, **Lithuania**); 6th Global Mountain Partnership (September 2022, **USA**); 24th Mediterranean Exchange of Archaeological Tourism (October 2022, **Italy**); Planetiers World Gathering, Panel for “Sustainability and Innovation” (October 2022, **Portugal**); IGLTA Global Convention (October 2022, **Italy**); Stati Generali del Turismo (October 2022, **Italy**); El Corte Ingles Viajes Conference (November 2022, **Spain**); Travel Hashtag webinar (November 2022, **Italy**); Montreux International Tourism Forum (November 2022, **Switzerland**); 25th anniversary of Euro Velo (November 2022); Rogaland Country Council Webinar (November 2022, **Norway**); Sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean, Union for Mediterranean side event at COP27 (November 2022, **Egypt**); The Economist’s roundtable discussion on “People, Planet, and Progress: transforming the future of travel and people flows” (November 2022, **Belgium**); EHTI Summit (December 2022, **Belgium**); DSOTT 2022 (December 2022, **Portugal**); Annual Tourism Awards (December 2022, **Bulgaria**); Boost (January 2023, **Portugal**); Tourism Sector Dynamizer of a Sustainable Recovery Forum (January 2023, **Belgium**); Boot Düsseldorf (January 2023, **Germany**); MSC Foundation for Kids: Sustainable Future Day (February 2023, **Italy**); International Tourism Exhibition Holiday and Spa (February 2023, **Bulgaria**); International Tourism Guide Day celebration (February 2023); Luxonomy Women’s Round Table on Sustainability (March 2023, **Spain**); Global Chamber of Business Leaders – Heroes of Digital (March 2023, virtual); BTM Bari (March 2023, **Italy**); Tourism Forum 2023 (March 2023, **Czechia**); Expedia Insights Summit (March 2023, **Germany**); International Conference Risks, Security and Citizenship (April 2023, **Portugal**); Adriatic Sea Forum (May 2023, **Croatia**); IMBA Europe Summit (June 2023, **Switzerland**).
14. At its twenty-fourth session, the General Assembly decided that its twenty-fifth session would be held in **Uzbekistan** (resolution 750(XXIV)). The session is scheduled to be held in the city of Samarkand from 16 to 20 October 2023. UNWTO is working in close cooperation with the Government of Uzbekistan on the organization of the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly. The authorities of Uzbekistan have already taken all necessary measures to host this session in Samarkand and to provide all required services to the Members’ delegations.

15. The Department continued to foster dialogue with non-members in the region, namely with **Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom**. Through bilateral meetings at operational, diplomatic, and ministerial levels, and through mutual participation in different initiatives and events, we build on existing synergies and work towards their potential membership in the Organization.

b) Enhanced cooperation with the international community and interregional cooperation

16. UNWTO, through the Regional Department for Europe, has been working diligently to enhance cooperation with the international community in Europe to advance the sustainable development of tourism across the continent. Through a variety of partnerships and initiatives, the Regional Department has been able to promote the development of sustainable tourism policies and strategies by identifying best practices and developing frameworks for responsible tourism that prioritize the well-being of local communities and the preservation of natural and cultural resources. In addition to policy development, the UNWTO has also been actively promoting capacity building and knowledge sharing, through training programs, workshops, and other educational initiatives, essentially helping tourism professionals and businesses to develop the skills and knowledge needed to operate sustainably.
17. **European Union:** The Regional Department for Europe has established a strong collaboration with the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Committee of Regions, positioning UNWTO as the primary global tourism interlocutor with the EU and its various institutions. This collaboration is geared towards achieving the goals of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.
18. The Regional Department has provided contacts to the operational departments of the Organization, resulting in concrete collaborations. Furthermore, the Regional Department is engaged in forward-looking planning for structured cooperation with countries holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, including **France, Czechia, Sweden and Spain**. The Regional Department also coordinates UNWTO's participation in the co-implementation processes of the Transition Pathway for Tourism.
19. The Regional Department has further improved its institutional virtual presence and cooperation with the UN Brussels Team on strategic issues related to the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This collaboration has been particularly focused on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) of the European Union, its political agenda, and the European Green Deal, as well as the UN Brussels Task Force on Youth. By leveraging the UNBT's expertise and resources, the Regional Department can better advocate for the tourism sector's interests and ensure that sustainable tourism remains a priority in the EU's policy and funding decisions.
20. The UNWTO Director for Europe completed a mission to Brussels, Belgium, in November 2022, during which she met with the representatives of the Cabinet of the European Commission's Executive Vice-President, Mr. Frans Timmermans, Head of the Natural Resources Committee of the European Committee of the Regions, Deputy Head of Unit for **Armenia and Georgia** in DG NEAR of the European Commission, UNDP Representative and UN Chief in Brussels, as well as UNEP Chief in Brussels. In addition, she participated in the panel on "Tourism transition to lead a smart recovery", organized by Aquieuropa and Prestomedia Grupo at European Parliament, and in The Economist's roundtable discussion on "People, Planet, and Progress: transforming the future of travel and people flows".
21. The European Year of Youth (EYY) was of great relevance to UNWTO, particularly in the context of the newly launched initiative Global Youth Tourism Summit, and offered an opportunity for UNWTO to collaborate with the EU to promote and support meaningful youth participation in the tourism sector. The EYY helped to amplify the voices of young people and provide them with the recognition and support they need to make a real impact. This collaboration contributed to the efforts of creating a more



sustainable, responsible, and inclusive tourism sector that will benefit both young people and the wider society. The Regional Department represented UNWTO in the EYY Stakeholders and national coordinators meeting and “Claim the future!” EYY 2022 legacy conference in the European Parliament in December 2022.

22. During the FESTA Forum, held in Albania in April 2023, the Secretary-General met with the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans. They discussed the possibility of creating a particular line of action in the “Fit for 55” package and European Green Deal for cruise and cycling tourism as well as areas of common interest for research in the coming months.
23. The Executive Director participated as a speaker (pre-recorded message) in the European Tourism Day celebration, organized at the European Commission in Brussels. The day before, RDEU and IEI, in collaboration with DG GROW, Amadeus, Telefónica, Lobster Ink and Mastercard, organized a webinar to promote the Digital Futures Programme for SMEs in Europe.
24. The European Year of Skills, similar to EYY, is highly relevant to UNWTO, particularly in light of the workforce shortage in the tourism sector across the region. UNWTO recognizes that skills development and training are crucial for building a resilient and sustainable tourism. By working together, UNWTO and the EU can identify key skills gaps and develop targeted training programs that equip workers with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the sector. This collaboration can also help to raise awareness about the opportunities available in the tourism sector and encourage more people to pursue careers in this field.
25. UNWTO signed with the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) an Action Plan, strengthening the existing cooperation. One concrete outcome and implementation of this Action Plan is the joint study, which is being co-designed by the UNWTO and CoR experts on EU-27 sub-national data and statistics for tourism. The study is meant to be launched in Q3 2023 at a seminar on rural development and tourism, organised by CoR in Cantabria, **Spain**.
26. **Food and Agriculture Organization**: UNWTO has continued its fruitful collaboration with FAO particularly by favouring exchanges between experts on each organization's policies, projects, and activities being implemented in the field of sustainable rural tourism. Strategic discussions took place in Q3 of 2022 to identify priority areas of cooperation together with the FAO teams.
27. During his mission to Italy in March 2023, the Secretary-General held an official visit to the FAO Headquarters, where he met with the Director-General, Mr. Qu Dongyu and senior management including the Deputy Director-General, Ms. Maria Elena Semedo.
28. In the context of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Sites (GIAHS), a knowledge exchange webinar between GIAHS and BTV was held in March 2023. The next series are being planned with specific focus on the application of Geographical Indications (GI) in rural development of tourism.
29. Joint actions to foster youth empowerment through the participation and mutual contribution to the content of the main events through the World Food Forum and Global Youth Tourism Summit.
30. In the context of the 1000 Digital Villages Initiative, the identification of a pilot village for twinning with BTV is under way.
31. In the context of the Mountain Partnership, a publication on [Understanding and Quantifying Mountain Tourism](#) was released in April 2023 to advance knowledge development of mountain tourism. The Secretary-General also participated as a speaker (pre-recorded message) in the closing ceremony of the International Year for Mountains, held on 26 April 2023.
32. **Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)**: UNWTO continues to collaborate with the BSEC for the benefit of the 12 Member States that the two organizations have in common. In September 2022, the Memorandum of Understanding that provides the framework for collaboration was extended for an additional period of two years. UNWTO participated in the 2nd International Black Sea

Symposium: 30 years of Black Sea Economic Cooperation, held in November 2022, in Athens, **Greece**, presenting the current trends of international tourism and its global prospects, with special attention to the region. The Regional Department continues to represent the UNWTO in the BSEC Working Group on Tourism.

33. **Union for the Mediterranean:** UNWTO and the Union for the Mediterranean signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will see the parties work together to enhance cooperation and promote tourism as a tool for sustainable development, peace, and security in the Euro-Mediterranean region, capitalizing on tourism's potential to advance sustainable economic growth, social inclusiveness, decent employment, MSME development, women and youth empowerment and poverty alleviation.
34. **UNDP:** UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina, in collaboration with the Agency for International Cooperation of the Italian Republic, through their ongoing project BRIDGE, which fosters intercultural dialogue and interaction among young people from different ethnics and religious groups and geographic locations around nature, science, tourism and environment protection causes, included the UNWTO Students' League (categories: high school and undergraduate students) in the project implementation.
35. UNWTO has further strengthened its cooperation with international financial institutions such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), as well as other institutions including the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). UNWTO has intensified discussions with these institutions to address the specific recovery needs of individual countries in the region. This collaboration has been facilitated through the actions of the Technical Cooperation Department. By strengthening these partnerships, UNWTO aims to provide targeted support and assistance to members, thereby contributing to the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry in the region.
36. **Europe – Americas:** In February 2023, the Department had exploratory meetings with the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) of the European Commission to understand possible funding opportunities and relevant projects on sustainable tourism as part of the Commission's Latin America & Caribbean Investment Facility (LACIF). Possible linkages with the Development Bank for Latin America (CAF) are being explored further.
37. **Europe – Africa:** In January 2023, the Department had an exploratory meeting with the Regional Department for Africa on EU-Africa cooperation and the additional focus that this could have on tourism, skills, and youth. The Departments are investigating the initiative pioneered by the Directorate-General for Home Affairs (DG HOME) of the European Commission on migration and skills with North African countries, called the Talent partnerships. The possibility is currently being evaluated to send an application to receive funds from tourism angle.

c) Initiatives, services, projects and activities

38. **Exchange of information:** The Regional Department continued holding bilateral meetings with Focal Points of the members in the region, providing valuable insight into their situation, identifying main challenges and priorities during the recovery process, as well as focused bilateral meetings with relevant stakeholders in interested Member States, with the aim of supporting innovation, education, investments, sustainable tourism development, market intelligence, and competitiveness. In addition, the Regional Department held a series of thematic informative webinars for the Focal Points. The platform EuropeConnect, which now has more than 110 users from all countries in the region, is the primary environment for the exchange of information between members in the region and UNWTO. The Regional Department encourages members to use the platform for their own information sharing as well.

39. Data management: The Regional Department continues to develop a centralized database for the collection of structured historical and current information (political, economic, tourism policy and UNWTO collaboration) for the members in the region.
40. Infographics: The Regional Department upgraded the visual presentation of the most relevant tourism data and initiatives in each Member State, including matching priorities, by making them available on UNWTO's website through a QR code.
41. Training survey: The results of the regional survey on training needs, launched in early 2022, served as the guidelines for the prioritization of the training needs at the regional and sub-regional level and for the initiation of the partnerships with the private sector, aimed at providing training for the members. The newly established UNWTO + AVIAREPS Destination Marketing Grant will allow selected Member States to benefit from a range of digital marketing services, to be supplied on a pro bono basis. Services include assistance with campaign websites, landing pages, webinars, online press conferences, e-learning programmes and virtual events provided via the AVIAREPS Ecosystem. The grants will also cover destination research and analysis, PR services and will allow the recipient to participate in various AVIAREPS Roadshows, held throughout the year to connect travel industry buyers with destinations. The Regional Department is also in contact with Amadeus and TUI, to provide training on data, digital advertising, and sustainability.
42. The first edition of the Global Youth Tourism Summit (GYTS) took place in Sorrento, Italy, in June/July 2022, jointly organized with the Government of the **Italian** Republic. It brought together some of the brightest young minds and gave UNWTO an opportunity to hear their concerns, but above all, their vision for the sector. This was a landmark first – for the young people, for UNWTO and for the tourism sector.
43. The following European members were represented: **Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Ukraine**; as well as one non-member (United Kingdom).
44. Out of the event came the Sorrento Call to Action: Youth for Sustainable Tourism, a call from the young participants to have a greater say in the decisions that will affect them whether as tourists themselves or as beneficiaries of the sector.
45. The report Impact of COVID-19 on Youth – Focus on Asia and Italy, released ahead of the GYTS, examines how to support young people throughout the recovery and beyond. It includes an initial list of measures to support young people through the post-pandemic recovery.
46. The report A Youth-led Recovery of Global Tourism – Priorities and Recommendations was the continuation of the UNWTO youth tourism series, presenting an overview of the issues and concerns that young people face across all regions of the world against the backdrop of the pandemic, as well as their priorities and ambitions for the recovery of the global tourism sector.
47. The Regional Department, as the custodian of the initiative, mobilized resources of the following partners of the event: MSC Foundation, Region Campania (Italy), Global Tourism Economy Research Centre, Qatar Foundation, Aeroporti di Roma, Mastercard, Bella Vista Institute of Higher Education Switzerland, Air Europa, State Tourism Agency of Azerbaijan, Hilton, Nutella and Hostelling International, as well as other types of collaboration with Meta, Didier Drogba Foundation, UEFA Foundation, Kids Against Plastic, World Food Forum, International Telecommunication Union, Los Angeles Virtuosi Orchestra, Veryovka National Ukrainian Ensemble, SmallWorld Foundation, Marevivo, Wakalua and Ashley Lashley Foundation.
48. The GYTS platform continues in 2023 with a series of activities aimed at the establishment of a network of national/regional youth tourism summits, with the next global event foreseen for the summer of 2024.

49. The UNWTO Students' League aims to promote tourism education, research, and innovation, and to engage the next generation of tourism professionals in shaping the future of the tourism industry. In 2022, the initiative was launched at the national level, with **Switzerland** and **Bosnia and Herzegovina** joining the initiative for the 2022-2023 academic year.
50. Rural Development: During the second edition of the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO, 20 members from the European region participated, presenting a total of 49 applications (36% of the total applications received), of which 15 villages (from **Austria, Georgia, Israel, Italy, Romania, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland** and **Türkiye**) received the BTV label and 9 (from **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Italy, Israel, Poland, Portugal** and **Türkiye**) were included in the upgrade programme.
51. UNWTO has created a Working Group on Health and Travel & Tourism, a subsidiary organ of the Executive Council, whose mandate is to draw from the lessons from the COVID-19 crisis and to strengthen coordination between tourism and health to generate greater resilience within travel and tourism, ensuring preparedness in the face of future threats.
52. The One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, guided by the Global Strategy for Sustainable Consumption and Production 2023-2030, focuses on several key areas, including resource efficiency, climate change, biodiversity conservation, community engagement, and cultural preservation. UNWTO, as the co-lead of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme for the period 2023 – 2024, focuses on three main areas of intervention: accelerating climate action in tourism through the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, which (as of May 2023) has more than 400 signatories from **32 countries**, including 9 non-members; building a circular economy of plastics in tourism through the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative; and transforming food value chains in tourism.
53. With support from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection of **Germany** (BMUV), the UNWTO, in collaboration with UN Climate Change (UNFCCC), developed the report [Climate Action in the Tourism Sector: An Overview of Methodologies and Tools to Measure Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#).
54. Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism: **Spain, Austria, Italy** and **Sweden** contributed their studies for the publication [Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism – Learning from Pilots](#), released in December 2022. In addition, **Austria, Germany, Italy** and **Sweden** contributed their pilot studies for the publication [Experiences from Pilot Studies in Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism – A Synopsis for Policy Makers](#), released in April 2023.
55. International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories: Out of the total of 37 observatories in the UNWTO INSTO Network, one is in **Greece**, one in **Croatia**, one in **Italy**, three in **Portugal**, six in **Spain**.
56. **Lithuania** was represented in the role of a speaker at the Asia-Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Policy and Strategy, which took place in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on 7-11 November 2022.
57. Women Empowerment: With the support of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of **Germany** and UN Women, UNWTO continues to implement the project Centre Stage: Women's empowerment during the COVID-19 recovery, which aims to strengthen, coordinate and focus work on gender equality in tourism governmental institutions and businesses in Jordan, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Mexico. In addition, with the support of the **Estonian** Development Cooperation, UNWTO continues to implement the project Empowering Young Women: Sustainable Livelihoods through Tourism in the **Republic of Moldova**.
58. Legal Instruments: **Republic of Moldova** and **Portugal** adhered to the International Code for the Protection of Tourists in 2022. **Albania** ratified the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics and its Optional Protocol in 2022.
59. Technical Cooperation: A detailed list of the technical assistance projects is included in Annex II.



60. Human Workforce Development: UNWTO recognizes the importance of promoting training and capacity building for human resources, and in collaboration with the members in the region and educational institutions offer the following opportunities to students and young professionals from the region.
61. Officers on Loan: By way of the Capacity Building Scheme through the Loan on the part of the member State of an Official, the UNWTO currently receives 2 officers from **Azerbaijan**.
62. Junior Professional Officer: By way of a Fixed Term Appointment through the Loan of a Staff Member on the part of the United Nations Development Programme, and with support from the Government of the **Italian** Republic, the UNWTO currently received 1 Junior Professional Officer.
63. Internships: UNWTO has internship cooperation agreements with institutions from **Belgium** (1), **Czechia** (2), **Hungary** (1), **Lithuania** (3), the **Netherlands** (2), **Poland** (1), **Spain** (1), **Switzerland** (1) and the **United Kingdom** (1), offering internship opportunities to more than 20 students per year.
64. Other partnerships: UNWTO recognizes the importance of working with the private sector in Europe to advance sustainable tourism development across the region. The private sector is a key driver of tourism growth and innovation.
65. Expedia: UNWTO and Expedia continue to share data on tourism trends and developments, both at the global and the local scale, and engage in other joint initiatives. This helps achieve informed decision-making, producing data-based policies aimed at tourism's sustainable recovery and future growth.
66. European Cycling Federation: UNWTO and ECF work together to promote cycling routes throughout the European region, including the EuroVelo routes that make up the European cycle route network, highlight the increasing importance of cycling tourism, its benefits and regional economic impacts, advocate a form of slow and sustainable travel which encourages interest in the richness of the local gastronomy, heritage and community life across the countries and regions. In collaboration with ECF, UNWTO will launch a start-up competition, specifically focused on cycling tourism, and joint research on cycling tourism, as an update on the last research done in Europe, by European Parliament in 2012.
67. European Training Foundation: In January 2023, the Department had an exploratory call with the European Training Foundation on the topic of possible joint studies evaluating future training needs of youth in the tourism sector, in Europe.
68. European Travel Commission: UNWTO and ETC collaborate in the development of the UNWTO-ETC DataLab Network, offering training to NTOs, NTAs and other relevant partners in the region.
69. International Congress and Convention Association: UNWTO and ICCA are collaborating in the launch of a start-up competition for mega event and MICE tourism, which aims to empower start-ups and entrepreneurs to share disruptive solutions that facilitate the transition to smart event tourism.
70. MSC Cruises and MSC Foundation: Following the successful collaboration with the MSC Foundation in the context of the Global Youth tourism Summit, the UNWTO continues to collaborate with the constituencies of the MSC Group in the elaboration of initiatives that support the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and the corresponding Sustainable Development Goals within each organisation's core aims and objectives. In June 2023 on the World Oceans Day, UNWTO and MSC will organize a high-level panel on oceans aboard the MSC Euribia cruise ship. At the same time, MSC will launch the project "GYTS Aboard", developed by the UNWTO, to further promote youth empowerment and meaningful youth participation in the tourism sector.
71. UEFA and UEFA Foundation: UNWTO and UEFA promote the benefits of sports and sports tourism for development and opportunity for all, particularly young people. The joint actions focus on sustainability, education, destination development, research, digitization, and green investments.



Annex I: List of UNWTO events in Europe from 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023

- 67th meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe (1-3 June 2022, Yerevan, **Armenia**)
- Workshop on “Changing the Way We Travel”, One Planet Forum at Stockholm+50 (1 June 2022, Stockholm, **Sweden**)
- Global Youth Tourism Summit (27 June – 3 July 2022, Sorrento, **Italy**)
- Side-event on Blue Ecosystems for Regenerative Tourism at Forum Ocean (28 June 2022, Lisbon, **Portugal**)
- Side event on Tourism Ocean Action – Towards a Circular and Regenerative Blue Economy at the UN Ocean Conference (29 June 2022, Lisbon, **Portugal**)
- 6th UNWTO Global Conference on Wine Tourism (20-21 September 2022, Alba, **Italy**)
- 2022 Global INSTO Meeting (20-21 October 2022, Madrid, **Spain**)
- Smart Destinations Conference (23-25 November 2022, Valencia, **Spain**)
- 29th World Committee on Tourism Ethics Meeting (1-2 December 2022, Madrid, **Spain**)
- 3rd meeting of the Working Group of Experts on MST and workshop on MST Pilots (14-16 December 2022, Madrid, **Spain**)
- Global Tourism Innovation Forum (14-17 February 2023, Tel Aviv, **Israel**)
- UNWTO Tourism Tech Adventures Canarias 2023 (15-16 March 2023, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, **Spain**)
- Think Tank on Talent in Wine Tourism (23-24 March 2023, Haro, **Spain**)
- 2nd Sustainable Destinations Summit (30-31 March 2023, Palma de Mallorca, **Spain**)
- International Forum on Environment and Sustainable Tourism (3-5 April 2023, Tirana, **Albania**)
- 2nd World Sports Tourism Congress (26-27 April 2023, Zadar, **Croatia**)
- 68th meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe (31 May – 2 June 2023, Sofia, **Bulgaria**)

Annex II: List of new Affiliate Members from Europe

The following entities became UNWTO Affiliate Members since the 67th meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe:

- during the 116th Session of the Executive Council (7-8 June 2022):
 - from **Croatia**: University College Aspira;
 - from **Italy**: Travel Escape Tour Operator SRL;
 - from **Portugal**: UNIAG - Applied Management Research Unit;
 - from **Spain**: Asociación Española de Comisionados de Filmaciones, Cine y Televisión (Spain Film Commission), Basque Tourist Consulting SLU, Foro MICE, MedCruise, NH Hotel Group, and Servicios Turísticos de Ceuta SLU;
 - from **Türkiye**: Istanbul Convention & Visitors Bureau;
- during the 117th Session of the Executive Council (23-25 November 2022):
 - from **Austria**: Comité International des Festivals du Film Touristique – CIFFT;
 - from the **Republic of Moldova**: National Inbound and Domestic Tourism Association of Moldova;
 - from **Spain**: Asociación Española de Directores y Directivos de Hotel y Restauración, Eturia clm. Empresa Pública de Promoción del Turismo y la Artesanía de Castilla-La Mancha SA, and Innovaris SL;
 - from **Türkiye**: Kapadokya Üniversitesi (Cappadocia University);
- during the 118th Session of the Executive Council (16-18 May 2023):
 - from **Belgium**: European Boating Industry, International School Sport Federation, European Cultural Tourism Network (ECTN);
 - from **Greece**: Toposophy Limited GR
 - from **North Macedonia**: University of Skopje;
 - from **Spain**: EXPOURENSE Fundación de Feiras e Exposicións de Ourense, Mabrian Technologies S.L., Empresa Pública para la Gestión del Turismo y del Deporte de Andalucía, S.A.;
 - from **Türkiye**: Arcadia Vineyards Ltd, Trakya Kalkınma Ajansı / Trakya Development Agency.

Annex III: Detailed list of technical assistance projects in Europe

MEMBER	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT DURATION	BENEFICIARY	DONOR INSTITUTION	REMARKS
Croatia	Facilitating Tourism Recovery in Aftermath of Covid - 19	2021 - 2022	Ministry of Tourism and Sports	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Measuring Sustainability of Tourism – Support Programme for Croatian Tourism MSMEs – Review of Marketing Strategies – Review of Safety Protocol and Safety Label
Georgia	Facilitating Tourism Recovery in Aftermath of Covid-19	2021-2022	Georgia National Tourism Administration	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop a Change Mechanism for MSMEs to Cater to the Domestic Tourism Markets. – Adapt the Tourism Marketing Strategy to respond to the COVID-19 Tourism Impact. – Development of a Capacity Building Training Programme.
Greece	Facilitating Tourism Recovery in Aftermath of Covid-19	2021-2022	Ministry of Tourism	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Measurement of the COVID-19 Tourism Impact and Develop Monitoring Guidelines. – Roadmap to Support Tourism MSMEs and Job Retention. – Update the Tourism Marketing Strategy to respond to the COVID-19 Tourism Impact. – Development of a Tourism Crisis Management Plan.
Greece	Providing Tourism Recovery Technical Assistance on Marketing and Promotion to Skiathos Island	2021-2023	Municipality of Skiathos	Municipality of Skiathos	Agreement signed and the activities have commenced. Marketing Activity Completed in July 2022. Resident Study to be completed by June 2023.
Greece	Providing Tourism Recovery Technical Assistance on Marketing and Promotion and Residents Study to Thasos Island	2023-2024	Municipality of Thasos	Municipality of Thasos	The Municipality is currently working on its internal processes before providing the green-light to initiate the signing of the agreement



Kazakhstan	Common Health and Safety Protocols and Standards along the Almaty-Bishkek Economic Corridor (ABEC)	2021-2022	Committee of Tourism Industry of the Ministry of Culture and Sport	Asian Development Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Covid-19 relief project focused on establishing ABEC as a safe travel bubble. – Onsite training courses for the public and private sector of both countries organized in April 2022.
Kyrgyz Republic	Common Health and Safety Protocols and Standards along the Almaty-Bishkek Economic Corridor (ABEC)	2021-2022	Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Economy and Finance	Asian Development Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Covid-19 relief project focused on establishing ABEC as a safe travel bubble. – Onsite training courses for the public and private sector of both countries organized in April 2022.
Montenegro	Facilitating Tourism Recovery in Aftermath of Covid-19	2021 - 2022	Ministry of Economic Development	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Situation analysis focused on measuring the impacts of COVID-19. – Development of Tourism Recovery Plan. – Review and Update Marketing Strategies to Support Tourism Recovery. – Review the Effectiveness of Operational Protocols on Safety, Hygiene and Security (SOPs).
Republic of Moldova	Empowering Young Women: Sustainable Livelihoods through Tourism	2020-2024	Invest Moldova Tourism Agency	Estonia Development Corporation	<p>Agreement signed in December 2018 and extended to December 2024. Activities commenced in May 2020, all remotely, and focussed on consultations with a range of stakeholders to conduct a rapid tourism gender value chain analysis and a rapid tourism training needs assessment. In the first semester of 2022, focus group discussions were conducted with local tourism stakeholders and a work plan for Phase II was devised for the roll out of several training programmes.</p> <p>Preparatory discussions are taking place for conducting a scoping mission to identify the lead training institute responsible for the implementation of the train-the-trainers programme and local training programme for women and youth.</p>
Tajikistan	Sustainable Tourism Development Project	2020 – 2024	Committee for Tourism Development under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan	Asian Development Bank	<p>Joint project between UNWTO, ADB and CTD focused on the implementation of 3 tourism activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – International and Domestic Tourist Profile Studies: Finalization of activity within the first half of 2023.



					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Preparing Tajikistan for its first experimental TSA: TSA Report submitted in February 2022. – Sustainable Tourism Plan: Submission of Sustainable Tourism Master Plan in March 2022. Third Domestic Workshop in April 2022. – Central Asian regional workshop to take place by March 2024.
Türkiye	Facilitating Tourism Recovery in Aftermath of Covid-19	2021-2023	Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Provinces of Isparta, Mardin and Erzurum	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Digital Marketing Assessment Report for Pilot Provinces finalized in March 2023. – 3 capacity building workshops in Mardin, Erzurum and Isparta organized in January 2023. – Project to be developed with the assistance of UNDP (Turkey Office).
Uzbekistan	Facilitating Tourism Recovery in Aftermath of Covid-19	2021-2022	Ministry of Culture and Tourism	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Situation analysis focused on measuring the impacts of COVID-19. – Review of the tourism recovery plans adopted, recommend improvements and assist with developing or strengthening the Domestic Tourism Marketing Strategy. – Review the Effectiveness of Operational Protocols on Safety, Hygiene and Security. – Specialised Training Course aimed at Building Resilience of Tourism Enterprises to Adapt to the COVID-19 Reality, including Safety and Hygiene. – Tourism Support Masterclasses for Tourism MSMEs. – Developing Tourism Human Resource Development Action Plan.
Uzbekistan	Tourism Diversification Strategy for the Khorezm and South Karakalpakstan	2022-2023	Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Khorezm region and Karakalpakstan	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	<p>The development of a Tourism Diversification Strategy will allow for improved tourism planning, marketing and implementation through training, while supporting the objectives outlined in the country's National Development Strategy.</p> <p>The assignment is divided into two phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development of a Tourism Diversification Strategy – Development of Case Studies and tourism training



Projects in the pipeline:

MEMBER	PROJECT TITLE	BENEFICIARY	DONOR INSTITUTION	REMARKS
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic	Developing the tourism potential of the Almaty-Bishkek Economic Corridor (ABEC)	Tourism Industry Committee	Asian Development Bank	Follow-up project aimed at further developing the tourism potential of the Almaty-Bishkek Corridor. Focus on two main activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Assistance in implementing the new joint ACS developed by UNWTO in Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. – Assistance in implementing common health and safety protocols developed by UNWTO, with a specific focus on training and the recommendations / actions contained in the final training report.
Central Asia	Development of a Visa Facilitation Study for the CAREC region	Central Asia and member States of ADB's Regional Economic Cooperation Program	Asian Development Bank	Activities to focus on Visa Facilitation Study for the CAREC region, including a Central Asian Case Study, plus the organization of capacity building workshops throughout the Central Asian region.
Western Balkans	Silk Road Tourism Development along the Western Balkan Region	Ministries of Tourism of the Western Balkan region	International Development Group	Together with the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and its Silk Road European Interdisciplinary Tourism Centre, UNWTO will work towards the creation of an academic cooperation framework between Western Balkan universities and/or research partners. Research obtained will be compiled into one Western Balkan Silk Road Report aimed at providing an understanding of Silk Road heritage of tourism interest within each participating country and guide any future Silk Road tourism development activity within the cluster.

