

Gothenburg Declaration

GOTHENBURG DECLARATION ON CULTURAL TOURISM

This Declaration was made at the third annual conference of the European Cultural Tourism Network held on the 22nd to 24th of November in Göteborg, Sweden: The Creative Future. Cultural Tourism as a Sustainable and a Growing Sector.

It is based on the overall conclusions of the conference and incorporates the recommendations of the ECTN Interreg IIIc report on developing best practice in cultural tourism, which the conference endorsed. European Institutions and policy makers are invited to take account of the following key conclusions and recommendations from the conference, it:

- Focuses the need to actively involve the community in the development as well as management, of cultural tourism. The community has to first value its cultural heritage before they can effectively promote it to the visitor. This relates naturally to those working in the tourism industry as well.
- Highlights the need to raise the profile of cultural tourism so that people are aware of the important contribution it can make to economic development, regional diversity and sustainable development.
- Underlines the need for practitioners as well as academics to work more closely together to improve our understanding of cultural tourism: the motivations and characteristics of cultural tourists, the economic impact it has in terms of its stimulus to the creative industries, as well as a projection of a positive image for a destination.
- Emphasizes the need for education about local culture, for those working in the tourism industry. This is an issue of concern since an increasing number of migrant workers are employed in the hospitality industry.
- Calls for a close cooperation between policy makers, practitioners and researchers/educators in order to achieve an effective development of cultural tourism. Academics are required to help improve the evidence base on which policy makers take decisions and to educate and train those working in the industry. The practitioners are asked to take projects forward, share best practice and advise the policy makers on the practicalities of proposed policy initiatives.
- Stresses the vital role of Cultural Tourism in promoting peace and understanding between different cultures. To travel is to learn about different cultures, it enhances the traveller's appreciation of cultural and religious traditions, thereby enabling us to empathize with the people from different racial, social and religious backgrounds.

The conference also endorsed the recommendations of the ECTN Interreg IIIc Project Report, which are set out below:

1. That European Institutions, national, regional and local governments take account of the principles set out ECTN's Cardiff Declaration and Europa Nostra's Malta Declaration, in the development of policies and initiatives impacting on cultural tourism.
2. That Destination Managers:
 - § Undertake ongoing research into the needs and expectations of cultural tourists including on site surveys to measure visitor satisfaction.
 - § Monitor the impact of cultural tourists on the destination, the cultural heritage and the community and take immediate steps to address negative impacts.
 - § Develop effective partnerships between the cultural and tourism sectors including the private sector to jointly develop and oversee the implementation of strategies and plans to develop the cultural tourism potential of destinations where there is support from the local community.
 - § An integrated approach is adopted to the management of cultural tourism destinations with the active involvement of the local community and businesses using tools such as 'Integrated Quality Management' to progressively improve the quality of the visitor experience whilst securing economic, social and environmental benefits for the host community.
 - § Both the importance of

local culture and heritage and the benefits of cultural tourism are promoted to local residents. § Only cultural tourism products that are founded on quality and authenticity both historical and contemporary are supported. 3 That tourism businesses; seek to ensure that accommodation products offer a local sense in terms of design, furnishings and cuisine and that their front of house staff have an understanding of local culture and heritage including local cultural tourism products through familiarisation visits. 4 That ECTN works with Europa Nostra and other relevant European bodies to pilot the development of a European label for sustainable cultural tourism destinations based on the application of a practical destination management process, which reflects the principles, and recommendations set out in this report.