

Objectives

The tourism sector is one of those hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rebuilding tourism is an opportunity for transformation with a focus on building more resilient communities and businesses through innovation, circularity, digitalization, sustainability, and partnerships.

This event will convene European government representatives, tourism institutions and international organisations to explore how sustainable tourism can build back greener towards a more sustainable tourism industry in a post-COVID scenario.

It will provide an overview of the impacts of COVID on the tourism sector and evaluate how stimulus packages and recovery plans could be aligned with a transition that meets health and safety requirements, leads to an inclusive green economy and meets the sustainable development agenda, and climate commitments.

Online event on 9 November
13:00 – 14:30 CET
in cooperation with OECD and UNECE

An aerial photograph of a coastal town with red-tiled roofs and a large island in the sea. The town is built on a hillside overlooking the water. The island is lush with greenery and has a rocky coastline. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

Transforming Tourism for a resilient and sustainable post-covid world

Programme

13:00 Welcome and introductions

Bruno Pozzi, Director, Europe Office, UNEP

13:05 Setting the scene

Dr Anna Spenceley, Chair of the IUCN Tourism and Protected Areas Specialist Group

13:15 Panel session

Sustainable tourism policies and practices during the COVID-19 recovery - needs, tools and benefits

Moderator: Marika Palosaari, Programme Coordinator, Europe office, UNEP

Panelists:

Anne Pluvinage-Nierengarten, Head of the Global Affairs Unit,

Directorate for European and International Affairs,

Ministry for Ecological Transition, France

Peter Haxton, Policy Analyst, OECD

Sergio Guerreiro, Director, Tourism Portugal

**Alina Szasz, Public Manager, Carpathian Sustainable
Tourism Center**

Tim Fairhurst, Secretary General, European Tourism Association

14:00 - 14:25 Questions and answers session

14:25 - 14:30 Closing remarks

Background

The causes and consequences of the zoonotic COVID-19 disease highlight the links between tourism and nature. Tourism has helped to conserve nature and protect endangered species but the pandemic and the subsequent closure of natural protected areas has had a destructive impact on the communities responsible for the protected areas.

With its high climate and environmental footprint, the growth of tourism over recent years has put achieving the climate targets of the Paris Agreement at risk. Transport-related greenhouse gas emissions from tourism have been estimated at 5% of all human originated emissions and could rebound sharply if the recovery of the sector is not aligned with climate goals.

The increased health and safety requirements related to the COVID-19 response increase waste generation and water use creating additional pressure in popular destinations where waste and water systems are already under significant stress.

The current planning of recovery and related investments by the public and private actors is critical in steering tourism models into sustainability and capturing opportunities for biodiversity conservation, climate action and circular economy.