

**EUROPEAN TOURISM CONVENTION
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1. What are the main challenges for European Tourism in the next 10-20 years?

In particular, the medium (2030) and long-term (2050) development period will be shaped by the results of how successfully we will deal with the current COVID-19 crisis and how we will prepare the tourism ecosystems for the very likely future crises that tourism will have to face. **One thing is for sure, the tourism of the future will never be the same as it was before COVID-19.**

The development orientation **towards greener, healthier, digital and contactless tourism** will certainly remain the basic development paradigm in the next couple of years. The key and demanding tasks will be primarily on tourism companies, as they will have to adapt their business models, educate employees with the new skills and competencies and have to adapt their tourism services, products and supply chains to the new requirements of demanding tourism consumers with extremely changed behaviour due to COVID-19.

The new post-COVID-19 tourism era will also bring many new opportunities and new challenges, especially for **more sustainable - greener tourism and, above all, more information-accessible and data driven tourism**, which will enable the digital transition.

Experience with the current COVID - 19-crisis show that the focus of tourism flows is due to safe reasons oriented more on **cross-border and regional tourism**, rather than on long-distance tourism. The expected trend will most certainly remain also in the medium and long term and will require a **new approach and adjustment in the marketing and promotion of the European tourism**.

Tourism at not yet recognizable mostly hidden rural areas, but with rich cultural and natural potentials, will most certainly develop faster than urban destinations. In addition to safety requirements, new trends in the tourism market reveal the need to green and digitize tourist ecosystems in both rural and urban areas in order to make them more sustainable, smart and accessible.

The sustainable transport component and the transport accessibility of emerging new tourist ecosystems, including the availability of information and the digital literacy, will thus be extremely important in the future.

In addition, creating synergies of the tourism ecosystem with other ecosystems such as transport, industrial, environmental, social ecosystems are of a crucial importance in order to ensure a favourable framework conditions for the SMEs, Tour operators, destination management and all other actors of the tourism ecosystem.

2. What investment priorities are necessary for the sustainable recovery and resilience of the EU tourism ecosystem?

The pandemic was disruptive to all sectors of the tourism sector, businesses and destinations, but some parts of the sector have been affected more than others. The crisis has certainly affected SMEs the most, as many companies in this sector are small businesses. Given the often-limited financial resources and existing administrative barriers to accessing investment capital, tourism SMEs can survive the crisis and remain competitive in the long term only with a supportive business environment, direct, fast and easy access to investment resources. That will allow companies to adapt business models to the current COVID-19 reality and possible new crisis in the future, quickly and successfully.

The best way to help SMEs in tourism to recover quickly and adapt to the green and digital transition is good political support and a common and coordinated approach to using financial resources to invest in the renewal of the tourism industry and destinations.

The tourism ecosystem is very multiplicative in terms of economic indicators, but very specific, as it depends on the good functioning of many other subsystems, such as transport, health, free movement of people, industry and the common market, environment, social communities, etc.

Not only the tourism SMEs but also the destinations have been hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis, especially recognizable urban destinations. Domestic urban tourism is most likely to recover after 2021 if the health crisis ends, but the recovery of international tourism is likely to take years to be the same as it was before COVID-19.

Therefore, also regional and local destinations and communities will need appropriate investments in sustainable public infrastructure and incentives for sustainable management and development planning to become more green and smart.

Investment priorities for the sustainable recovery and resilience of the EU tourism ecosystems should therefore focus, inter alia, also on promoting multimodal low-carbon transport systems, on building resource-efficient tourism facilities, investing in innovation and the investments in the continued use and knowledge about the digital technologies.

Tourism ecosystems also need investments in promoting the adoption of responsible business practices and in the promotion the integration of tourism businesses into low-carbon and sustainable supply chains.

The full recovery of European tourism will be time-consuming and demanding in terms of the necessary investments in all components of the tourism ecosystems.

The green recovery of tourism ecosystems and the long-term satisfactory resilience of the sector will therefore require coordinated sectoral action, policy coordination and sound decision-making at national and the EU level.