

Official statement

ASCAME calls for Proactive Mediterranean Governance to Boost Resilience of Tourism Sector

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance for global tourism policymakers and industry leaders to **activate a more proactive and decisive approach**, to enhance the sector's resilience.

The **Mediterranean is the world's leading tourism** area with nearly 400 million tourists: 32% of all international arrivals and 30% of global revenues. It accounts for 13% of exports, 23% of the services sector and employs more than 20 million people. The region has 20% of the world's hotel accommodation capacity. It has 10.000 destinations, some 100.000 hotels and one million restaurants. However, despite these numbers, **tourism remains heterogeneous and fragmented between the two shores of the Mediterranean.**

Overall, the pandemic has reminded **tourism policy makers and industry leaders that they are equally crisis managers**. This requires a posture that understands and accepts the imminence of various threats to the sector and the resultant need to activate a proactive approach to enhance its readiness to **meet the challenges of the present and future.**

ASCAME suggests that this decisive leadership should be underscored by meaningful partnerships and synergies; data-driven policies; innovative thinking and adaptation and human capacity-building. Other considerations can include aggressive approaches to product diversification; the establishment of effective, real-time information systems; and a **commitment to sustainable tourism development** that balances multi-interests and future considerations whether economic, social, human, cultural and, indeed, environmental.

The pandemic has highlighted the need for the tourism sector to establish a task force or an action committee that can be immediately activated at the onset of a crisis.

This crucial asset would provide important **advantages in crisis management experiences** in regard to ensuring swift responses, targeted communication, balance of information between warning, assurance and general cross-sectorial cooperation and collaborations. This would allow for the leveraging of diverse strengths, skills and resources to achieve common goals. As a result of strengthened relationships among stakeholders, the **capacity to identify risks** early and implement effective mitigation and recovery strategies is also likely to be enhanced.

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ASCAME will focus on key components of the industry where change is mandatory, identifying the steps that need to be taken and **consolidating solutions to be implemented**. And, on top of that, ASCAME will keep on **tackling issues intrinsic to sustainability**, such as economic model variations, climate impact, tourism's environmental impact, coastal and marine shifts as well as agricultural and carbon neutral policies.

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