Recommendation 1133 (1990)[1]

European tourism policies

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Thanks to the free movement of persons and a rise in the duration of paid leave, tourism as a form of recreation has become available to the broad mass of the population and is part of the everyday lives of millions of individuals. The tourist industry has become a key sector of the economy and a significant factor in growth and development. Tourism creates jobs and wealth, generates investment and regional development, and is a complex, intersectorial activity, the economic, social and cultural importance of which is poorly understood and therefore often underestimated.

2. The cultural aspects of tourism should be integrated in tourism policies. The negative effects of mass tourism on the cultural heritage should be registered as well as the cultural attractions. The objectives of tourism should be differentiated and planning adjusted accordingly. Attention should be given to education and preparation, but also to widening access. Greater attention should be given to marrying tourism with the promotion of culture. This is particularly relevant at the present in the development of tourism in Central and Eastern Europe at a time when these countries are opening up to democracy and the peoples of Europe are coming together once again. Tourism involves the movement of individuals. Its potential for increasing understanding between peoples depends upon recognition of tourists as individuals.

3. Awareness of the major environmental problems and growing concern for healthier lifestyles have generated an increasing need for leisure activity which is close to nature and restful.

4. In addition, the crisis of agriculture calls for solutions permitting that sector to maintain its economic role and offering the countryside an important means of development.

5. Tourism is also a factor in the North/South dialogue ; it is one of a number of ways of helping the less-developed countries to emerge from their marginal economic position, and these countries must be given the opportunity to derive due advantage, particularly economic, from it, proper account being paid to their national prerogatives and their economic, social, cultural and environmental development. Encouragement should also be given to the idea of tourism from the lesser developed countries.

6. Unfortunately, tourism in recent years has evolved into an insufficiently controlled mass phenomenon, which may cause landscapes to become deteriorated, the environment to be degraded, the soil to be eroded, the water to be polluted, cultures to be denatured, cultural identities to be lost...

7. Well-conceived agricultural and tourism policies could permit, on the one hand, agriculture to continue to fulfill its multiple functions as a supplier of food, a host to tourism and a guardian of the environment and, on the other, tourism to meet the objective need for a ‘‘soft tourism", which is respectful of the environment and the quality of life.

8. It is, therefore, essential to allow rural tourism to become an integral part of policy in the relevant sectors : protection of the natural and built heritage, agriculture policy, regional policy, soil use, etc

1. Assembly debate on 29 September 1990 (12th Sitting) (see Doc. 6270, report of the Committee on Agriculture, Rapporteur : Mr Klejdzinski) ; Doc. 6273, report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, Rapporteur : Mr Ewing ; Doc. 6283, report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, Rapporteur : Mr Dimmer ; and Doc. 6300Doc. 6300, report of the Committee on Culture and Education, Rapporteur : Mr Müller. Text adopted by the Assembly on 29 September 1990 (12th Sitting).

9. European Tourism Year 1990 has been proclaimed by the European Community, and there must be extensions to it ; here is an opportunity for the Council of Europe and the governments of the member states to take stock of the many, albeit scattered and fragmentary, achievements attained in this sphere, and to realise the need to define the general aims of a concerted European policy to promote quality tourism as a factor for progress and development both of the individual and of the economy, without detriment to the ideals and values upheld by the Organisation.

10. The European Parliament, in its resolution of13 July 1990 on the resources needed to protect the environment from potential damage caused by mass tourism, as part of European Year of Tourism, has identified many of the key problems and called for action on the level of the European Community. The Assembly calls on the governments of all member states to apply, where applicable, the measures contained in the European Parliament resolution.

11. In addition, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite the governments of member states :

11.1. to work towards a better understanding of tourism in all its aspects by, among other things, developing studies and research, at university level and within governments and national parliaments, by setting in place appropriate structures to foster a multidisciplinary approach, with a mandate to monitor and forecast the trend of this phenomenon and having the necessary decision-making powers and budgetary authority ;

11.2. to promote a non-destructive form of quality tourism in Europe through better geographical and seasonal distribution, that is, measures to encourage tourism out of season, the staggering of holidays on a concerted basis in Europe, the diversification of all types of tourism, especially cultural tourism, and the availability of low-cost accomodation for visitors throughout the entire continent ;

11.3. to implement tourism and land use policies which cause a minimum of harm to the environment and agriculture, and to assess thoroughly the environmental and social impact of tourist facilities before allowing their construction ;

11.4. to facilitate access to this type of recreation for every sector of the population, special attention being given to tourism for the disabled, which is now growing fast, and to tourism for the elderly, particularly because the population in Europe is ageing, and to the requisite adjustments in structures and staffing which such tourism entails ;

11.5. to promote a rural tourism which is capable, by respecting the environment and the local cultural identity, of achieving the ‘‘social contract" which, in an integrated European rural policy, will guarantee the maintenance of an ecological, cultural and social balance between town and country, and a varied and lasting agriculture ;

11.6. to promote regional food specialities and traditional styles of cooking, which constitute an important part of the European cultural heritage ;

11.7. to encourage the development of a code of ethics among tourism professionals, respecting the rights of consumers, as well as seeking to educate tourists to understand their obligations and develop a sense of responsibility towards the landscapes and places visited and the people encountered.

12. The Assembly also recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

12.1. by way of an extension to European Tourism Year, move beyond the stage of scattered, piecemeal achievements and to that end convene a meeting at all-European level of the various bodies involved in tourism - governments and members of parliament, together with professionals and users - in order to define together the priority aims of a concerted European policy, and the specific contribution which the Council of Europe, because of its structure and terms of reference, is particularly well placed to make in this field ;

12.2. to consider, particularly in the context of co-operation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the desirability of reactivating certain proposals that have been made in the Council of Europe, such as, for example, the drawing up of a European code of conduct for tourists, and of encouraging wider ratification of certain conventions and agreements ;

12.3. increase the resources allocated to the intergovernmental sector of the Council of Europe for activities connected with the countryside, and rural tourism in particular, and to act on the proposals generated by the European Campaign for the Countryside, not least through joint action with OECD, which has launched a substantial programme in this field in the wake of the campaign.