



Written Contribution for the European Tourism Convention by State Secretary, Mona Keijzer, Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy:

1. What are the main challenges for European tourism in the next 10 to 20 years?

The main challenge at this time is for us, in Europe to work together to ensure the sustainable recovery of the tourism sector in the long term, making it resilient to current and future crises. We have seen – and are now seeing again – just how vulnerable yet how resilient the sector is. It is important that recovery is sustainable so that future generations can also enjoy all of the beautiful places Europe has to offer.

Before COVID-19 we witnessed tremendous growth in global tourism. Tourism contributes significantly to the European economy. At the same time, we saw that some cities and popular destinations in particular were becoming faced with too many visitors due to the increase of tourists and the quality of life in those places was being threatened, despite the opportunities for expanding tourism in other places. It will be a challenge not to revert back to the old situation but instead to ensure that future developments in the tourism sector strike a balance between what visitors want and what locals need. It is therefore important to limit the negative impact of tourist activity on local life to an acceptable minimum. The challenge will be to ensure that places are not only attractive destinations for tourists, but that they are also pleasant environments for those who live and work there. At the same time, it is important to expand the tourism options currently available, inviting people to visit different destinations and to do so outside the usual travel periods.

Making the sector more sustainable is another big challenge for the years ahead. In the context of the climate goals, the tourism sector carries responsibility as well to increase sustainability, prevent pollution and waste, and minimise CO₂ emissions within their sector.

No one knows what the tourism market and sector will look like once the coronavirus is under control. We see that, like many others across Europe, Dutch people are rediscovering their own country. Once international travel resumes again on a wider scale, it will be important for tourists to feel safe – both en route and at their destination. This will require a lot of effort from business owners when it comes to health and safety measures. New technologies and data can help us make this transition. Together we face the challenge of making sure that, in practice, we use them to our advantage.

Finally, an overlapping challenge is to ensure good cooperation between the different stakeholders, so that we can work together (entrepreneurs, governments, knowledge institutions and destination marketing organizations) on a sustainable and balanced recovery.

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

In order to ensure a resilient sector in the future, it is important to focus on what is necessary for the sector's long-term recovery. It is a priority to invest in balanced tourism development, by stimulating the sustainability and digitization of the sector

It is important to invest in knowledge and data regarding both supply and demand in the tourism sector. It is also important to make use of new technologies and to support businesses that are doing so. The European Commission and EU member states can play an active role in this regard by sharing knowledge and best practices.

It will also be a challenge to re-establish tourists' trust in the sector. This can be done by setting preconditions for safe destinations and safe transport. It is important that the EU support this by playing a role in coordinating travel advisories and health measures. Communicating information clearly to the public and to businesses is important in this regard.