

EUROPE'S NATIONAL TOURISM AUTHORITIES CONVENE TO DISCUSS OMICRON'S IMPACT AND THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Leading by example, tourism directors from all over Europe travelled to Switzerland and met in person to plan how to revive the struggling travel sector

Brussels, 7 February 2022: Last week's Annual Meeting of the European Travel Commission (ETC) in Engelberg, Switzerland brought together the Board of Directors of national tourism authorities and their marketing and research teams from across Europe. Over 70 participants from throughout the continent convened at the meeting hosted by Switzerland Tourism.

In the wake of the Omicron variant, the gathering provided an exceptional platform for industry leaders to discuss the most recent Covid-19 developments and the path to recovery. Participants reviewed the latest data illustrating the impact of the Omicron variant on the winter travel season and put their heads together to tackle the challenges that lie ahead for the sector as it struggles to recover from the pandemic. It was noted during the meeting that one of the key challenges is the mass exodus of skilled workers from the hospitality sector over the past two years. As such, a priority for Europe's tourism authorities in 2022 will be attracting talent back to the hospitality sector, ensuring it is an attractive employment option.

Commenting on the meeting, Luís Araújo, ETC's President, said: *"As we learn to live with Covid-19 and manage the health risks, it is imperative that European governments do everything in their power to revive travel. Alignment on travel rules across Europe is critical to boost consumer confidence and restart mobility. Clear communication and decisive action informed by data is also essential if pre-pandemic levels of European travel are to be achieved"*.

Strategic agenda for Destination Europe towards 2030

Also top of the agenda was the sustainable and digital transition of tourism in Europe. This year's meeting launched intensive work and laid the foundation to develop *ETC Strategy 2030*. The upcoming strategy will define how the organisation and its members can contribute to the green and digital transition of European tourism in the coming years and better support the sector's recovery following the impacts of the pandemic.

This discussion was timely in light of the [EU Transition Pathway for Tourism](#) which was published at the end of last week. Understanding the crucial role of national tourism authorities in supporting the sector's transformation and involving all relevant local stakeholders, ETC members agreed that the organisation should align its strategic priorities and actively contribute to the implementation of the Transition Pathway for Tourism.

Participants also acknowledged the emergency of climate change, and the need to align ETC's actions over the next decade with the European Green Deal. There was an agreement that as Europe recovers from the pandemic there is an opportunity to build back stronger, ensuring that the region is driving green and sustainable tourism practices globally.

A clear consensus was also reached on the importance of timely research and new sustainable KPIs to measure the sector's transition. During the meeting, the national tourism authorities in attendance got a sneak peek at ETC's latest studies and upcoming reports, including its quarterly report *'European Tourism Trends & Prospects'* due to be published next week. This report analyses trends and prospects for Q4/2021 and highlights how cross-border travel recovery stalled during winter months following the re-imposition of travel restrictions and lockdown measures across Europe. The report also predicts trends for the resumption of intra-European and long-haul travel.

ETC's Associate Members and partners representing the private industry such as CrowdRiff, the European Tourism Association (ETOA), Euronews, MINDHAUS, MMGY Global and the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) were also in attendance, providing informative presentations to participants.

The next meeting of Europe's national tourism organisations will take place on 18-20 May in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Hosted by the Slovenian Tourist Board, the event will focus on sustainable tourism practices and gender equality in tourism.

ENDS

[More information about the European Travel Commission](#)

The **European Travel Commission (ETC)** represents the national tourism organisations of Europe. Established in 1948, ETC's mission is to strengthen the sustainable development of Europe as a tourist destination and to promote Europe in third markets. Its 34-member tourism boards work together to build the value of tourism for all the diverse European destinations through cooperation in sharing best practice, market intelligence and promotion. For more information, visit www.etc-corporate.org and follow [@ETC_Corporate](#).

Media contact

Shane Bradley

Hume Brophy Communications

etc@humbrophy.com

Ph: +32 (0)2 234 6860