

## Workshop 15:

Supporting sustainable growth in tourism within coastal regions



## Report

### 1. Three key messages:

In terms of employment in sea related sectors, coastal tourism, as well as offshore and coastal wind energy, and shipping sectors, plays a prominent role. It accounts for 4% of the Community GDP, 4% of the total labour force and 8 million jobs, but with the related sectors such figures rise to 11% of the Community GDP, 12% of the total labour force and 24 million jobs.

Within this context, the three main messages developed within the framework of the Coastal Tourism workshop are:

- First message: sustainable development is crucial in coastal regions;
- Second message: tools for sustainability: product diversification, indicators, networking, synergies, studies
- Third message: all round support and coordination (political, stakeholder, consumer) needed.

### 2. Key questions and messages from the floor:

A representative of the cruise industry suggested that one of the three "key messages" should stress the positive economic impact generated by cruise tourism in European coastal regions and islands. Although the cruise industry's positive impact was mentioned during the workshop

presentations, it was felt that a generalistic as opposed to sectorial approach was preferable within the context of the "key messages".

### **3. Summary of the interventions from the panel**

**Francesco Ianniello** opened the session stressing the fact that the Treaty of Lisbon creates a new legal basis entirely devoted to tourism. EU Tourism policy in fact has developed, through the years, under the umbrella of different EU policies.

He informed the participants on the CALYPSO social tourism initiative, in order to address the issue of seasonality and promote access for groups for which going on holiday has progressively become complicated and particularly seniors citizens, youth disabled and family tourism, with the objective of making tourism a sustainable sector from an economic, social and cultural point of view.

He also described "EDEN – European Destinations of Excellence", an initiative led by DG ENTR, particularly addressed to all Member States national administrations in charge of tourism, in order to promote lesser known destinations across the European Union. The project is based on national competitions that take place every year and result in the selection of a tourist "destination of excellence" for each participating country. Through the selection of destinations, EDEN effectively achieves the objective of drawing attention to the values, diversity and common features of European tourist destinations. It enhances the visibility of emerging European destinations, creates a platform for sharing good practices across Europe and promotes networking between awarded destinations. "Aquatic tourism" is the theme for the 2010 edition.

Francesco Ianniello also informed participants that, according to a European Commission survey conducted by Gallup European citizens still want to go on holiday in spite of the limited budget available due to the current economic and financial crisis. Therefore, he underlined the fact that economic operators could take the opportunity to innovate and

develop new services and facilities in order to satisfy the needs of this changing segment of the market.

**Enzo Finocchiaro** highlighted that 2.300 are the hotels alongside 40 km of the Rimini coast and that 2/3 of the total number of tourists visit the Rimini province in July and August, making the area a mass tourism destination. In order to tackle the issue of sustainability of the tourism sector, the Rimini Province launched initiatives aiming at involving economic operators, local authorities and consumers. In 2001, the Province of Rimini participated in the first International Conference on Sustainable Tourism, which produced the "10 golden rules for sustainable tourist" and the "Chart of Rimini on sustainable tourism". Other relevant initiatives include the award of the prize to the most sustainable beach and the reimbursement of the ticket to tourists arriving by train to their holiday destination.

He drew up some conclusions:

- In order to develop sustainable coastal tourism is important to develop a long-term strategy with the support of economic operators which, in turn, need to achieve results in the short term;
- Benchmarking is important, but even more important is to avoid exact duplications of others' ideas.

**Françoise Breton** developed her presentation around the question whether it is possible to use ICZM (Integrated Coastal Zone Management) to measure the sustainability of tourism. She stressed that there can not be control without measurement; therefore it is necessary to develop indicators for assessing the European State of the coast in order to be able, in turn, to assess the sustainability of tourism sector. In her view, the growth rate of the tourism sector should not be linked to the growth of building sector (e.g. number of hotels), since urban development and planning policies need to be compatible with the coastal landscape. She mentioned that the impact of the cruise industry can be positive in terms

of economic growth, while having an impact on the environment, in terms of externalities.

**Alan Vella** highlighted that the EU, as a tourist destination is growing in terms of arrivals but has lost market share in favour of Asia and the Pacific region.

One of the main issues that is being addressed at EU level concerns the seasonality, with the twofold objective of unveiling the unexploited potential of tourist destinations in the low seasons, and diversifying the offer, so that EU tourism industry can regain market share at global level. Alan Vella thereafter recalled the recent EU policy initiatives on tourism, namely the Communications of 2006 "*A renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism*" and 2007 "*Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism*". These Communications are at the core of subsequent initiatives like EDEN, CALYPSO, European Tourism Forum, NECSTOUR and Knowledge Networks that could be of direct interest to stakeholders involved in coastal tourism.

He also referred to the ongoing study on tourist facilities in ports, carried out by DG MARE, with the objective of assessing the benefits for ports to invest in environmentally sustainable facilities for receiving tourists, notably to cruise tourism, to the benefits of coastal regions and islands. The study is demonstrating that cruise tourism can continue playing an important role for the economy of Europe and at the same time address the issue of environmental sustainability.

**Nigel Adams** highlighted that the Wales coast expands over 1200 km, 70% of which is designated for environmental importance.

The preparation of a Welsh Coastal Tourism Strategy was identified as one of the key national actions of the Wales Spatial Plan. The purpose of the strategy is to identify a clear way forward for the development of Coastal Tourism, which realises and builds on the economic potential of the Welsh

coastline, whilst respecting its environmental qualities and recognising the importance of achieving direct benefits to coastal communities. Research suggests that there has been a decline in long holiday in coastal tourism over the past decade and an increase in short breaks. Tourism on the coast needs to adapt to meet the demands of new markets in order to prosper.

The vision of the strategy is to have an integrated year round coastal tourism industry.

From a methodology point of view, the preparation of the strategy by a consultancy is being overseen by a steering group, subsequently it will be issued for consultation and then finalised taking account of the consultation responses.

**Jamila Madeira** MEP focused the presentation on her own-initiative European Parliament report "Impact of tourism on coastal regions". Parliament recalls that a significant part of the European population lives on the 89 000 km stretch of mainland European coast. Tourism, while typically the main activity in these regions, positively contributing to social and economic development in terms of increasing GDP and employment levels, can also have adverse territorial effects arising from the seasonal nature of activity, employment of unskilled labour, lack of integration between coast and hinterland, lack of economic diversification, or the degradation of the natural and cultural heritage.

These are the main highlights of the report:

- It is important to consider the social dimension in the tourism sector;
- Initiatives aimed at the protection of the environment should be perceived as an opportunity and not a barrier to development of the tourism sector;
- Structural funds can play a very important role in promoting sustainable coastal tourism;

- There is a strong need to have an integrated approach to coastal tourism.

The report, in particular

- Stresses the importance of mobilising Structural Funds for coastal regions;
- Suggests creating a European sectoral network under the umbrella of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology and the Seventh Framework Programme;
- Advocates the creation of a database on maritime projects in order to ensure transparency as regards EU expenditure in the coastal zones in order to quantify the level of investment and to analyse the impact of the supported initiatives in those regions;;
- Recommends that the coastal Member States ensure high visibility for the projects selected and simplify the procedures for access to funding, with a view to attracting private financing for coastal tourism and facilitating the creation of partnerships between public authorities.

#### **4. Links to presentations and speeches by speakers, and other documentation relevant for the workshop**

Documents will soon be available on the website