



## UNWTO Commission for Europe

Sixty-eighth meeting  
Sofia, Bulgaria, 1 June 2023

CEU/68/CR  
Madrid, 26 June 2023

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS** **TAKEN BY THE UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EUROPE** **AT ITS SIXTY-EIGHTH MEETING**

**Sofia, Bulgaria, 1 June 2023**

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## AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Communication of the Chair (Greece).
3. Report of the UNWTO Secretary-General: Implementation of the Programme of Work 2022-2023.
4. Report of the UNWTO Director for Europe: Implementation of the Programme of Work in Europe 2022-2023 (regional and technical activities).
5. Survey Findings on Members' Priorities for the UNWTO Programme of Work (PoW) 2024-2025 and the long-term vision.
6. Discussion on the UNWTO Programme of Work 2024-2025.
7. Meetings of the UNWTO Commission for Europe in 2023 and 2024.
8. Nominations and elections to statutory organs and their subsidiary bodies:
  - 8.1 Nomination of candidates to the various General Assembly offices and its subsidiary bodies:
    - a. one Vice-President of the General Assembly (2023);
    - b. two Members of the Credentials Committee (2023);
    - c. one Chair of the UNWTO Commission for Europe (2023-2025);
    - d. two Vice-Chairs of the UNWTO Commission for Europe (2023-2025);
  - 8.2.1 Nomination of candidates to represent the region on the Executive Council and its subsidiary bodies:
    - a. four members of the Executive Council (2023-2027);
    - b. one member of the Executive Council (2023-2025);
    - c. one member to the Programme and Budget Committee (2023-2027);
    - d. two members to the Committee on Tourism and Sustainability (2023-2027);
    - e. two members to the Committee on Tourism and Competitiveness (2023-2027);
    - f. two members to the Committee on Statistics (2023-2027);
    - g. three members to the Committee on Matters Related to the Affiliate Members (2023-2027);
  - 8.2.2 Nomination of two candidates to the Task Force on "Redesigning Tourism for the Future";
  - 8.3 Recommendation on the venue of the World Tourism Day 2024.
9. Preparations for the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the UNWTO General Assembly in October 2023.
10. Other matters.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA** (document CEU/68/ProvAg)

The Commission,

1. Thanks the Chair of the UNWTO Commission for Europe (Greece) and the Secretary-General for their welcome words;
2. Agrees to insert in the Provisional Agenda a new Item 7 called “Meetings of the UNWTO Commission for Europe in 2023 and 2024” and to discuss under this item, at the request of Germany, the possibility of a second meeting of the Commission on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the UNWTO General Assembly in Samarkand (Uzbekistan), in October 2023;
3. Agrees to remove Item 9 called “Venue of the next meeting of the Commission”, the content of which will be discussed under the new Item 7 and, takes note of the renumbering of the items, as reflected in the Agenda included in the present document;
4. Adopts the Agenda of the sixty-eighth meeting, with the above-mentioned changes.

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### **COMMUNICATION OF THE CHAIR**

The Commission,

Having heard the communication of the Chair of the UNWTO Commission for Europe:

1. Thanks the Government of Greece for their valued contribution to the work of the UNWTO and of the Commission for Europe in particular;
2. Appreciates the contribution of the UNWTO to the reinforcement of the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainability and its efforts to build consensus with Member States, private sector partners and major stakeholders;
3. Welcomes the proposal of an Agenda for Europe to achieve high standards of performance in tourism policy elaboration and governance and to return value to the members of the region of Europe;
4. Agrees that tourism in Europe has proven its resilience even through the challenging times of the global pandemic, rebounding – in 2022 – to 80 percent of the pre-pandemic level of tourist arrivals;
5. Notes with interest that tourism in Greece is constantly improving due to the country’s efficient methods of promoting tourism and supporting investment through the Greece 2.0 Recovery and Resilience Plan, financed by the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the centrepiece of NextGenerationEU – the European Union’s plan to emerge stronger and more resilient from the current crisis;
6. Welcomes Greece’s cooperation with the UNWTO in supporting sustainability in tourism, by participating in the Statistical Framework for Measuring Tourism Sustainability, supporting the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, the Global Plastics in Tourism Initiative, and the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories;
7. Agrees on the importance of continued establishing of the Sustainable Coastal and Maritime Tourism Research and Monitoring Centre in Greece;

8. Acknowledges Greece's candidacy to be Vice-Chair of the Commission of Europe, to contribute further to the tourism development in this continent and to enhance its impact within the UNWTO.

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**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL:  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2022-2023**

The Commission,

Having heard the Report of the Secretary-General with an update on the work since the last Commission meeting,

1. Thanks him for presenting the main strategic objectives and priorities of the Organization and the results of the implementation of the Programme of Work;
2. Appreciates the update on international tourism trends, showing resilience and fast recovery, with Europe being the world's top-performing region;
3. Acknowledges that the Russian Federation is no longer a member of the UNWTO;
4. Agrees on the importance of cooperation to face challenges, such as climate emergency and talent shortage crisis;
5. Welcomes the five priorities and strategic objectives of the UNWTO, and appreciates the progress achieved towards these goals:
  - a. Education, jobs and empowerment:
    - Collaboration with the institutions of the European Union regarding the Transition Pathway for Tourism and thematic years focused on youth and skills in 2022 and 2023, respectively;
    - Launching numerous initiatives to promote education, including the UNWTO Tourism Online Academy, the first Bachelor's Degree programme in International Sustainable Tourism, and the Ted.Qual programme;
    - Involving youth in the tourism sector, through initiatives such as the Students' League and the first Global Youth Tourism Summit;
  - b. Investments in tourism:
    - Joining the World Investment for Development Alliance and reaching an agreement with the Annual Investment Meeting;
    - Preparing to hold the Global Tourism Investment Forum, in cooperation with Armenia, and to celebrate World Tourism Day 2023, focused on Green Investments, in September 2023;
  - c. Sustainability and climate action:
    - Renewing UNWTO's role as a leader in the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, amplifying the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative and promoting the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism;
    - Expanding the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories;
    - Elaborating the unified global Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism;
  - d. Competitiveness and resilience:
    - Collecting data and sharing knowledge through the World Tourism Barometer and Tourism Data Dashboard;
    - Collaborating with the Members, the European Commission and various agencies and programmes of the UN, and participating as a knowledge partner to the Indonesian and Indian G20 Presidencies;

- Advocating for tourism as a driver of rural development through the expansion of the initiative of the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO;
  - Supporting initiatives for ethical and equitable tourism, including the International Code for the Protection of Tourists, Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics, and new global standard on Accessible Tourism;
- e. Innovation and digital transformation
- Identifying solutions through the Startup Competitions and Innovation Challenges;
  - Providing practical tools for the strengthening of the tourism MSME ecosystem through the Digital Futures for SMEs Programme;
  - Organizing, in collaboration with Israel, the first Global Tourism Innovation Forum.
6. Appreciates UNWTO's Technical Assistance projects to support its Members, with 13 technical assistance projects in 10 European countries;
  7. Notes with interest that the UNWTO collaborates with several key partners, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to support its Members;
  8. Takes notes that the Spanish Government will finalize its plans for the new UNWTO headquarters in Madrid in 2024;
  9. Expresses its satisfaction that almost 60% of the UNWTO Affiliate Members are from Europe, and that UNWTO is also working with non-member European states in efforts to eventually propose and secure their membership;
  10. Congratulates on the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution on "The promotion of tourism for poverty eradication and environmental protection", with special appreciation to Croatia for its contribution to the success; and on the declaration of 17 February as the "Global Tourism Resilience Day", with Greece being a part of the Core group of countries that worked to advance this initiative;
  11. Encourages the collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) regarding rural development and mountain communities.
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**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR EUROPE: IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE PROGRAMME OF WORK IN EUROPE 2022-2023 (REGIONAL AND TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES)**  
(document CEU/68/Report)

The Commission,

Having heard the presentation of the Director of the Regional Department for Europe on the Implementation of the UNWTO Programme of Work in Europe in 2022-2023,

1. Thanks her for the detailed and insightful presentation and appreciates the activities carried out to achieve a closer regional cooperation in Europe;
2. Welcomes the recent report that Europe is the world's largest destination region and is recovering quickly after the pandemic, with some countries already exceeding pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2023, and that an even better performance is expected in the summer season;
3. Agrees on the importance of working together with stakeholders in the tourism industry to address current challenges and to develop resilient and sustainable strategies;
4. Acknowledges the decision that the forthcoming 25<sup>th</sup> session of the UNWTO General Assembly will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from 16 to 20 October 2023;

5. Notes with interest that the Regional Department for Europe responds to these challenges with structured political outreach, enhanced cooperation with the international community and by implementing a series of different initiatives, services, projects and activities, adapted to the needs of the Members in the region;
6. Appreciates the efforts towards efficient political outreach and cooperation through high-level bilateral meetings, official visits and participation in numerous international events both virtually and in person;
7. Encourages the Regional Department for Europe to continue to foster dialogue with non-member countries of the region;
8. Welcomes that the Regional Department has established a strong collaboration with the European Union and with the countries holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union to effectively include in the EU tourism policies the UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals and to co-implement the Transition Pathway for Tourism;
9. Acknowledges UNWTO's collaboration with the European Union to promote the European Year of Youth, other initiatives focused on ensuring meaningful youth participation in the tourism sector, and also working together in the framework of the European Year of Skills and the European Tourism Day;
10. Supports UNWTO's collaboration with many important international organizations, including FAO, UNDP and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation;
11. Welcomes the Department's strong focus on exchanging information, data management and training for Member States;
12. Congratulates for the highly successful organization of the first edition of the Global Youth Tourism Summit in Italy, the adoption of the Sorrento Call to Action: Youth for Sustainable Tourism, and the publication of two reports focused on youth in tourism;
13. Appreciates that 15 European villages received a Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO label in 2022 and 9 European applicants were included in the Upgrade Programme of the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO, bringing the total number of European Best tourism Villages by UNWTO to 32 and villages in the Upgrade Programme to 21;
14. Takes note of UNWTO's participation and cooperation in events and conferences in various European countries and contribution to numerous studies, reports and publications;
15. Supports that the Regional Department has established and nurtured strong partnerships with the private sector stakeholders, collaborating with them on tourism development, data sharing and promotion of skills, youth and sustainability;
16. Takes note that the UNWTO's Human Workforce Development focus is on a strong collaboration with the Members in the region, employing Officers on Loan, a Junior Professional Officer and offering internship opportunities to more than 20 students per year from different European countries, including Czechia, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain, gaining experience in different departments of the UNWTO.
17. Thanks the Regional Director and the team of the Regional Department for Europe for their dedication and valuable assistance to the Members.

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**SURVEY FINDINGS ON MEMBERS' PRIORITIES**  
**FOR THE UNWTO PROGRAMME OF WORK (POW) 2024-2025 AND THE LONG-TERM VISION**

The Commission,

Having heard the presentation of the Director of External Relations about the Survey Findings on Members Priorities for the UNWTO Programme of Work 2024-2025 and the long-term vision,

1. Appreciates that all 41 Full Members, 1 associate member and 4 non-member states from the region, including Baltic states and a strong voice of the Nordics, responded to the survey;
  2. Takes note that the planning and implementation of the survey included extensive consultations with the Programme and Budget Committee on the methodological aspects of the survey and overall with the Organization's members;
  3. Recognizes the significance of the robust qualitative data derived from the survey, allowing to channel member and non-member states' primary needs and viewpoints into the UNWTO Programme of Work and the sector's development vision for the next decade;
  4. Appreciates the importance of the survey results to define, in close coordination with the governing organs and their subsidiary bodies, the required reforms to ensure better governance and services of the Organization;
  5. Acknowledges that members' priorities in the region are centered around 1. marketing, positioning and promoting destinations, 2. product development and diversification, and 3. sustainability, green transformation and climate change;
  6. Notes with concern the main challenges for the members in the region, as identified by the members in the region, being 1. human capital shortage and retaining talent, 2. political instability, and 3. economic recession and inflation;
  7. Takes note of the most common opportunities for the Programme of Work, as identified by the members in the region, being a reform of tourism legal and policy framework and/or governance model, and growing demand for specific destinations and products;
  8. Acknowledges the sector's long-term development patterns in Europe, as identified by the members in the region, being sustainability (shift in consumers demand), climate challenge (adaptation and mitigation) and digitalization along the entire tourism value chain;
  9. Commits to further examine the draft Programme of Work 2024-2025 during the 69<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe, to take place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, prior to the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the UNWTO General Assembly.
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### **DISCUSSION ON THE UNWTO PROGRAMME OF WORK 2024-2025**

The Commission,

Having heard the presentations on the UNWTO Programme of Work and the results of the survey on members' priorities,

1. Appreciates the contributions of the Members to the Survey, which have facilitated a very dynamic and rich discussion;
2. Welcomes the general conviction that there will be a recovery of tourism during the next biennium but notes with concern the regional political and economic instability, which are slowing down the full recovery of the international tourism in the region and globally;
3. Endorses by consensus the proposal of Greece, seconded by Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Montenegro, Romania, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, to develop a "UNWTO Agenda for Europe";
4. Requests the Secretariat to take necessary actions to establish a working group, as proposed by Switzerland, composed of the representatives of the members, to elaborate a concept of the "UNWTO Agenda for Europe";
5. Requests the Secretary-General to include the "UNWTO Agenda for Europe" in the UNWTO Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025 and to propose the final version, recommended by members during the 69<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe, for the endorsement of the 119<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Council and the approval of the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the UNWTO General Assembly..

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**MEETINGS OF THE UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EUROPE IN 2023 AND 2024**

The Commission,

Having heard the report of the Regional Director for Europe,

1. Takes note of the proposal of Germany to resume the practice of hosting two regional commissions in alternating years, when the UNWTO General Assembly also takes place, to allow members in the region for Europe to discuss the final draft of the Programme of Work for the following biennium as well as any other items relevant for the region;
  2. Endorses the proposal of Germany to host the 69<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, prior to the start of the 25<sup>th</sup> session of UNWTO's General Assembly, in October 2023;
  3. Thanks Albania for presenting its candidature to host the 70<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe in 2024 and accepts its invitation;
  4. Entrusts the Secretariat with making the necessary arrangements and offering support for the holding of the forecoming meetings of the UNWTO Commission for Europe.
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**NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS TO STATUTORY ORGANS AND THEIR SUBSIDIARY BODIES:**

(document CEU/68/ComReg)

The Commission,

Acknowledging the candidacies received for the nominations and elections to statutory bodies and their subsidiary bodies,

1. Nominates **Uzbekistan** as President of the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the UNWTO General Assembly, following the practice of giving the Presidency to the host country of the General Assembly's session;
2. Nominates **Hungary** as Vice-President of the 25<sup>th</sup> session of UNWTO's General Assembly;
3. Nominates **Kazakhstan** and **Uzbekistan** as members of the Credentials Committee;
4. Elects **Ukraine** as Chair of the UNWTO Commission for Europe for the period 2023-2025;
5. Elects **Greece** and **Hungary** as Vice-Chairs of the UNWTO Commission for Europe for 2023-2025, following a vote by ballot;
6. Recommends **Bulgaria, Czechia, Italy** and **Lithuania** as members of the UNWTO Executive Council for the period 2023-2027, following a vote by ballot;
7. Recommends **Azerbaijan** as member of the UNWTO Executive Council for the period 2023-2025, following the decision by consensus of electing for this vacant seat the 5<sup>th</sup> most voted candidate in the previous vote;
8. Nominates **Switzerland** as member of the Programme and Budget Committee for the period 2023-2027, following a vote by ballot;
9. Nominates **Croatia** and **Portugal** as members of the Committee on Tourism and Sustainability for the period 2023-2027, following a vote by ballot;



10. Nominates **Malta** and the **Republic of Moldova** as members of the Committee on Tourism and Competitiveness for the period 2023-2027, following a vote by ballot;
  11. Nominates **Austria** and **Portugal** as members of the Committee on Statistics for the period 2023-2027, following a vote by ballot;
  12. Recommends **Spain**, **Tajikistan** and **Uzbekistan** as members of the Committee on Matters related to the Affiliate Members for the period 2023-2027;
  13. Recommends **Israel** and **Spain** as members from the Region of Europe of the Task Force on “Redesigning Tourism for the Future”, following a vote by ballot;
  14. Recommends **Georgia** as the host of the World Tourism Day 2024, around the theme “Tourism and Peace”.
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### **PREPARATIONS FOR THE 25<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The Commission,

Having heard the information provided by the representative of the UNWTO Secretariat and the host country,

1. Thanks the Organization for the preparations underway for the hosting of the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the UNWTO General Assembly in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, in October 2023;
  2. Takes note that the decision on the venue of the 26<sup>th</sup> session will be taken at the 25<sup>th</sup> session in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.
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### **VOTE OF THANKS TO THE HOST COUNTRY**

The Commission addresses its warmest appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria, in particular to its Ministry of Tourism, for its exceptional efforts to provide the best hospitality and for the arrangements made for the holding of the sixty-eighth meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe, in Sofia, from 31 May to 2 June 2023.

The Commission conveys its gratitude to the Director of the International and Visa Affairs Department of the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria and his team, for their tireless dedication and efforts for the successful meeting of the Commission and related events.

<b>LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS</b>
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**I. FULL MEMBERS / MEMBRES EFFECTIFS****ALBANIA / ALBANIE**

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