

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Recommendation Rec(2003)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the promotion of tourism to foster the cultural heritage as a factor for sustainable development

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 15 January 2003
at the 824th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18), signed in Paris on 19 December 1954, the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (ETS No. 121), signed in Granada on 3 October 1985, the European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised) (ETS No. 143), signed in Valletta on 16 January 1992, and the European Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176), signed in Florence on 20 October 2000;

Having regard to the resolutions of the 4th European Conference of Ministers responsible for the Cultural Heritage, held in Helsinki on 30-31 May 1996, and in particular Resolution No. 2 on the cultural heritage as a factor of sustainable development;

Having regard to Recommendation No. R (97) 2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on sustained care of the cultural heritage against physical deterioration due to pollution and other similar factors, of 4 February 1997;

Having regard to the work carried out in the Council of Europe and in particular:

- Recommendation No. R (94) 7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on a general policy for sustainable tourism and environment-friendly tourism development;
- Recommendation No. R (95) 10 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on a sustainable tourist development policy in protected areas;
- Recommendation 1133 (1990) on European tourism policies and Resolution 1148 (1998) on the need to accelerate the development of tourism in central and eastern Europe, adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
- the declarations adopted at the European Symposia of Historic Towns by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe;

Bearing in mind the work of other international organisations, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco), the European Union, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Icomos) and the World Tourism Organisation;

Acknowledging that tourism helps to bring peoples together, to develop the European identity and to raise awareness of the value of the cultural heritage of peoples in their diversity, while promoting respect for different cultures and constituting a factor for tolerance;

Affirming that the cultural heritage is, in itself, a unique and irreplaceable asset and that its conservation is part of the process of sustainable development;

Convinced that the cultural heritage possesses an intrinsic value greater than its tourist value, that cultural tourism is but one of the uses of this heritage and that its conservation, in its authenticity to be handed down to future generations, is an absolute priority;

Aware of the risks to the cultural heritage, local populations and cultures, constituted by the excessive and uncontrolled development of tourism, and conscious of the risks of cultural uniformity and loss of identity that may result,

Recommends that the governments of member states:

- draw on the principles and methods listed in the appendix to this recommendation in drawing up and implementing their tourism and development policies;
- ensure the wide dissemination, through each country's appropriate media channels, of the present recommendation, its appendix and its explanatory report to the local authorities and professional circles involved, urging them to put the underlying principles and methods into practice in their local areas.

Appendix to Recommendation Rec(2003)1

Taking simultaneous account of the facts of tourism and the vital need to protect the heritage

1. As well as individual buildings, sites and settlements, the cultural heritage of Europe, within the meaning of the present recommendation, includes cultural landscapes, urban and rural, representing the interaction of man and nature. They illustrate the evolution of human society and settlement over time, within the physical constraints and opportunities of their natural environment and under the influence of social, economic and cultural forces both external and internal.

Establishing general frameworks for managing the sensitive relationship between tourism and cultural heritage is essential in order to:

- safeguard the heritage and maintain its authenticity as a priority both for its cultural value and as an irreplaceable asset of the tourism industry;
- make cultural tourism an integral element of sustainable development;
- diversify the supply of tourist activities in the historic environment and extend these activities over the year, in order to avoid the risk of excessive tourism at particular sites, with the aim of mitigating the adverse economic, cultural and

social effects of the concentration of tourist flows on a small number of sites of symbolic or emblematic significance, often over short periods of time each year;

- ensure that the specific features of the sites and their fragility set the conditions for access, generally giving priority to individual visitors and families, thus enabling local people to welcome tourists and allow them to better understand the specific value of the cultural heritage. Group visits, however, require specific solutions on a larger scale, from encouragement to restriction in the case of excessive use; management arrangements may vary depending on the time of year;

- restrict excessive tourist access liable to threaten priority uses of sites, for instance those of a religious and spiritual nature; wherever it is necessary, for reasons of conservation or of respect for particular cultures, certain heritage sites should be more strictly protected and visited only for purposes of scientific research.

3. General frameworks for managing cultural tourism should:

- cover all aspects of the natural and the built environment and of social, cultural and economic policies;

- set general goals based on common aims, expressed through territorial strategies and specific action plans;

- be devised in partnership with all sectors and actors concerned, in order to achieve a shared responsibility for their execution.

Benefiting from cultural tourism in the interests of both development and heritage promotion

4. Sustainable cultural tourism is a factor for economic, social and cultural development for the benefit of local communities through the development of quality products and services.

5. Responsibility for the conservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage should be shared between:

- political leaders;
- populations;
- cultural heritage experts;
- owners and managers of cultural heritage sites;
- tourism professionals;

so that benefits and costs are fairly distributed.

6. To this end, financial mechanisms should be introduced at all levels (national, regional and local) to ensure that the tourist sector makes regular contributions towards:

- conservation and maintenance of the heritage;
- improvement of amenities for the public;
- compensation for the additional costs generated by tourism.

Promoting management methods that take into account sustainable development

7. Public authorities should define territorial tourism development strategies which ensure sustainability. In the definition of these strategies, it is essential to involve not only conservation specialists and administrators of monuments and heritage sites, tourism professionals and other economic agents, but also the local communities who are the primary custodians, heirs and managers of the heritage.

8. These strategies should:

- analyse the tourism potential of the heritage concerned;
- evaluate the short-, medium- and long-term effects of tourism development on all aspects of the historic, cultural, social and economic environment;
- assess the visitor capacity of the heritage concerned, particularly the maximum capacity at any one time, as the basis of defining acceptable limits;
- form the basis for the preparation of management plans.

9. In preparing management plans, authorities should:

- take into account any existing development plans concerning the territory;
- define the different phases of preparation and implementation of the plan, clarifying the roles of those concerned;
- involve all relevant individuals and organisations:
 - . heritage conservation specialists;
 - . owners and managers of sites;
 - . tourism and economy professionals;
 - . representatives of public-sector transport;
 - . local elected bodies, associations and residents;
- delimit an appropriate perimeter, taking full account of the areas through which sites will be approached and any others upon which tourism development will have an impact. Improvement and development projects should never be limited to the heritage site itself.

10. Management plans should:

- define actions designed to give tourists a better knowledge of the places they visit; these could include the creation of visitors' centres, the production of information brochures and educational documents adapted to different audiences

and readily available. Quality information should be provided concerning heritage sites where access is limited or which are closed for conservation reasons;

– plan for essential amenities for visitors that are no larger than necessary – their location and architecture must be such as not to detract from the cultural heritage or the historic environment. Priority should be given to the use of existing buildings and to the local products and skills utilised;

– facilitate access to cultural heritage sites by non-polluting and appropriate public transport as an alternative to the car as the sole means of access;

– be drawn up for a given period and be evaluated periodically with a view, if necessary, to adapting the objectives, altering the priorities and revising the working methods or the actions planned, in the light of experience.

Involving people in the proper use of resources

11. Tourism is a means of access to culture and nature. It should be an opportunity for self-education, fostering mutual tolerance, learning about other cultures and peoples and their diversity, as well as for enjoyment, rest and relaxation. Cultural tourism provides particular opportunities for learning about other cultures through direct experience of their heritage. In Europe, cultural heritage tourism can help to forge the European identity and develop awareness and respect of the cultural heritage of peoples.

12. The authorities of the member states should draw the attention of those involved in the cultural heritage and tourism fields to the following series of objectives:

– working with tourists and local populations to develop partnerships and effective means of using cultural tourism to promote enjoyment and understanding of Europe's cultural heritage and diversity;

– developing new means of improving awareness of cultural heritage, its nature, diversity and significance, not just at cultural tourism sites, but as a vital role of education at all levels;

– providing appropriate training for personnel receiving tourists about the history and architecture of the site and the problems and possible solutions of heritage conservation;

– drafting a code of good conduct to be given to individual visitors to enable them better to understand and respect the heritage they are visiting, in full awareness of its uniqueness and fragility.