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Sustainable development and tourism: towards quality growth

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 1835 (2008)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined [Recommendation 1835 \(2008\)](#) on “Sustainable development and tourism: towards quality growth”. It has drawn the recommendation to the attention of the governments of member states and has communicated it to the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) and the Steering Committee for Education (CDED).
2. The Committee of Ministers has noted with interest the measures recommended by the Assembly in order to contribute to well-thought-out, qualitative development of tourism. Like the Assembly, it recognises the importance of quality for the development of a kind of tourism able to contribute not only to economic growth but also to the promotion of cultural diversity and dialogue.
3. In this context, the Committee of Ministers draws attention to the commitment to promoting sustainable development expressed at the highest political level by the Council of Europe Heads of State and Government at the Warsaw Summit in May 2005. It welcomes the extensive normative framework developed by the Council of Europe in this field and in a number of related fields referred to by the Assembly in its recommendation.² It calls on member states to refer to the provisions of these instruments and to incorporate them into their national legislation relating to tourism. It also draws attention to the provisions of its recommendations to member states No. R (94) 7 on a general policy for sustainable and environment-friendly tourism development; No. R (95) 10 on a sustainable tourist development policy in protected areas; and Rec(2003)1 on the promotion of tourism to foster the cultural heritage as a factor for sustainable development.
4. Tourism helps to bring peoples closer together and to raise awareness of the value of the natural and cultural heritage, while promoting respect for different cultures and constituting a factor for tolerance. Education has a specific role to play here, particularly as regards educating local populations and tourism professionals in a long term perspective. Education in this field must be guided by the principles of sustainable development and the fostering of ethical tourism. In this connection, the Committee of Ministers restates the importance of modern language teaching throughout Europe and emphasises the invaluable contribution made by the Council of Europe in this area.
5. Some aspects of the issues dealt with in the Assembly recommendation have been covered by activities in the CDED’s multi-annual project “Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights”. This project has promoted in particular the concept of ethical tourism geared to sustainable tourism, respectful of humankind, their culture and environment. The Council of Europe has thus made a special contribution to the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) in preparing a publication of good practices for dissemination on the Internet.

1. adopted at the 1044th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (10 December 2008)

2. The Committee of Ministers wishes to stress the relevance of the following Council of Europe conventions: [Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitat](#) (Bern, 1979); [Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe](#) (Granada, 1985); [European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage \(revised\)](#) (Valletta, 1992); [European Landscape Convention](#) (Florence, 2000); and [Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society](#) (Faro, 2005).



6. The question of the promotion of quality tourism also features in the work carried out by the CDPATEP under its terms of reference with the aim of reflecting further on the cultural heritage's social impact and its role in the context of citizenship. As part of its future activities, the CDPATEP intends to develop, for the attention of public authorities and practitioners in the member states, principles and methods for the sustainable development of local cultural and landscape resources, viewed as an expression of cultural diversity, promote integrated sustainable spatial development policies through the pooling of information and good practice at European level and exploit the possibilities of interpretation of the cultural and landscape heritage as a tool for mutual understanding between different populations and intercultural dialogue.

7. The Assembly also emphasises the human aspects of development, and in particular the affordability of holidays and physical accessibility of tourist destinations and sites, particularly for persons with disabilities. In this connection, the Committee of Ministers wishes to draw the Assembly's attention to the Council of Europe Conference on how to improve the lives of people with disabilities, held in Strasbourg on 29 and 30 October 2008 under the aegis of the Swedish Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers and the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The conference looked at ways of fostering the full participation, inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities in Europe. It also focused on promoting the recognition and application of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the implementation of the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015, to which the Assembly refers in its recommendation.