

Press Release

European Destinations to Strengthen Crisis Preparedness Strategies

European Travel Commission releases a major study analysing the impacts of and lessons learned from crises on tourism in Europe and presenting effective crisis management strategies

Brussels, 5 September 2024: The European Travel Commission (ETC) has released a comprehensive report titled '**Crisis in Tourism: Impacts and Lessons from European Destinations**,' which highlights the increasing frequency and severity of crises affecting the tourism sector in Europe and worldwide. As global travel dynamics evolve and economies become more interconnected, the tourism industry faces heightened vulnerability to crises, from pandemics to geopolitical tensions and extreme weather events.

Recent challenges such as COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine have shown that European destinations must be prepared for complex, long-term threats. This report, conducted in collaboration with national tourism organisations across Europe, identifies key vulnerabilities in European tourism and offers a roadmap for effective crisis management. By highlighting lessons learned and best practices, the study aims to strengthen the resilience of European destinations in an increasingly unpredictable world.

Commenting on the study's findings, **Miguel Sanz**, President of the European Travel Commission, said: *"In today's interconnected world, the tourism sector is among the industries most susceptible to the ripple effects of global crises. This is why resilience is no longer a luxury but a necessity – a foundation upon which the future of tourism must be built. By fostering resilience and enhancing crisis management capabilities, we can ensure that European tourism not only survives but thrives in the face of future challenges. ETC aims to equip European destinations and their partners with the tools necessary to navigate the complexities of crisis management effectively."*

Europe's crisis exposure

As a global, interconnected sector with complex supply chains and a high proportion of small and medium-sized businesses, the travel and tourism industry is vulnerable to a **wide range of risks**. ETC's study found that European tourism is especially susceptible to extreme weather and other natural disasters, geopolitical crises such as war and terrorist attacks, civil unrest, cyber-attacks and other IT system failures.

Climate risks present significant challenges for Europe, affecting energy and food security, ecosystems, infrastructure, and water resources. Weather patterns across the continent are becoming increasingly unpredictable, with some regions facing heatwaves and droughts while others experience widespread flooding.

European destinations also rely heavily on complex infrastructure, including transportation networks, accommodation facilities, and tourist attractions. Additionally, the travel industry is vulnerable to political instability, border disputes, and international conflicts. These factors contribute to potential uncertainties and disruptions in travel across Europe.

Enhancing crisis preparedness

The study is accompanied by a detailed **Crisis Management Checklist** designed to help national tourism organisations (NTOs) plan their response at every stage of a major crisis – preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience. Recognising that crises are rarely linear, the Checklist is structured as a continuous loop, ensuring that resilience measures reinforce future preparedness.

As European destinations increasingly face frequent and severe crises, NTOs play vital roles in coordinating with regional authorities, travel businesses, transportation hubs, and other stakeholders while also providing clear and concise information to visitors. Their key roles are outlined as follows:

- **Trustworthy Communicator:** Providing clear, reliable updates to the tourism sector and visitors, serving as a trusted information source during crises.
- **High-Level Coordinator:** Uniting government, industry, and visitors for a coordinated response.
- **Sector Mediator:** Monitoring the impacts of crises on the tourism sector and offering guidance and reassurance to businesses and stakeholders.
- **Safety and Reputation Monitor:** Overseeing visitor safety and protecting the country's international image.
- **Disinformation Counter:** Combatting misinformation by ensuring accurate, consistent messaging and collaborating with experts to maintain a clear narrative.
- **Aggregator of Data and Insights:** Collecting and analysing data to support informed decision-making during crises.

The study also highlights that national tourism bodies should engage in long-term risk planning by analysing data from multiple destinations across the country and monitoring crisis response and recovery efforts. This approach will ultimately help adjust future tourism resilience to climate risks and shifts in demand.

The full report can be downloaded from: <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/crises-in-tourism-impacts-and-lessons-from-european-destinations/>

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Note to editors

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 36-member tourism boards work together to build the value of tourism for all the diverse European destinations through cooperation in sharing best practices, market intelligence and promotion. For more information, visit www.etc-corporate.org and follow [@ETC_Corporate](https://twitter.com/ETC_Corporate).

Media contact

Giada Lasio
Penta Group
etc@pentagroup.co
Ph: +32 (0)2 234 6860

European Travel Commission

Rue du Marché aux Herbes 61,
1000 - Bruxelles, Belgique
Tel: +32 2548 90 00

www.etc-corporate.org