

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 284 (2009)¹ The future of cultural tourism – towards a sustainable model

1. Cultural tourism is a valuable tool for the economic and artistic regeneration of historic sites and towns.

2. Heritage professionals, urban designers, civil engineers and artists should therefore work closely together in order to set up organisational arrangements with a view to delivering quality services and programmes designed to attract tourists particularly interested in cultural tourism.

3. Cultural tourism can contribute to shaping an area's distinctiveness, clarifying its heritage character and providing a framework to facilitate and celebrate diversity.

4. All stakeholders involved in tourism development should commit themselves to developing and promoting responsible and community-based tourism, while respecting the cultural identity of local residents and the sense of place, which is essential to the preservation of the distinctiveness and the attractiveness of historic sites.

5. Cultural tourism can best be developed when taking into account the dignity of local cultures and respecting them, thereby enriching the tourism experience and contributing to the development of pride and confidence among local communities.

6. In its Resolution 219 (2006) on reconciling heritage and modernity, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe highlighted the necessity to strike a balance between the protection of the historic urban heritage as an essential part of our identity and the need to modernise this heritage, which houses populations that must be allowed to continue to live in these neighbourhoods.

7. In the light of the above the Congress,

a. believing that one of the key cultural assets of cities is the diversity and cultural heritage of their populations and that the awareness and respect of the traditions, customs and cultural diversity of the host communities should be an integral part of cultural tourism programmes;

b. convinced of the valuable contribution that the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue can provide for promoting intercultural exchanges and the shaping of cultural tourism programmes to foster awareness and respect for different forms of cultural expression and the perception of cultural diversity as a resource and an enrichment for the development of a pluralistic democracy;

c. convinced of the need to recognise cultural diversity as a source of wealth for human heritage and to recognise

cultural pluralism as a basic condition for peaceful coexistence and cultural stability within communities and cities, for the well-being of their citizens and for the social coherence and economic development of cities and regions;

d. convinced of the need to further develop interdisciplinary and thematically structured skills within local administrations in charge of tourist programmes, as well as private tourist agencies and organisations, so as to ensure a wide range of attractive cultural events and activities;

8. Calls on local and regional authorities to:

a. express explicitly their common commitment in favour of a responsible and community-based tourism approach, so as to avoid the commercial over-exploitation of historic sites;

b. ensure increased participation of citizens when proposing new urban planning concepts, by setting up consultation mechanisms at the level of city councils and by inviting citizens to actively interact with local and regional decision makers.

c. involve local communities in all stages of responsible tourism development, that is, planning, decision-making and implementation of tourism development strategies in their region, so as to ensure that tourism activities are compatible with the overall priorities agreed at local level;

d. encourage and support all forms of sustainable tourism that provide healthy interaction opportunities for tourists and locals and improve understanding of different cultures, customs, lifestyles, traditional knowledge and belief;

e. encourage proactive participation and involvement by all stakeholders including local and regional authorities, the private sector, tourism organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and youth associations, at all stages of tourism development strategies;

f. seek to make the best possible use of existing best practices in the domain of cultural tourism management, which have been successfully implemented in cities and regions, by disseminating them among the members of the Congress and giving them a prominent platform in local and regional media programmes;

g. reinforce and promote knowledge of environmental issues among all stakeholders, raising awareness of the fact that conservation and a sustainable use of the natural and built environment constitutes a basic investment in resources and is a source of financial benefit, to be drawn upon by the local communities exploiting those sites;

h. set up professional training sessions for tourist managers, key public policy implementation personnel and customer facing staff in public services, in order to include the sustainable dimension of tourism planning from the outset;

i. encourage a wider use of historic sites in order to ensure greater occupancy of historic buildings beyond their traditional use as conference centres or exhibition halls, thereby ensuring a more vibrant day/night economy capable of attracting a different type of tourist, by adding a new quality of services and programmes;

j. generate new job opportunities and self-employment opportunities for the local residents by involving them directly in tourism services and heritage protection and promotion projects and activities;

k. establish a consistent vision for cultural tourism by pooling resources and knowledge between local and regional authorities in order to develop guidelines that take into account the needs of visitors, the tourism industry and the host community;

l. to invite the European Association of Historic Towns and Regions supported by the Culture Programme of the European Union and in close partnership with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

to elaborate a set of guiding principles for the promotion of sustainable cultural tourism;

m. to invite the Committee on Culture and Education of the Congress to pursue targeted background research on evidence-based case studies and invite cities to contribute their own case study material in order to provide further input for guidelines on sustainable tourist development.

1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Regions on 4 March 2009 and adopted by the Congress on 5 March 2009, 3rd Sitting (see Document CPR(16)4REP, explanatory memorandum, rapporteur: G. Krug (Germany, R, SOC)).