

## MEETING SUMMARY

# High level meeting on Tourism policies for sustainable and inclusive growth

2-3 October 2017  
OECD, Paris



## High Level Meeting on Tourism Policies for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth, OECD Headquarters, 2- 3 October

### Meeting Summary

Tourism Ministers and Representatives of OECD Member and Partner Countries (Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Egypt, Lithuania, Morocco, Peru, the Philippines, Romania, South Africa), together with industry representatives and international organisations, assembled under the Chairmanship of Greece, on 2-3 October, to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> session of the Tourism Committee.

With more than 200 participants, the High Level Meeting on Tourism Policies for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth gathered senior policy makers from 45 countries, including 8 Ministers (Greece, Belgium, Iceland, Ireland, Spain, Turkey, Brazil, Morocco) and 6 Vice Ministers and Secretaries of State (Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, Peru). The discussions were enriched by the participation of 17 industry leaders representing Accor, AirBnb, Blablacar, European Tourism Association (ETOA), EXCELTUR, GuesttoGuest, HOTREC, International Air Transport Association (IATA), International Union of Railways (UIC), Mise en Place Hospitality Group, STR, TEMES S.A., the Icelandic Tourism Industry Association, the Travel Industry Association of Canada (TIAC), Turkish Airlines, the World Economic Forum (WEF), and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). The European Commission, UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), UN Environment, UNESCO and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) were also active participants.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss major advances in the implementation of policies and programmes to support sustainable and inclusive tourism growth. The meeting facilitated open discussions on the long term objectives for tourism development, and how an effective, forward-looking, whole-of-government approach can help achieve these objectives. Participants explored the multi-dimensional implications of megatrends and how they will shape the future of tourism to 2040, and reviewed policy approaches to better mobilise and target tourism investment, stimulate growth and maximise the economic and social returns generated by the sector.

#### Keynote addresses

Ms. Elena Kountoura, Minister of Tourism of Greece and Chair of the meeting, opened the event by highlighting the role of tourism as bridge that unites people and nations, brings cultures closer together, and promotes the exchange of ideas.

The Secretary General of the OECD, Mr. Angel Gurría, delivered inspiring opening remarks calling on policymakers to develop robust whole-of-government strategies to ensure tourism is a force for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Ms. Maryann Ferenc, SME entrepreneur and Member of the U.S. Secretary of Commerce's Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, noted that true collaboration between private and public-sector entities was invaluable in efforts to reach workable solutions that can be implemented in a reasonable time frame.

Mr. Alvaro Nadal Belda, Minister of Energy, Tourism and Digital Agenda, Spain, encouraged policy makers to diversify destinations, to promote social inclusiveness and quality jobs, and invest in energy efficiency and digitalization in order to foster a sustainable, profitable and workable tourism sector.

## Fostering a whole-of-government approach in tourism

Participants discussed the need to move towards more coherent and comprehensive approaches in tourism policy making. Mr. George Tziallas, Secretary General, Tourism Policy & Development, Greece, moderated the session and reflected on how the responsibility of governments has changed over time to include a greater focus on working with stakeholders to adopt a common forward looking vision.

Mr. Numan Kurtulmuş, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Turkey, delivered keynote remarks on the importance of tourism as a cultural mediation instrument against discrimination, and the need to provide solid infrastructure to ensure the enhancement and diversification of the sector.

Lead off speakers for this session were Ms. Ana Mendes Godinho (Portugal), Mr. Ryoichi Matsuyama (Japan), Mr. Slawomir Tokarski (European Commission), Mr. Roger Wigglesworth (New Zealand), Ms. Gloria Guevara Manzo (WTTC), and Ms. Sabine Hepperle (Germany).

During the roundtable discussion participants highlighted the following key themes:

- **Strong leadership** is needed to support policy makers to adopt a medium- to long-term focus, through the definition of clear road maps and roles to coordinate action, and maximise synergies between different entities, encompassing all levels of government (Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, New Zealand, Peru, European Commission, HOTREC).
- **Regular dialogue** between public sector, private sector and civil society is essential to ensure tourism competitiveness and alignment of objectives, (Croatia, Japan, Norway) and it is important to build awareness that tourism is a positive economic and social force that can benefit the whole community (Portugal, ETOA).
- “Every Minister is a Minister of Tourism” and a **coordinated response** is required to address the challenges that come with the growth in visitor numbers (Australia, France, Portugal, United States, HOTREC). Coordinating bodies should seek to leverage complementarities with related policy areas, including transport, environment, culture, security, education, agriculture, new technologies, digital economy, and wider economic policy (Morocco, UIC).
- The need for clear, simple and stable **regulatory frameworks** was advocated to promote technological innovation in the industry (Airbnb, TEMES, WTTC). Among the challenges identified, a specific focus was placed on the issue of safety and security (Romania, WEF).

## Keynote addresses

Ms. Lamia Kamal-Chaoui, Director of the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Local Development and Tourism, OECD, opened the discussion by highlighting that tourism needs to be more joined up with other policies to deliver on its potential, and underlined the unique capacity of the OECD to bring together many of the policy areas needed to support effective tourism development (SMEs, regional, urban and rural development, environment, transport, investment, digital, statistics etc.) and help countries prepare for the future.

Mr. Armando Peres, Advisor to the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Activities and Tourism, Italy, and Chair of the OECD Tourism Committee, underscored the Tourism Committee’s longstanding advocacy for a whole-of-government approach and its work on travel liberalisation and facilitation, statistics, jobs quality, inclusiveness, and sustainability.

Ms. Isabel Hill, Director, National Travel and Tourism Office, Department of Commerce, United States, welcomed the strong progress by countries in developing and implementing horizontally and vertically coordinated governance models. She also encouraged the inclusion of the private sector in policy

development and implementation, to address the issues of technology evolution, safety and security, and crisis management.

### **Analysing megatrends to better shape the future of tourism**

Participants discussed the important trends that will fundamentally change the environment for tourism in the years to come. Mr. Richard Kämpf, Head of Tourism Affairs, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Switzerland, moderated the session and described the consideration of future scenarios as a challenging but necessary task to ensure the sustainable development of the tourism industry, and to capitalise on challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Mr. Simon Ralph, Director External Affairs, International Air Transport Association, delivered a keynote address highlighting the main megatrends that are expected to affect the aviation industry to 2035, including the centre of gravity shifting towards the east, the increasing concern demonstrated by consumers and governments for greater sustainability, safety and security issues, infrastructure needs, and the increasing importance of big data.

Lead off speakers for this session were Ms. Eva Štravs Podlogar (Slovenia), Ms. Charlotte Bell (Travel Industry Association of Canada), Mr. Anthony Pickles (United Kingdom), Ms. Helena Rey (UN Environment), Mr. Frédéric Mazzella (Blablacar).

In the discussion that followed, participants outlined policies and mechanisms to identify and respond to key megatrends. The following issues were identified as being particularly relevant:

- **Sustainability** will be one of the main challenges for the sector, both in terms of environmental and social impacts on communities. Tourism can play a key role in driving the transition to a low-carbon and resource efficient economy (Austria, Netherlands, Slovenia, United States, UN Environment, Blablacar, EXCELTUR).
- **Evolving visitor demand** and **demographic changes** will have an impact on labour, as increased demand combined with ageing populations potentially resulting in workforce shortage (Australia, Japan, Slovenia). Demand and competitiveness are increasing, requiring the development of diversified tourism products and efforts to promote new destinations in order to spread the benefits of tourism and reduce seasonality (Croatia, Greece, Japan, Slovenia, United Kingdom, TIAC).
- **Enabling technologies** will play a key role in shaping the industry, the tourism experience, and travel safety and security (Portugal, TIAC). Data and strategic foresight are essential to bring currently unforeseen and emerging issues onto the strategic policy agenda and inform the development of comprehensive long-term plans (Finland, Iceland, Norway, STR).
- **Transport connectivity** between and within destinations can play a significant role in how destinations physically develop, influencing the mobility of visitors and the connectivity of tourist experiences (Australia, Ireland, Blablacar, UIC, Turkish Airlines).

### **Leveraging investment for sustainable and inclusive tourism growth**

Participants discussed the critical role of investment in managing tourism growth in a sustainable manner. Mr. Robert Owen-Jones, Assistant Secretary, Australian Competitiveness Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, moderated the session and opened the discussion by highlighting supply of labour, government support services and regional investment as major challenges when dealing with tourism growth.

Ms. Gabrielle Gauthey, President, Investment and Local Development, Caisse des Dépôts et consignations, France, delivered a keynote address emphasising the role of public actors in encouraging investment in infrastructure, development and the renovation of existing infrastructure.

Lead off speakers for this session were Mr. Rogers Martin Valencia Espinoza (Peru), Mr. Sébastien Valentin (Accor), Ms. Ilona Rehberg (Canada), Mr. Luis Fonseca de Almeida (ICAO), Mr. Javier Guillermo Molina (Mexico), and Mr. José Luis Zoreda (EXCELTUR).

In the discussion that followed, countries provided a high level overview of investment policies and identified the following key themes:

- **Active policies and programs** can serve to increase the level of private investment, through the provision of stable and certain environments. Governments should play a key role in providing investors with a better understanding of investment opportunities and trends in primary and secondary destinations (New Zealand, STR), while private and public funding should be coordinated towards a common vision (Canada, Italy, Slovenia, ICAO).
- Priority must be given to providing **financing tools for SMEs**, which form the backbone of the tourism industry, in coordination with investment in entrepreneurship and innovation (Canada, Greece, Italy, Mexico, Peru, United Kingdom).
- Investment should be mobilised to stimulate growth and maximise the **environmental, economic and social returns** generated by tourism, taking into account the local impacts and the accessibility of tourism (France, EXCELTUR, TEMES S.A.).
- Investment in **training and skills development, infrastructure, transport, safety and security** are key to attracting private investment (Portugal, United States, Accor).

### **Policy Statement - Tourism Policies for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth**

Countries and intergovernmental organizations endorsed the *Policy Statement - Tourism Policies for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*, which highlights the importance of tourism as an engine for economic, sustainable and inclusive growth and notes that moving towards coherent and comprehensive policy approaches will help countries to reframe tourism growth to better spread the benefits, address inequalities and improve the resilience of economies.

### **Towards a future policy agenda for tourism**

Looking ahead, Mr. Sergio Guerreiro, Senior Director Knowledge Management and Corporate Affairs, Turismo de Portugal, underscored that technology and sustainability will play a decisive role in the development of the industry, and will shape the role of governments in the future. He highlighted that governments and industry must be prepared to deal with changes in consumer profile and behaviour, in business models, in production of goods and services, and in the role of stakeholders.

Mr. Alain Dupeyras, Head of Tourism, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Local Development and Tourism, OECD, provided final remarks from the perspective of the OECD, identifying potential priority areas for future work of the Tourism Committee including: better management of tourism growth, finding the optimal policy mix to improve competitiveness, stronger evidence based data support for policies, and a rethinking of the role of government by working more closely with the private sector and aligning to the work of international organisations.