



Deputy Minister's Office

Please find below a statement by the Deputy Minister of Tourism of Cyprus, Mr Savvas Perdios, on the occasion of the European Tourism Convention:

- What are the main challenges for European tourism in the next 10-20 years?
- What investment priorities are necessary for the sustainable recovery and resilience of the EU tourism ecosystem?

Tourism by nature is a sector vulnerable to unpredictable and exogenous factors that affect its performance and create imbalances. Consequently, as it is often unexpectedly affected, so it affects other sectors of the economy, especially in small and island member states such as Cyprus, which rely heavily on it. Even though, tourism is rapidly affected by various factors, it is observed that it often recovers rapidly.

The coronavirus pandemic is another uncertain, exogenous factor that has come to leave its mark, not only on European but also on world tourism for years to come. The current crisis involves additional difficulty, as it is still unknown when the situation will be epidemiologically under control, so that forecasts can be made for the coming years. What can be said with confidence is that the recovery will be gradual and the situation will not be fully normalized before 2024.

So, what are the main challenges for European tourism in the coming years? The first and main challenge is that tourism itself will change and will become more demanding. After all, this had already begun to appear before the crisis. More specifically, new trends in the sector had already begun to emerge, which were reinforced by the realities brought by the pandemic. These trends are none other than: the shift to "slow tourism, the emphasis on environmentally friendly holidays, extended holidays that can be combined with work, the organization of hybrid events and conferences with minimized physical presence and expansion of virtual presence, development of health and wellness tourism, tourism of special interests and experiences, tourism of smaller groups to avoid crowds, luxury tourism with private yachts and jets where possible, regional holidays and private bookings without many intermediaries.

Given the above, in order for European tourism to survive and emerge more resilient from the current crisis, it needs to adapt to the new requirements and upgrade its product faster. The Deputy Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Cyprus has launched the National Tourism Strategy 2030, which refers to many of the aforementioned trends and includes: The modification of our tourism marketing, the development of special forms of tourism, the targeted sponsorship plans to the tourism industry to improve the tourism product, the promotion of quality certification standards, a more flexible legal framework and the development of the inland tourism product.



Having outlined the above, we share the view that the aforementioned approach can be applied to the investment priorities for the sustainable development and the resilience of the EU tourism ecosystem. At a European level, emphasis should therefore be placed on three main areas, namely: a) digitization, b) the development of inland, mountainous, rural and remote areas, and c) green development.

More specifically and in relation to a), the recommendations for "social" or more precisely, "physical distancing" of the population can be implemented through the digitization of the experience of visitors at museums, monuments and other popular places of tourist interest. In addition, the overall experience of tourists in European

destinations should be contactless (i.e. online check-in and access to rooms, orders at the restaurants and so on).

Regarding b), the development of inland, mountainous, rural and remote areas, there are many things that can be done. Emphasis should be placed on health and wellness tourism with the establishment of appropriate centers in suitable areas, the development of agrotourism accommodation and the restoration of the village centers, the creation of theme parks and centers of adventure and special interests, the construction of Glamping or Eco Lodges units. Furthermore, utilization of traditional arts, crafts and recipes has to be enhanced and better connection of remote areas with the airports and ports of each country needs to be established.

Finally, in relation to point (c), green development, this should be the epicentre for all above actions, always having in mind the use of renewable energy sources and implementation of recycling practices wherever possible.

Savvas Perdios
Deputy Minister of Tourism