

**CALL FOR ACTION:**  
***Driving behavioural change for European sustainable destinations  
through trans-regional cooperation***

*Brussels, the 16th of September 2019*

**OUR REASONS FOR THIS CALL FOR ACTION**

Whereas, the **Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism - NECSTouR** drives an interregional cooperation strategy to support regions and their Destination Management and Marketing Organisations in delivering **the tourism of tomorrow through** the priorities: ***Smart Destinations, Socio cultural balance, Skills & talent, Safety and security and Statistics & measurability.***

Whereas, the **European Committee of the Regions opinion “Tourism as a driving force for regional cooperation across the EU”** recognizes NECSTouR as a reference of tourism regional strategies driving sustainability.

Whereas, the European Commission Communication COM(2010) 352 **“Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe”** highlights NECSTouR as a key stakeholder with who develop developing a system of indicators for the sustainable management of destinations.

Whereas the **Council Conclusions “The competitiveness of the tourism sector as a driver for sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion in the EU for the next decade”** COMPET 434, adopted on 27/05/2019 **“ENCOURAGES** Member States ... to promote policies and practices in favour of competitive, sustainable, accessible and inclusive tourism policies contributing to reaching the EU climate goals and the goals of the Paris Agreement in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals”.

Whereas the tourism industry **contributes to the European economy** accounting for more than 10% of EU GDP and almost 12% of the total labour force and touches a range of sectors and EU policies for its horizontal nature.

Whereas Tourism is more than a value chain but a **“Visitors Economy”** for covering the whole traveller journey including a diversity of suppliers at each stage of which 90% are SMEs.

Whereas, the **United Nations recognized the potential of the tourism sector** to contribute to the **2030 Sustainable Development Agenda** and the **17 Sustainable Development Goals**.

Whereas, **regional authorities are key drivers for sustainable change in the territory**, have the capacity to develop effective tourism policies with the potential of contributing to the above mentioned 2030 Sustainable Development targets.

**Whereas the European Tourism Manifesto**, an initiative gathering 50 public and private stakeholders representing the tourism sector and beyond, advocates for the creation of a **strategic plan for an environmentally sustainable tourism industry** (including systems, technology and infrastructure) in order to contribute to climate and sustainable job creation goals, **in cooperation with all relevant SDGs and international bodies as appropriate.**

Whereas, NECSTouR regions and their partners<sup>1</sup> are committed to implement the **Barcelona Declaration *Better Places to Live, Better Places to Visit***<sup>2</sup> to balance people, place and business.

### STAKEHOLDERS BEHIND THIS CALL FOR ACTION

**NECSTouR**, the **Network of European Regions for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism**, bringing together 36 European Regions, and 30 academic organisations and sustainable tourism business associations and networks;

**The Travel Foundation;**

**The European Tourism Association (ETOA);**

**The European Travel Commission;**

Agree to jointly **call for European action** as the legacy of the conference “***Driving sustainable destinations change through trans-regional cooperation***”, held in Brussels on September the 16<sup>th</sup>.

***We invite all the NECSTouR’s members, all the European Regions and all the different stakeholders – representing public, private, citizens at different governmental levels from local to international, to support this declaration and join us in its implementation.***

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<sup>1</sup> Europa Nostra, European Travel Commission and European Cultural Tourism Network with the support of the European Heritage Alliance 3.3.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.necstour.eu/better-places-to-live-better-places-to-visit>

## OUR CALL

We call for

- 1. A European agenda for a “Sustainable Visitor Economy”** based on a long-term vision, with clear objectives, dedicated resources and performance indicators. This strategy should lead destinations to achieve smart and sustainable growth, address climate change and improve resource efficiency, embrace digitalisation, boost skills, deliver market intelligence and optimise the potential that tourism has as one of the drivers of the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.
- 2. Endorsement of the Barcelona Declaration *Better Places to Live, Better Places to Visit*** principles:
  - ✓ *Smart and inclusive governance.*
  - ✓ *Adding value to the sense of place.*
  - ✓ *Using a holistic vision for marketing and preservation.*
  - ✓ *Balancing place, people and business.*
  - ✓ *Connecting people to people.*
- 3. A European Statistical Governance, which recognises the socio-economic importance of the Visitor Economy**, measures sustainable tourism at sub-national level for regions to benchmark official data, that enables evidence-based policy decision for effective destination management with accurate intelligence, combining official statistics and big data.
- 4. Smart European Union funding targeting the Visitor Economy challenges**, both specifically and from a cross-cutting approach, due to its direct impact on European policies, visible and flexible to reply to the long-term needs of the destinations and businesses.
- 5. A pan-European dialogue** to support destinations and their ecosystems in delivering the European Visitors Economy agenda in a sustainable way, while generating the behavioural change which is needed to flourish.

Initiated by:



In cooperation with:

