

World

Magazine



SPECIAL INTERVIEW:

**KUBANYCHBEK
OMURALIEV**

SECRETARY GENERAL OF
ORGANIZATION OF
TURKIC STATES

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World Magazine

Editor's Note:

Dear Esteemed Readers,

As we embark on the latest journey within the vibrant pages of World Magazine, we celebrate the resilience, innovation, and collective spirit that define the global tourism industry. This edition is more than a collection of articles and interviews; it is a testament to the unwavering commitment and adaptability of the tourism community amidst unprecedented challenges and evolving opportunities.

In the past years, our industry has faced formidable obstacles, from the global pandemic to economic disruptions. Yet, it is in these moments of adversity that our strength and creativity have truly shone. The proactive measures and innovative approaches within the tourism sector have been instrumental in steering our industry through turbulent times. Collaborative efforts and strategic initiatives have driven recovery and growth, leading to a remarkable resurgence.

This edition also features key contributions from industry visionaries who underscore the importance of sustainable tourism and digital transformation. Their insights provide a comprehensive view of the innovative strategies being employed to ensure a resilient and prosperous future for global tourism. As we celebrate the tourism industry's return to pre-pandemic levels and beyond, we recognize the collective efforts that have made this achievement possible.

As we reflect on the pivotal moments and the lessons learned, it becomes clear that our path forward lies in fostering inclusive, sustainable, and resilient tourism practices. Our collaboration continues to showcase the unique cultural heritage, natural beauty, and economic potential of each region, inviting travelers to embark on transformative journeys that enrich their lives and support local communities.

Looking ahead, we are filled with optimism and excitement for the possibilities that lie on the horizon. Together, we can build a tourism industry that not only survives but thrives, leaving a positive legacy for generations to come. We invite you to join us on this incredible journey, exploring the rich tapestry of stories, insights, and innovations that shape the future of global tourism.

Thank you for your unwavering support and for being part of this journey with us.

Warm Regards,

Hanni Tran

INTERVIEW

Sweden, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and harmonious relationship with nature, is redefining travel with its initiative.

“A DESTINATION OF A DIFFERENT NATURE”

This unique perspective showcases Sweden's commitment to long-lasting values and nature-based lifestyle, from the northern lights and midnight sun in the Arctic to lush forests and archipelagos in the south. Visitors are invited to explore and immerse themselves in authentic Swedish experiences, highlighting the country's diverse nature and cultural richness.

In this interview, Susanne Andersson, CEO of Visit Sweden, elaborates on the sustainable practices that preserve Sweden's natural beauty and enhance resilience to climate change within its tourism sector. She also discusses the reception of sustainable tourism initiatives by tourists and locals, and the strategic goals envisioned for the future of tourism in Sweden. Discover how Sweden is leading the way in sustainable travel, offering meaningful and conscious experiences for all.



STOCKHOLM

Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, is the most popular tourist destination in the country. Other popular tourist destinations include Gothenburg, Malmö, Uppsala, and the archipelago regions.

Q Could you please elaborate on the initiative “Sweden - A Destination of a Different Nature” for our international audience?

A “A Destination of a Different Nature” it's about new perspective, where Sweden what we believe offers long lasting values; easy access to our diverse nature in combination our nature-based lifestyle. From northern lights and midnight sun in the Arctic to lush forests and archipelagos in the south. The opportunities for nature-based activities—even in urban areas. Swedish cuisine is influenced by our natural surroundings, cultural experiences. Our lifestyle embodies a harmonious relationship with nature, inviting travellers to explore and immerse themselves in authentic Swedish experiences.

Therefore - A Destination of a different nature, is a way for us to frame and guide us in our communication and marketing.

SUSANNE

ANDERSSON
CEO of Visit Sweden,

Visit Sweden elaborates on the sustainable practices that preserve Sweden's natural beauty and enhance resilience to climate change within its tourism sector.

Q Could you detail the sustainable practices implemented to preserve Sweden's natural beauty and enhance resilience to climate change within its tourism sector?

A Sweden's tourism sector has long been committed to work with sustainability. The sector is not only aiming to preserve the Swedish natural beauty but also to build resilience and attractiveness. For example, renewable energy sources like wind, solar and waterpower are extensively utilized. Despite the freedom to roam in Sweden, strict regulations ensure the protection of delicate ecosystems and biodiversity. Waste management initiatives, including recycling programs, help minimize pollution and promote a circular economy. Education programs target both visitors and industry professionals, raising awareness about sustainable practices and environmental conservation. Moreover, local communities play an integral role in tourism development, contributing to the long-term growth of the sector while preserving the local/cultural heritage and traditional livelihoods. By integrating these and many more sustainable practices, Sweden's tourism sector not only enhances its environmental stewardship but also builds resilience to climate change, ensuring the long-term viability of its tourism industry.

Visit Sweden

TOURISM NUMBERS

Tourism revenue in Sweden has been steadily increasing over the years. In 2018, tourism generated around \$9.17 billion, which is 1.7% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). There was a dip in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the sector is expected to make a full recovery by 2027.

SOURCE MARKETS

The majority of tourists visiting Sweden come from Germany, followed by Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

DOMESTIC TOURISM

Tourism revenue in Sweden has been steadily increasing over the years. In 2018, tourism generated around \$9.17 billion, which is 1.7% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). There was a dip in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the sector is expected to make a full recovery by 2027.

NATURAL BEAUTY

Sweden is well-known for its beautiful natural scenery, including its skärgården (archipelagos), forests, and lakes.

“ WE MAY NOT HAVE AN EIFFEL TOWER, PALM TREES, OR CHEAP BEER. BUT SWEDES BELIEVE IN SEEING THE WORLD WITH FRESH EYES, WHERE TRAVEL CREATES LONG LASTING VALUE FOR INDIVIDUALS, SOCIETY, AND THE PLANET. ”

SUSANNE ANDERSSON
CEO of Visit Sweden,

A DESTINATION OF A DIFFERENT NATURE

Q What is the reception of tourists and local residents towards the policies and initiatives associated with sustainable tourism?

A In Sweden - overall, there is recognition among both tourists and local residents of the importance of sustainable tourism practices in preserving Sweden's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and quality of life for future generations. It's why tourists want to visit us! It's a strong driving force for visiting Sweden. I think we all see the importance and that all the stakeholders see the essentials to ensure that sustainable tourism initiatives are effectively implemented and supported by all parties involved.

Q What strategic goals are envisioned for the future of tourism in Sweden?

A Tourism to and in Sweden is an integrated part of the Swedish governmental strategy of foreign business, trade, investments, and global competitiveness.

We may not have an Eiffel Tower, palm trees, or cheap beer. But Swedes believe in seeing the world with fresh eyes, where travel creates long lasting value for individuals, society, and the planet. In Sweden, we embrace the new and different, forging our own path and exploring tomorrow's tourism together and believe in holistic wellbeing. It's about meaningful, conscious experiences enriching both travellers and destinations. Our vision is that a new era has begun, and that we lead the way forward.





A JOURNEY OF DISTINCTION

AYDIN YASAYACAK ON LOTI'S PIONEERING LUXURY TRAVEL
EXPERIENCES

A JOURNEY OF DISTINCTION

AYDIN YASAYACAK ON LOTI'S PIONEERING LUXURY TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

Aydin Yasayacak, CEO of LOTI, sheds light on LOTI's innovative services and their commitment to exceeding client expectations. He elaborates on the exclusive Lujo BlackJet service, LOTI's meticulous attention to detail in arranging luxury vacations, and the emerging trends in the luxury travel industry.

LOTI has established itself as a leader in the luxury travel industry, distinguished by its exceptional personalized service and premium selection of hotels from top global chains and select local brands. With a focus on providing unique and memorable travel experiences, LOTI stands out through its exclusive offerings, such as the Lujo BlackJet business liner, specially designed Mercedes-Benz minivans, Sea Planes, and the Mercedes Maybach S580 for comfortable, private, and secure transfers in Turkey.

LOTI
less & more

Q What unique luxury travel experiences does LOTI offer that set it apart from other premium travel services?

A LOTI provides exceptional, personalized service, featuring a premium selection of hotels from top global chains and select local brands. Our exclusive Lujo BlackJet business liner sets us apart. In Turkey, LOTI's branded fleet includes special designed Mercedes-Benz minivans, Sea Planes and Mercedes Maybach S580, ensuring comfortable, private, and secure transfers for our clients. LOTI stands out with its unique style, offering clients a blend of past elegance and nostalgic emotions with modern technology. These details provide a sense of timeless sophistication and warmth. We meticulously plan every aspect to ensure our clients feel exceptionally special through personalized service and attention to detail.

Q Can you elaborate on the Lujo BlackJet service and what makes it an exclusive travel option for business-class travelers?

A Lujo BlackJet is a hallmark of luxury travel. On our Boeing 757-200, fully equipped with 72 business-class seats, even long flights will pass by effortlessly. Each seat reclines into a full bed and is equipped with personal reading lamps, power outlets, and USB ports. Passengers enjoy gourmet meals prepared by top chefs, luxury travel kits, and high-end gadgets for entertainment and connectivity. The service extends beyond the flight, with dedicated check-in counters, access to exclusive lounges, and transfers by request in branded Mercedes-Benz vehicles upon arrival. Lujo BlackJet

is designed for those who demand the highest standards of comfort, privacy, and personalized service, making it an ideal choice for travelers.

Q How does LOTI ensure personalized service and attention to detail in arranging luxury vacations for its clients?

A At LOTI, personalized service begins with understanding our clients' unique preferences and requirements. We aim to provide not just a vacation, but unforgettable memories. This is achieved through premium services, exceptional quality, personalized attention, and meticulously planned details that exceed our guests' expectations. Our dedicated team provides 24/7 support, anticipating and addressing every need to ensure a seamless journey. Feedback is continuously gathered and used to refine our offerings, ensuring we consistently meet and exceed expectations.

Q What trends are you seeing in the luxury travel industry, and how is LOTI adapting to meet the evolving demands of high-end travelers?

A The luxury travel industry is increasingly focusing on unique and personalized experiences. High-end travelers seek not just luxury, but also distinctive cultural and natural encounters. LOTI adapts by offering exclusive tourism itineraries and integrating the latest technologies to enhance customer experiences. Our experienced and highly professional team continuously works on creating, implementing, and enhancing premium services, personalized care, and delivering the best experiences to our clients.



AYDIN YASAYACAK,
CEO OF LOTI

INTERVIEW

Marie-Caroline Laurent Discusses CLIA's Environmental and Economic Impact

“SAILING TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY”

The Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) stands at the forefront of the cruise tourism industry, championing responsible travel and environmental stewardship. As a leading global organization, CLIA is committed to ensuring the health and safety of guests, crew, and the communities they visit, while fostering sustainable tourism practices. Their partnership with city authorities, ports, and various organizations underlines their dedication to preserving the cultural heritage and natural beauty of the world's most cherished destinations.

In this interview, we speak with Marie-Caroline Laurent, Director General Europe of CLIA, who provides valuable insights into the cruise tourism sector, addressing challenges posed by climate change, safety and security measures, and the industry's significant economic impact on a global scale.



SUSTAINABILITY

Today cruise lines are building and introducing the ships of the future which will run on new, more sustainable engine technologies,

Q Could you share with us your perspective of Cruise tourism?

A The cruise industry strives to be a leader in responsible tourism, and is committed to environmental protection, destination stewardship, providing rewarding career opportunities, and, above all, the health and safety of guests, crew, and communities we visit.

Consistent with UN Tourism's definition of responsible tourism, we partner with city authorities, ports, and other organizations on sustainable tourism initiatives to help preserve the cultural heritage and beauty of the world's most treasured destinations.

Q What challenges does the cruise tourism sector encounter in the face of climate change? How does CLIA prepare for unforeseen climate events?

A The fight against climate change is leading to a fundamental shift in the technologies and energy used in shipping. Already today cruise lines are building and

introducing the ships of the future which will run on new, more sustainable engine technologies.

We are moving away from fossil fuels towards low and net-zero carbon fuels such as bio and synthetic gas as well as green forms of hydrogen and methanol. This is a systemic change which is taking place at a global scale, and this change will have impacts throughout global shipping.

While technology investments continue, the maritime industry faces the challenge that today, there are no sustainable alternative fuels available at scale to achieve its decarbonisation ambitions. We are calling on governments to focus efforts on the production and deployment of sustainable marine fuels, and CLIA has launched a study on global investment needs that will include a mapping on the infrastructure needs at cruise ports.

MARIE-CAROLINE LAURENT

Director General Europe of CLIA,

Consistent with UN Tourism's definition of responsible tourism, CLIA partners with city authorities, ports, and other organizations on sustainable tourism initiatives to help preserve the cultural heritage and beauty of the world's most treasured destinations.



ECONOMIC IMPACT

THE ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION FROM THE CRUISE INDUSTRY TO THE GLOBAL ECONOMY :

138

BILLION DOLLARS

JOB CREATION

CRUISE INDUSTRY SUPPORTING GLOBAL JOB CREATION EFFORTS WITH:

1.2

MILLION JOBS WORLD WIDE

ON DESTINATIONS

MORE THAN

%60

OF PASSENGERS RETURN TO VISIT LOCATIONS THEY FIRST VISITED BY CRUISE

“ CRUISE LINES HAVE MAINTAINED AN EXCEPTIONAL SAFETY RECORD, MAKING CRUISING ONE OF THE SAFEST WAYS TO TRAVEL ”

MARIE-CAROLINE LAURENT
Director General Europe of CLIA

SAILING TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

Q Could you outline the action plan concerning the safety and security of both tourists and local residents in the countries where cruises operate?

A Cruise ships are part of a comprehensive system of regulation, enforcement, and inspection, involving the International Maritime Organization (IMO), flag states and port states, among others. This framework operates for the benefit of passengers, crew, and port communities.

In addition, as a requirement of membership, CLIA cruise line members must adhere to a stringent set of policies and practices which undergo constant review and improvement and often exceed what international and local laws require.

Cruise operators place a priority on safety, and will adjust itineraries as needed, according to the risk, whether weather-related, geo-political tensions or other emerging events.

Cruise lines have maintained an exceptional safety record, making cruising one of the safest ways to travel.

Q What is the cruise industry's impact on global economic growth?

A The economic contribution from the cruise industry to the global economy is significant, generating \$138 billion in economic impact globally, and supporting 1.2 million jobs worldwide.

In addition to the many thousands of people working in seafarer and onshore roles, we bring substantial economic and social benefits for coastal communities. Cruise tourism provides revenue for local attractions, restaurants and bars, tour operators, and hotels, many of which are small businesses.

Cruise lines plan itineraries at least two years in advance bringing economic stability to local economies. Furthermore, more than 60% of passengers return to visit locations they first visited by cruise, providing additional long-term economic benefit.



COVER STORY

UNLOCKING TOURISM POTENTIAL

VISION AND INITIATIVES OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF TURKIC STATES



INTERVIEW

As tourism continues to be a pivotal force in driving economic growth, fostering cultural exchange, and creating jobs, the OTS is spearheading efforts to harness the collective potential of its member states.

UNLOCKING TOURISM POTENTIAL OF TURKIC STATES

In an exclusive interview with, Kuban Omuraliev, Secretary-General of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), delves into the ambitious vision and strategic initiatives aimed at revolutionizing the tourism landscape of the Turkic States. As tourism continues to be a pivotal force in driving economic growth, fostering cultural exchange, and creating jobs, the OTS is spearheading efforts to harness the collective potential of its member states. From seamless travel routes to sustainable tourism practices and exciting new projects, the OTS is committed to ensuring that the benefits of tourism reach local communities while preserving the rich cultural heritage of the region. Join us as we explore the future of tourism in the Turkic States and the innovative steps being taken to attract and delight visitors from around the world.



ORGANIZATION OF TURKIC STATES

The Organization of Turkic States (OTS), formerly called the Turkic Council or the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, is an intergovernmental organization comprising all but one of the internationally recognized Turkic sovereign states.

Q What is your vision for the future of Turkic States' economy through tourism?

A Organization of Turkic States attaches utmost importance to cooperation in the field of tourism among its Member States. It is considered that the tourism potential of the Member States has a privileged place in the multidimensional and in-depth cooperation process created within the framework of OTS. To this end, 8 Ministerial and 18 Working Group Meetings were held since the establishment. 9th Ministerial Meeting on Tourism will be held on 25-26 September 2024 in Zhalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan.

We believe tourism is one of the driving forces of the economies, which contribute to economic growth, job creation, infrastructure development, foreign exchange earnings, and cultural exchange. In this respect, we are working on coordinating efforts of the Turkic States and attract more tourists to the region in a collective manner.

KUBANYCHBEK

OMURALIEV
Secretary General of
Organization of
Turkic States

Kubanychbek
Kasymovich
Omuraliev is a
Kyrgyz diplomat
and ambassador.
He is the Secretary-
General of the
Organization of
Turkic States since
2022.

Q Common Tourism Routes is one of the initiatives of seamless tourism within the region. Could you elaborate on it?

A We are working on enhancing seamless tourism within the Turkic region by creating integrated, multi-country travel experiences, to promote regional cooperation, cultural exchange, and economic growth by simplifying travel across borders, solving the problems tourists are facing and offering tourists a cohesive and enriching journey.

In this regard, we have developed a key project called "Tabarruk Ziyarat" which is a pilgrimage to the sacred places in the territories of our countries with a view of raising public awareness of the legacy of the great religious leaders, who have left huge mark on Turkic history. The Project aims at further expanding cooperation in the field of tourism, joint promotion of the Turkic cultural heritage, diversification of tourism products and services as well as to organize ziyarat (pilgrimage) to the holy places in the Member and Observer States. The Project includes organizing visits to cultural, historical and scientific heritage sites, as well as organizing info tours and promoting them through holding regular scientific and practical conferences. ...



MEMBER STATES

- Azerbaijan
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Turkey
- Uzbekistan

Observer Members:

- Hungary
- Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus



THE PROJECT "TABARRUK ZIYARAT" AIMS AT FURTHER EXPANDING COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM, JOINT PROMOTION OF THE TURKIC CULTURAL HERITAGE, DIVERSIFICATION OF TOURISM PRODUCTS AND SERVICES AS WELL AS TO ORGANIZE ZIYARAT (PILGRIMAGE) TO THE HOLY PLACES IN THE MEMBER AND OBSERVER STATES.



UNLOCKING TOURISM POTENTIAL OF TURKIC STATES

Furthermore, Turkic States are located in the historic Silk Road where is an attractive tourism destination for the curious tourists who would like to experience a unique journey from the past to the present. The cities in the Turkic States with their historical monuments including the symbolic caravansaries as well as their natural attractions open their gates to be discovered by curious tourists who would to taste such a different experience.

Also for an authentic voyage, tourists have the chance to experience and observe traditional craftsmanship, applied arts, knowledge and skills in making yurts (Turkic nomadic dwellings), folk-art, carpet/rug-making, needlework and so on.

Q How do you plan to ensure that the growth of tourism benefits local communities and economies?

A In our age, while globalization overwhelms most of the parts of our lives, local items also gain importance. We believe in preserving the values of the local communities but at the same time we are trying to reveal the hidden gems in the Turkic World. It is also obvious that ensuring the growth of tourism benefits local communities and economies requires a multi-faceted approach that emphasizes sustainable practices, inclusive development, and strategic planning.

In this context, we are working on implementing “Best Tourism Villages of the Turkic World” initiative to promote and standardize certain local places in the region.

Q How is the Organization addressing the challenge of sustainable tourism development?

A The OTS is addressing the challenge of sustainable tourism development through various initiatives and strategies aimed at preserving cultural heritage and fostering economic growth within its member states.

While working on this we give utmost importance to regional cooperation and coordination, we develop joint tourism strategies, we organize training programs for tourism professionals withing the Turkic World to ensure best practices sharing and support the promotion of cultural and heritage preservation.

In this term, more than 2000 tourism professionals received thematic trainings with the aim to increase capacity building and standardization of the service sector.

Q Are there any upcoming projects or partnerships that you are particularly excited about?

A We have several exciting projects to enhance tourism development in the Turkic World.

The Modern Silk Road Joint Tour Project follows the cultural and historical landmarks of the Silk Road through our Member States.

Tabarruk Ziyarat project promotes the holy places in the Turkic World as well as present uninterrupted passage among these places.

Our new website www.turkicsilkroad.com compiles comprehensive tourism information on the Turkic World. Additionally, the “Turkic World Tourism Capital” initiative supports and promotes the tourism destinations within our Member States. These are some of our prestigious projects in the field of tourism.

Q What message would you like to convey to potential tourists considering a visit to the Turkic States?

A Turkic States offer a safe, unique and untasted travel experience for those seeking new adventures.

We warmly invite you to explore our region, rich in history, culture and breathtaking natural landscapes.

Discover our rich cultural heritage, stunning natural beauty, warm hospitality, vibrant and diverse cities. Whether riding horses across the steppes, exploring ancient ruins, tasting delicious traditional dishes or enjoying diverse music and dance performances, visiting the Turkic States is more than just a trip. It’s a journey through time and culture, a chance to witness nature’s beauty and an opportunity to create lasting memories.

Additionally, the “Turkic World Tourism Capital” initiative supports and promotes the tourism destinations within our Member States.

These are some of our prestigious projects in the field of tourism.



**KUBANYCHBEK
OMURALIEV**



THE DIRE CONSEQUENCES OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION HAVE STARTED SHIFTING TOURISM INTEREST OF GLOBAL VISITORS TO DESTINATIONS WITH A COOLER CLIMATE.

AMBASSADOR (A.H.) MICHAEL B. CHRISTIDES

Secretary General of the BSEC Organization (2015 – 2021)

For decades the broader Mediterranean region, thanks to its mild climate, its diversely spectacular coastline and beaches, as well as its rich cultural heritage, has been one of the foremost destinations for tourists worldwide. Millions of north-Europeans are dreaming of – and working hard each year to realize – an unforgettable vacation on one or more beaches somewhere along the stunning coastline of the Mediterranean Sea. However, the dire consequences of climate change have recently impacted the Mediterranean region to the extent that many tourists are today choosing vacation places that have a cooler climate and offer a completely different vacation than the usual “scorching sun & sea” alternative.

This new trend is already visible, and it should propel affected Mediterranean countries to draw the necessary conclusions and adopt adequate measures for rendering their tourism more sustainable and eco-friendlier, especially since it remains a vital factor in their overall economy.



Some of the most obvious ways to withstand this shift in tourists' preferences for cooler destinations are:

- **DEVELOP AND PROMOTE LESSER-KNOWN REGIONS TO DISTRIBUTE TOURIST TRAFFIC MORE EVENLY ACROSS THE TERRITORY OF A STATE.**

For example, in my home country Greece, the bulk of its yearly tourism traffic is concentrated in Attica and some of the Aegean & Ionian islands during mainly July and August, while the rest of continental Greece with its breathtaking mountains and numerous cultural monuments & traditions remains scarcely visited; yet it offers unique opportunities for alternative forms of tourism and a cooler, more pleasant climate.

- At the same time, Mediterranean countries should be constantly promoted as year-round destinations by highlighting activities and attractions available in the off-peak season, such as cultural festivals, historical tours, winter sports and other health related activity in mountainous regions.
- Mediterranean countries should invest more in the preservation and promotion of their unique historical and archaeological sites that are less visited, ensuring they remain accessible and engaging for tourists all year-round.



- **IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT COUNTRIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN FOCUS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECO-FRIENDLY TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE, LIKE HOTELS AND RESORTS THAT USE RENEWABLE ENERGY, CONSERVE WATER, AND MINIMIZE WASTE.**

Promoting eco-friendly transportation means to reduce carbon emissions will certainly help in presenting the region as eco-sensitive and determined to proceed with its “green transition”.

- Perhaps the gravest of all climate change effects are the ever-increasing water shortages, gravely impacting both local populations and the tourism industry, which so heavily relies on abundant water resources. Planning and strictly implementing policies of water conservation and recycling is crucial, if we wish to preserve our diverse ecosystems, their natural beauty and wildlife, that attract so many visitors.

This is why all 193 UN Member states should try to make out of the Summit of the Future (SOTF), called by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres at the United Nations on September 22-23, 2024, a decisive step forward to a more sustainable future for us and for the coming generations.

In conclusion, the consequences

of climate change in the Mediterranean region are reshaping global tourism patterns, with a noticeable shift towards cooler northern destinations. This trend highlights the need for strategic planning and sustainable practices by the Mediterranean countries to adapt to the changing climate and continue to attract visitors from around the world.



ZAGREB'S SUSTAINABLE TOURISM REVOLUTION

MARTINA BIENENFELD, CEO OF THE ZAGREB TOURIST BOARD, IS AT THE HELM OF ZAGREB'S TRANSFORMATION INTO A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM HOTSPOT.

INTERVIEW

Under her leadership, the board has prioritized green policies, aligning with the European Commission's Green Deal, to enhance the city's year-round appeal while preserving its environmental integrity. Zagreb's emphasis on green infrastructure is evident in its numerous parks, forests, and lakes, offering a serene escape within the urban landscape. The city is particularly attractive to budget travelers due to its affordable public transport, reasonably priced accommodations, and free cultural events. Additionally, Zagreb's low crime rates and well-maintained public spaces bolster its reputation as a safe and welcoming destination. Through initiatives like the Green BUZZG campaign and collaborations with international organizations, Martina Bienenfeld is steering Zagreb toward a future of sustainable and responsible tourism.

Join us as we delve into the heart of Zagreb, Croatia's vibrant capital...

ZAGREB'S SUSTAINABLE TOURISM REVOLUTION

INSIGHTS FROM MARTINA BIENENFELD

Q Could you provide a concise overview of Zagreb's tourism to our readers?

A Zagreb, Croatia's capital, offers a blend of historic charm, vibrant culture, and modern amenities. Its mixture of old-world charm and modernity attracts visitors worldwide. Visitors enjoy various museums, galleries, parks, and lively events, making it a compelling European destination year-round.

Q As the capital and largest city, Zagreb plays a pivotal role in Croatia's socioeconomic landscape. How does Zagreb Tourist Board translate sustainability policies into tangible practices?

A Since late 2019, the Zagreb Tourist Board (ZTB) has prioritized green and sustainable policies in line with the European Commission's Green Deal. Being a true year-round destination in Croatia, Zagreb's tourism sector maintains sustainability, distinguishing it from coastal areas. This commitment is underscored by Zagreb's second-place ranking for overall green infrastructure, urban green areas and trees among 37 capital cities, as per the European Environment Agency (EEA) survey.

As a non-profit organization, ZTB advocates for and promotes innovative projects to raise awareness of Zagreb as an environmentally conscious and appealing destination for, both, residents and tourists. In line with this mission, we've

launched the Green BUZZG campaign, highlighting Zagreb's abundant green spaces. This campaign aims to showcase the city's natural assets, offering a serene escape amidst its urban hustle and bustle, including parks, forests, lakes, the Sava River, and Medvednica mountain. By fostering sustainable practices and promoting green initiatives, ZTB is committed to ensuring that Zagreb remains a thriving and environmentally conscious destination for generations to come.

Q According to a recent study by VisaGuide.World, Zagreb has been ranked as the third best European capital for tourism in 2023. Can you elaborate on Zagreb as a destination for budget-friendly trips and emphasize its reputation for safety?

A Zagreb, ranked third best European capital for tourism in 2023 by VisaGuide.World, is ideal for budget-conscious travelers. Affordable public transport, reasonably priced accommodations and cuisine make it accessible. The city's reputation for safety is bolstered by low crime rates and a welcoming atmosphere. Well-maintained public spaces and efficient services ensure a pleasant and secure experience for tourists, enhancing Zagreb's appeal as a destination where travelers can explore without worry. Budget travelers can take advantage of the Zagreb Card, which provides free public transportation and entry to some attractions, plus discounts. Street festivals, cultural events and live music performances are often free, offering entertaining experiences without additional costs. Additionally, Zagreb's parks and green spaces, such as Maksimir Park

and Jarun Lake, provide scenic spots for leisurely picnics and outdoor activities. This blend of affordability, safety, and diverse attractions makes Zagreb an increasingly popular choice for travelers seeking both adventure and value.

Q Are there any specific initiatives in place within Zagreb's Tourism sector aimed at attracting more tourists while ensuring the preservation of environmental carrying capacity?

A Zagreb's Tourism sector focuses on sustainable initiatives like zero food waste programs, eco-friendly transportation and promoting responsible tourism practices among guests. Efforts include reducing plastic usage, increasing recycling, promoting local products and investing in sustainable infrastructure with the aim of balancing tourism growth with environmental conservation.

Additionally, Zagreb Tourist Board highlights the importance of preserving natural and cultural resources programs for tourists and locals through its Destination: Zagreb educational project. We also partner with international organizations such as UN Tourism, WWF Adria, City Destination Alliance, etc. which help Zagreb stay updated with global best practices and innovations in eco-friendly tourism.

Q What message would you like to convey to the global tourism industry?

A Let's prioritize sustainable practices, embrace cultural diversity, and foster responsible tourism. Together, we can create meaningful travel experiences that benefit destinations, communities, and travelers alike. Let's travel thoughtfully and leave a positive impact on the world, ensuring future generations can enjoy the same wonders.



MARTINA BIENENFELD,
CEO ZAGREB TOURIST BOARD

LEADING THE WAY IN AFRICAN HOSPITALITY

KASADA CAPITAL'S INITIATIVES AND INSIGHTS, FEATURING
THEIR DEDICATION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE
TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT ON THE AFRICAN HOSPITALITY LANDSCAPE.



INTERVIEW

Kasada Capital Management stands as the foremost independent real estate private equity platform dedicated to the hospitality sector in Africa. With a commitment to delivering attractive, sustainable value, Kasada plays a pivotal role in generating positive impacts within African economies and communities while ensuring substantial risk-adjusted returns for investors.

LEADING THE WAY IN AFRICAN HOSPITALITY

In this interview, Oliver Granet and David Damiba, Managing Partners & Co-Chief Executive Officers of Kasada Capital Management, explore how Kasada incorporates Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into its hospitality asset management practices. The discussion highlights Kasada's strategic approach, encompassing greenfield and brownfield projects, and its vision for the future of tourism in Africa. Join us as we delve into Kasada's initiatives and insights, featuring their dedication to sustainable development and the transformative impact on the African hospitality landscape.



DAVID DAMIBA

Managing Partner & Co-Chief Executive Officer of Kasada Capital Management

Q Could you provide a brief introduction to Kasada Capital Management?

A Kasada is the leading independent real estate private equity platform dedicated to delivering attractive sustainable value across the hospitality sector in Africa and committed to generating sustainable, positive impact in the African economies and communities it invests in, while also ensuring the delivery of attractive, risk-adjusted returns for investors.

Q How is Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) incorporated into hospitality asset management? Could you outline the best practices regarding ESG implementation?

A Kasada is committed to sustainability, setting international hospitality ESG standards across Africa and leads the sector in delivering long-term positive and



OLIVIER GRANET

Managing Partner & Co-Chief Executive Officer of Kasada Capital Management

value to all stakeholders. Across our hospitality portfolio, we – as Kasada – apply the most stringent environmental, social and governance standards that are the foundation of our strategic and stewardship approach and embedded in every part of our entire business. Kasada secured a strategic partnership with the IFC through a US\$160 million debt facility in July 2021, backing its plan to support the hospitality sector in Africa and instill globally recognised ESG practices. We are committed to originating and providing positive sustainable impact and value in the local economies and communities we invest in. Kasada already holds independent certifications for green building (IFC EDGE) and security and safety (SAFEHOTELS), underlying Kasada's commitment to being responsible investors in the African hospitality sector.



LEADING THE WAY IN AFRICAN HOSPITALITY

KASADA CAPITAL'S AFRICA VISION WITH OLIVER GRANET AND DAVID DAMIBA

Q Can you provide further details on how Kasada's strategy encompasses all sectors, including greenfield and brownfield projects, aiming to generate a sustainable positive influence on local economies?

A Our strategic approach has always been to create and grow a geographically diversified value-add portfolio, balanced across key attractive locations in Sub-Saharan Africa. In line with our strict investment, returns and ESG criteria, Kasada's strategy spans all segments, from budget to luxury, including lifestyle and leisure, and targets value-add investment opportunities from both operational and greenfield development projects.

Driven by our expertise, scale, strategic partnerships, industry networks, proprietary knowledge and significant investment pipeline, Kasada leads the way in delivering sustainable and innovative best-in-class hospitality destinations and experiences to meet the strong, resilient and fast-growing structural demand in a region that is significantly undersupplied.

Our portfolio has grown to 20 hotels across eight jurisdictions, of which 16 are brownfield and 4 are greenfield investments.

As part of our ESG efforts we are committed to delivering low-carbon buildings, enhancing the motivation, benefits and training for all employees,

providing the best guest experiences, reducing consumption of energy, water and resources, and the efficient management of resources and waste. We are committed to supporting the development of local talent and positively impacting job creation with true career opportunities, helping to transform the lives of our local communities.

Q What are your insights on the future of tourism in the African region? Are there specific challenges encountered during business operations, and could you suggest potential solutions to address them?

A With rapid urbanization and a strong and growing middle class with increasing spending power, the hospitality sector in Africa has resilient and increasing local and international demand fundamentals, yet is hugely underserved, unbranded and fragmented in terms of ownership. For [Africa's] national economies, the hospitality sector is key to successful development.

Challenges include finding the right staff and local suppliers and sometimes challenging transport links. By deploying its multi-disciplinary team with deep sector expertise and successful track records across investment, ESG and operations and through working together with local governments and communities, Kasada is able to overcome these challenges to transform the Hospitality sector in Africa.

WITH RAPID URBANIZATION AND A STRONG AND GROWING MIDDLE CLASS WITH INCREASING SPENDING POWER, THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR IN AFRICA HAS RESILIENT AND INCREASING LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL DEMAND FUNDAMENTALS



AN INTERVIEW WITH BSEC SECRETARY GENERAL AMBASSADOR LAZAR COMANESCU: HOW THE BSEC IS LEVERAGING ITS DIVERSE SECTORS TO BOLSTER TOURISM DEVELOPMENT?

PROMOTING TOURISM AND CONNECTIVITY IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

The Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) has been a cornerstone of economic cooperation and stability in the wider Black Sea region for over three decades. Founded with the goal of fostering mutual understanding and good neighborly relations, BSEC now encompasses thirteen member states from the Balkans, the Black Sea, and the Caucasus. This region, strategically positioned as a bridge between Europe and Asia, serves as a crucial hub for trade, transport, and energy.

In this interview, we gain insights from Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, the Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS) of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), on how the organization is leveraging its diverse sectors to bolster tourism development. Ambassador Comanescu discusses the importance of connectivity, sustainable growth, and inter-regional policies that can advance tourism within the BSEC framework. Discover how BSEC is driving initiatives to promote the rich natural and cultural heritage of the Black Sea region, making it a leading destination for travelers.

Q Could you provide a concise introduction to the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)?

A The Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), was established 32 years ago with the aim of fostering economic cooperation and promoting there through, stability, mutual understanding and good

neighborly relations, i.e., security in the wider Black Sea area. Consisting today of thirteen Member States from the Balkans, the Black Sea, and the Caucasus, BSEC is the only full-fledged Organization in a region of paramount geostrategic importance, a region which is the real bridge between Europe and Asia, and a real hub in terms of trade, transport or energy.

Q Do you believe that the diverse array of sectors under BSEC's purview can bolster the region's tourism development? Kindly expand on this viewpoint.

A My answer is definitely yes. The Black Sea region can already be seen as a leading tourist destination and there is potential for further strengthening this position. Over the last decades, tourism has increasingly been interconnected with fields such as culture, infrastructure, environmental protection, blue economy, green energy, digitalization and ICT, and the list does not end there. Success in the field of tourism goes hand-in-hand

with effective implementation of joint projects in areas such as connectivity, tourism-related infrastructure and transport investments. In recent years, cultural tourism in the BSEC region has been steadily increasing, while enormous development potentials are still untapped. Promoting transnational gastronomic- and wine- itineraries in the BSEC region is just one example of how to strengthen the national and regional culture identity.

Q Which specific aspect of BSEC's tourism sector should be prioritized for sustainable growth, and what are the underlying reasons for this focus?

A Strengthening connectivity among the BSEC Member States and close coordination between tourism and areas mostly linked with it are of key importance in promoting sustainable growth in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Environmental protection, blue and green economies and green energy investments rank high among the priorities of the Organization, as clearly reflected in the BSEC Economic Agenda, i.e., the Organization's medium- and long- term strategy framework document with special attention focused on deepening and promoting regional cooperation in the field of tourism, including the encouragement and further development of cultural tourist routes in the region. Close cooperation with UN Tourism, the Council of Europe (particularly the Enlarged Partial Agreement) and

the European Union is being given particular attention in this endeavor.

Tourism is one of the greatest assets of our region. To make full benefit of it there is a need for enriching and diversifying tourist products and adding value to tourist services offered in BSEC Member States. The Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization is committed to continue to actively contribute to the fulfillment of this objective, and thus to further promoting the rich natural and cultural - tangible and intangible - heritage and diversity of the wider Black Sea area.

Q What key inter-regional policies (initiatives and programs) could be implemented to advance the tourism development efforts within the BSEC framework?

A Developing and diversifying touristic activities and services is of particular importance and constitutes a priority for BSEC. That includes, for example, development of cultural routes and of thematic tourism, including cultural and gastronomic festivals. All that requires the availability of appropriately qualified human resources, respectively the implementation of specific training programs and projects. It is in this context that a First Meeting of Higher Education Institutions Specialized in Tourism Education in the BSEC region, was held in Baku on 23 April 2024, where strategies to provide guidance for the future of tourism in the wider Black Sea region were extensively discussed. Tourism development nevertheless cannot be successfully promoted without resilient transport infrastructure and high-quality, safe and secure mobility services. To this end and in more general terms, to face challenges in this area including, for example, border crossings, BSEC closely cooperates with regional and sectoral organizations such as UNECE, IRU, ITF, etc.



AMBASSADOR LAZAR COMANESCU,
the Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS) of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC),





INNOVATIONS AND POLICIES FOR EUROPEAN TOURISM

INTERVIEW

ISTVAN UJHELYI,
ON THE EVOLUTION OF EUROPEAN TOURISM



ISTVAN UJHELYI

Ambassador for UN Tourism to EU Institutions

As the global tourism landscape evolves, the shift towards sustainable and regenerative practices has become more crucial than ever. Emphasizing the need for responsible travel and its impact on local communities and the environment, Istvan Ujhelyi, Ambassador for UN Tourism to EU Institutions, champions these transformative ideals. His extensive experience as a Member of the European Parliament and his pivotal role in the Tourism Task Force within the Transportation and Tourism Committee (TRAN) have significantly contributed to embedding sustainable tourism into the EU's strategic framework.

INNOVATIONS AND POLICIES FOR EUROPEAN TOURISM

In this interview, Istvan Ujhelyi provides a comprehensive overview of the future of tourism, the accomplishments of the TRAN Committee's Tourism Task Force, and forthcoming policies within the Agenda 2030/2050 for Tourism and the European Tourism Convention. He also shares his vision and key messages in his new role, focusing on fostering continuous consultation and cooperation between the EU Institutions, stakeholders, and UN Tourism.

Q Could you provide your perspective on the future of tourism?

A To achieve sustainable tourism that considers environmental, social and economic impacts, it is essential to change travellers' mindset, who must act responsibly regarding their effects on local communities and the natural environment. The realisation of a future in which regenerative tourism, a further evolution of sustainable tourism, becomes mainstream depends on changing the behaviour of both hosts and travellers.

Q In your capacity as a Member of the European Parliament over two terms, could you elaborate on the accomplishments of the Tourism Task Force within the Transportation and Tourism Committee (TRAN)? How has it contributed to developing an EU strategy for sustainable tourism, encompassing a resilient tourism ecosystem and aligning with the long-term goals of digital and green transitions?

A TTF in the TRAN Committee has achieved the most important result, putting tourism policy on the political agenda and keeping it on the highest political level. If there were any transport, budget, or strategy-related position papers, the aspects of sustainable tourism were immediately included. TTF has given visibility and awareness and through thematic events, the entire tourism ecosystem was invited to express their vision. Yet, additionally, more attention

should be given to how introducing new technologies can affect a more sustainable development route for tourism. By harnessing technology, the tourism industry can work towards reducing its environmental footprint, supporting local. Technology can be used to support the development of sustainable destination management practices, such as monitoring tourist flows and managing the distribution of visitors across different areas. This helps reduce tourism's impact on sensitive environments while also ensuring that local communities profit from the economic benefits of tourism.

Q Could you shed light on the forthcoming tourism policies within the framework of Agenda 2030/2050 for Tourism and the European Tourism Convention?

A The forthcoming tourism policy should be based on three main elements at the European level: better governance under the leadership of an EU Commissioner on Tourism, a sole budget line in the annual EU budget dedicated to tourism, and a crisis management mechanism in case of later possible global and local crises.

The EU's tourism ecosystem is highly diverse and complex, covering globalised and interconnected value chains. Despite the notable disparities between EU countries, tourism represents an important part of the EU's overall economy. In 2019, it represented nearly 10% of the EU GDP and accounted for around 23 million jobs in the Union.

The update of the EU industrial strategy underlined the need to accelerate the green and digital transitions further and increase the resilience of EU tourism. To that end, the European Institutions including the opinions of other institutions proposed to co-create a transition pathway with industry, public authorities, social partners and other stakeholders.

Q What key message do you aim to convey to our global audience in your new role as the Ambassador for UN Tourism to EU Institutions?

A In the European Parliament, as a politician, I was the advocate for the Tourism sector at the European level; for instance, how to develop a European Tourism Union or how to have more competence for tourism at the European level. Parallel with this I was the politician of actions, and I initiated several projects which have become official programmes later, like the European Capital of Smart Tourism and the Discover EU programme (free-interrail ticket to all young citizens who became 18). As Ambassador for UN Tourism, my goal is the creation of constant consultation and cooperation between the EU Institutions, stakeholders and the UN Tourism. Up until now, there was no permanent representation of UN Tourism in Brussels and it was high time to change this, since more cooperation and better governance are needed to have a sustainable ecosystem in tourism in the future.

INTERVIEW

Gabon, with its remarkable biodiversity and rich natural heritage, stands as a hidden gem in Africa's tourism landscape. The country boasts 13 national parks and numerous marine sanctuaries, offering unique experiences such as elephants and hippos surfing the beaches. Despite this, tourism investments have been slow, with the sector attracting around 200,000 tourists annually. The Gabonese government aims to boost this number to 500,000 within the next five years, leveraging improved infrastructure, a better business climate, and robust local SMEs.

UNVEILING GABON'S TOURISM POTENTIAL

In this interview, H.E. Hugues Mbadinga Madiya, who has held several key ministerial roles in the Gabonese government, discusses actionable strategies for translating policy initiatives into tangible growth for Gabon's tourism sector. He also sheds light on the potential for future investments in African tourism, particularly in ecotourism, cultural tourism, and business tourism, and outlines priorities for fostering economic growth through tourism development.

Q Having held several ministerial roles in the Gabonese Government, compassing key sectors such as Investment Promotion, Public-Private Partnerships, Business Climate Improvement, Trade, SMEs, Industrie, Transport, Equipment, Infrastructure and Public Works, could you elaborate for our international audience on translating policy initiatives within your domains into actionable strategies to boost the growth of tourism in Gabon?

A I thank you for the opportunity you gave me to communicate in your newspaper. I indeed had the privilege of leading public policies in my country whose link with the development of tourism in Gabon that seems obvious to me. Indeed, what is notable in Gabon's tourism situation today is its formidable natural potential. Gabon has transformed more than 10% of its continental territory to create 13 national parks which are marvels in terms of biodiversity. My country also has around twenty marine and aquatic parks which are sanctuaries for whales, sea turtles and several species. It is in Gabon that you can see elephants or hippos surfing on the beaches. However, despite this tremendous potential, tourism investments



H.E. HUGUES MBADINGA MADIYA

has held several key ministerial roles in the Gabonese government, discusses actionable strategies for translating policy initiatives into tangible growth for Gabon's tourism sector.

are slow to come. Today the number of tourists in Gabon is estimated at 200,000 per year, while the Government is targeting a potential of 500,000 in the next 5 years. Also the construction of adequate infrastructure, the improvement of the business climate, the construction of a network of strong local SMEs and of course good investment promotion are key issues to achieve these objectives.

Q Could you please offer insights on the potential for future investments in African Tourism and Gabon?

A The tourism sector has shown some dynamism in recent years. According to figures from the World Tourism Organization, the African continent attracted 57.8 million tourists in 2016, which represents 5% of global demand. However, according to forecasts, Africa could reach 134 million tourists by 2030. There is indeed great tourism potential in Africa. But to realize this potential, Africa needs investments, especially since

the Covid 19 pandemic has seriously disrupted activity in the sector.

It seems to me that for the coming years ecotourism, cultural tourism and business tourism are the segments towards which the greatest potential for progression exists. However, beyond the individual efforts of countries, it is urgent that Africa adopt a transversal vision of tourism development which includes a common transport strategy, greater promotion at the international level, financing of tourism investments, the development of intra regional tourism as well as the question of security.

“ THE GOVERNMENT’S
MEDIUM-TERM
AMBITION IS TO
INCREASE THE
NUMBER OF
TOURISTS FROM
500,000 PER YEAR. ”

Q In what ways should Gabon prioritize tourism development to foster economic growth?

A Considering its potential, Gabon should prioritize the development of ecotourism and MICE tourism sectors. The Government’s medium-term ambition is to increase the number of tourists from 500,000 per year. Today, the contribution of this sector to the economy is quite low (2.7% of GDP), but we believe that there is potential for development of the tourism sector in Gabon. Tourism can constitute a real development lever for Gabon given the potential but also the transverse nature of the sector which can have real knock-on effects on other economic sectors. To achieve this, it is important to focus on increasing tourism investments and also improving the quality and quantity of the offer. The Government has taken important steps to improve the business environment and attract investments. This is particularly the case with the tourism investment code which grants significant advantages to investors. Likewise, through a proactive policy carried out for decades, Gabon today offers the image of an extraordinary source of biodiversity, the last Eden as evoked by eminent personalities. Particular emphasis should be placed on promoting this potential, designing suitable tourism products, strengthening the hotel offering as well as training and even capacity building for local tourism stakeholders.





RYAN KUFFNER

President and CEO of Economic Development Winnipeg

Winnipeg, often celebrated as the heart of Canada, is a city where vibrant cultural experiences, cutting-edge business opportunities, and rich historical narratives come together. The Economic Development of Winnipeg, through Tourism Winnipeg, plays a crucial role in showcasing the city's multifaceted appeal. With a focus on leisure tourism, business events, travel trade, and sports and special events, Tourism Winnipeg is dedicated to positioning the city as a premier destination.

STRATEGIC GROWTH AND VIBRANT EXPERIENCES

RYAN KUFFNER ON WINNIPEG'S TOURISM VISION

In this interview, we delve into the strategic insights of Economic Development Winnipeg's approach, as shared by Ryan Kuffner, President and CEO of Economic Development Winnipeg. The discussion highlights the city's unique offerings, upcoming initiatives, and the integral role of business events in Winnipeg's tourism strategy.

Q What are the primary objectives of Tourism Winnipeg's current strategy for attracting tourists to the city?

A Our current strategy for attracting tourists focuses on four key segments: leisure tourism, business events, travel trade, and sports and special events.

For leisure tourism, we are targeting families and promoting Winnipeg as a four-season destination with educational and fun activities. This includes our unique Canadian winter experiences like the river skating trail, along with Indigenous tourism experiences, such as the Inuit art centre Qaumajuq at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

Another key area of focus is business events. We're able to leverage our unique model at Economic Development Winnipeg, where we have an economic development agency and tourism agency under one roof, allowing us to target and attract business events in alignment with Winnipeg's key sectors of strength and showcase the city as a prime location for business gatherings. Among the travel trade network, Winnipeg is the Gateway to the North where our city offers transformational tourism experiences like the Canadian Museum for Human Rights or immersive Indigenous experiences prior to exploring Churchill, Manitoba—polar bear capital of the world.

Lastly, we work to attract sporting

events by leveraging Winnipeg's proven track record in hosting international multi-sport events, such as the 2023 World Police Fire Games and the upcoming 2025 World Archery Championships. Winnipeg's warm Prairie hospitality and high-quality sports facilities allow us to attract and host major sports and special events.

Q Can you discuss some recent or upcoming initiatives that aim to enhance the visitor experience in Winnipeg?

A Tourism Winnipeg is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and sustainability, and we are seeing consumers—both business clients and on an individual level increasingly care about these areas. Our organization has participated in the global destination sustainability index (GDSI) for the second year and built a sustainability tourism roadmap to guide this foundational work to advance these priorities.

We're also committed to bringing new events to the city, such as the Great Outdoor Comedy Festival, which is a first for Winnipeg this summer. These new experiences offer visitors additional reasons to visit and explore the city in unique and engaging ways.

These initiatives collectively aim to enhance the overall visitor experience by creating vibrant, sustainable and relevant experiences that cater to diverse interests and needs.



“ WINNIPEG IS THE GATEWAY TO THE NORTH WHERE OUR CITY OFFERS TRANSFORMATIONAL TOURISM EXPERIENCES LIKE THE CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OR IMMERSIVE INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCES PRIOR TO EXPLORING CHURCHILL, MANITOBA—POLAR BEAR CAPITAL OF THE WORLD. ”

“ WINNIPEG’S TOP INTERNATIONAL SECTORS, INCLUDING AGRI-BUSINESS, ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT, AND ADVANCED MANUFACTURING (INCLUDING AEROSPACE) JUST TO NAME A FEW, MAKE THE CITY AN IDEAL LOCATION FOR RELATED EVENTS. ”

Q What role do business events and conventions play in Winnipeg’s tourism strategy, and how are you working to attract more of these events to the city?

A Business events and conventions play an integral role in our tourism strategy. Their goal is to showcase the wealth of what Winnipeg has to offer and attract events to the city.

Important to our strategy is playing to our economic strengths and alignment with Destination Canada’s business events strategy. Winnipeg’s top international sectors, including agri-business, energy & environment, and advanced manufacturing (including aerospace) just to name a few, make the city an ideal location for related events. Winnipeg’s strong business ecosystem supports these industries with access to expert speakers, technical tours and academic connections.

To further attract business events, we offer personalized site visits for prospective organizers. These visits allow them to see firsthand the quality of hotels, venues, and the convention center and our incredible people helping them envision their events in Winnipeg.





MARIO ENZESBERGER

CEO & Founder
Liberty International Tourism Group

For over three decades, Liberty International Tourism Group has been a pioneering force in the global travel industry. Founded in the aftermath of the communist regime's collapse, Liberty initially catered to former communist countries, gradually expanding its reach across Europe and eventually to over 110 countries worldwide. Today, Liberty International operates with its own offices in 65 countries, offering a diverse range of services in MICE, Premium Leisure, Cruise, Aircraft, and more.

REVOLUTIONIZING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND NAVIGATING POST-PANDEMIC TRENDS

In this interview, Mario Enzesberger, CEO and Founder of Liberty International Tourism Group, shares insights into the company's evolution, its commitment to sustainable tourism, and his vision for the future of the global tourism industry. Mario discusses how Liberty integrates sustainability across its various segments, the market's growing acceptance of sustainable practices, and the potential for innovation and growth in the post-pandemic era.

Q Could you provide a brief overview of how your prestigious Liberty International has evolved over the course of three decades?

A Liberty started as a special company servicing former, so-called "communist" countries after the breakdown of the communist system beginning in 1991. Over the course of the next few years, Liberty expanded into other parts of the world, beginning with Europe and then later worldwide. So over the past 3 decades, we have expanded to 65 countries with our own offices and legal entities operating in over 110 countries as a DMC offering services in MICE, Premium Leisure, Cruise, Aircraft and more.

Q What inspired your company to prioritize sustainable tourism? Could you elaborate on how Liberty International integrates this ethos into its practices through the company segments such as MICE, Premium Leisure, Cruise, Sports, Event and Aircraft?

A I strongly believe sustainability is the need of the hour in the world of mass tourism. As positive and life-changing as tourism can be, it can also destroy a lot. We have our own trust, Secluded Africa Wildlife &

Community Trust, an organization that focuses on wildlife and nature conservation for the benefit of the local communities around certain conservancies in East Africa. This organization is part of a larger umbrella, which includes Secluded Africa Lodges, four barefoot luxury lodges in the heart of Kenya, where we encourage our guests to engage in our conservation work, anti-poaching and community efforts.

At Liberty, we offer sustainability every step of the way, be it itineraries, travel, or outreach programmes. We are, in fact, green-certified in many of the destinations we're operating in. From sustainable itineraries to engaging with local communities to volunteering programmes, we try to include sustainability every step of the way. It's important to note that we don't offer a cookie-cutter approach to sustainability at every destination. If you have, for instance, a MICE group in Las Vegas, it will be more difficult compared to a MICE group on the coast of Greece. For aircraft services, we focus on sustainable fuels and also offer the most modern aircraft. The more modern the aircraft is, the better the aircraft is equipped, and the less fuel is used. Of course, sustainability is not as simple as it sounds. But our efforts are ongoing.

“ WE HAVE OUR OWN TRUST, SECLUDED AFRICA WILDLIFE & COMMUNITY TRUST, AN ORGANIZATION THAT FOCUSES ON WILDLIFE AND NATURE CONSERVATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES AROUND CERTAIN CONSERVANCIES IN EAST AFRICA. ”

REVOLUTIONIZING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND NAVIGATING POST-PANDEMIC TRENDS

Q How is the market reflecting sustainability for the travel industry?

A The market is much more accepting of sustainability now than it was a decade ago. The travel industry is increasingly reflecting sustainability trends, driven by consumer demand, regulatory pressures, and a growing awareness of environmental impact. Being sustainable is the trend right now. But we don't see it as a trend, but rather a way of life. There's a lot of greenwashing as well. While everyone talks a lot about being sustainable, not enough is being done. At Liberty, we work extensively with our local suppliers to try and find the right medium and services for our clients' sustainable needs.

Q What is your perspective of the future of the global tourism industry?

A When the pandemic happened, everyone assumed that it would be the death knell for the tourism industry. But I always believed otherwise; I knew tourism would go right back to where it was pre-pandemic and even outperform the earlier numbers. Having said that, we also have to face the issue of over-tourism, something that you can already witness across some of the world's most famous travel destinations like Venice, Greece, Thailand and more. Tourism has to expand to second-tier destinations and we have to be creative with holiday timings as well. The entire tourism industry is still dictated by school holidays. There's a lot of potential here. We also see a rising trend in luxury travel, experiential holidays and sustainable tourism.





ASIA ON THE MOVE: DIGITALIZATION AND SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM

NOOR AHMAD HAMID

CEO of PATA
(The Pacific Asia Travel Association)



AN INTERVIEW WITH PATA CEO NOOR AHMAD HAMID

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) has been at the forefront of sustainable tourism development for nearly five decades, long before “sustainability” became a popular term. Through a series of innovative initiatives, PATA has significantly influenced the tourism value chain in the Asia-Pacific region, championing environmental preservation, crisis resilience, and responsible tourism practices.

In this interview, we sit down with Noor Ahmad Hamid, CEO of PATA, to explore the organization’s strategic approach to sustainable tourism, the challenges facing the sector, and the transformative potential of digitalization. Noor Ahmad Hamid provides insights into key projects like the Tourism Destination Resilience (TDR) Programme, the PATA BUFFET initiative, and the “Targeting Zero Plastics in Tourism Businesses” course. He also discusses PATA’s efforts to assist members in transitioning towards digitized tourism governance and highlights the comprehensive strategies devised to enhance and promote tourism across the Asia-Pacific region.

Q What sustainable tourism initiatives has PATA implemented, and how do they influence the tourism value chain in the Asia-Pacific region?

A The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) has been championing sustainable tourism development for nearly 50 years, even before the word “sustainability” has become a buzzword. For example, in 1991, PATA was already taking initiatives on the environmental preservation of destinations, predating many world known regulations and certification programs.

Recently, the Association has implemented several initiatives to promote sustainable tourism in the Asia-Pacific region, significantly influencing the tourism value chain.

KEY PROJECTS

INCLUDE:

- The Tourism Destination Resilience (TDR) Programme, which provides training and resources to help destinations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) prepare for and recover from future crises.

- The PATA BUFFET (Building an Understanding For Food Excess in Tourism) Initiative, which aims to reduce food waste in the hospitality sector through practical toolkits and resources.

- The ‘Targeting Zero Plastics in Tourism Businesses’ course, organized in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Expedia Group.

Furthermore, PATA has been actively involved in the EU-funded TourLink project under the SWITCH-Asia Programme, which aims to improve sustainability among Thai tour operators and their supply chains. The programme has already helped to train over 250 Thai businesses. As part of this project, PATA co-developed the Food and Plastic Waste Reduction Standards, based off of our earlier initiatives noted above.

Lastly, PATA also has created the Sustainability Resource Centre (src.pata.org), a comprehensive digital repository to assist Asia Pacific destinations, businesses, communities and tourism professionals in their journey towards sustainability,

responsibility and resilience. The site has already attracted visitors from over 150 destinations, and over 6,000 certificates have been issued to participants taking the online courses publicly available on the site.

Q In what ways does PATA assist its members in transitioning towards digitized tourism governance?

A PATA assists its members in transitioning towards digitalised tourism governance through various initiatives and resources, including training programmes, workshops, webinars, and flagship events. These sessions empower and share knowledge, enabling tourism businesses to stay competitive in an increasingly digital landscape, ultimately contributing to the sector resilience and sustainability. PATA also hosts government sessions for addressing industry challenges. Additionally, the Association has also organized grassroots activities such as the TDR for SMEs - Digital Skills Module and the informal workers training on digitalisation to support efficient government implementation.

ASIA ON THE MOVE: DIGITALIZATION AND SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM

AN INTERVIEW WITH PATA CEO NOOR AHMAD HAMID

Q Could you provide detailed insights into the Tourism Destination Resilience (TDR) Programme supported by PATA?

A The TDR Programme, supported by PATA, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), and the German Development Ministry (BMZ), enhances the resilience of tourism destinations against challenges like natural disasters, economic shocks, and health crises. The programme offers resources, including training sessions, workshops, and toolkits, to build capacity for effective crisis management and recovery. By fostering a proactive approach to crisis preparedness, the programme helps destinations minimize the impact of adverse events and ensure swift, sustainable recovery. The TDR for SMEs, supported by PATA and Visa, extends these efforts to SMEs, providing them with tools and training in financial skills, digital skills, and cybersecurity. This helps SMEs adopt technology, understand and better manage finances, and improve operational efficiency and crisis response capabilities. By supporting both destinations and SMEs, the TDR Programme promotes a comprehensive approach to resilience in the tourism industry.

Q What are the primary challenges facing the tourism sector in the Asia-Pacific region, and how can international organizations offer support?

A The tourism sector in the Asia-Pacific region faces several primary challenges, including the impacts of climate change, geopolitical

tensions, and economic uncertainty. Additionally, infrastructure deficiencies, environmental degradation, and fluctuating tourist demands pose significant hurdles.

International organizations such as PATA can offer support in several ways, such as:

FUNDING AND INVESTMENT:

Assisting stakeholders in receiving financial assistance for infrastructure development and environmental conservation projects. This can include grants, low-interest loans, and investments in sustainable tourism initiatives.

CAPACITY BUILDING:

Offering training and education programs to enhance local skills in tourism management, marketing, and customer service.

POLICY GUIDANCE:

Assisting governments in formulating and implementing policies that promote sustainable tourism. This includes advising on regulatory frameworks, environmental protection measures, and crisis management strategies.

MARKETING SUPPORT:

Collaborating with local tourism boards to promote the Asia-Pacific region as a safe and attractive destination. Joint marketing campaigns can help rebuild tourist confidence and attract international visitors.

RESEARCH AND DATA SHARING:

Conducting research and sharing data on tourism trends, best practices, and emerging challenges. This helps local stakeholders make informed decisions and adapt to changing market conditions.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT:

Providing expertise and resources for disaster preparedness and response. This includes helping regions recover quickly from natural disasters, political crises, or health emergencies.

By addressing these challenges collaboratively, international organizations can help the Asia-Pacific tourism sector recover and thrive sustainably.

Q What strategic approach has PATA devised to enhance and promote tourism in the Asia-Pacific region?

A PATA takes a comprehensive strategic approach to enhancing and promoting tourism in the Asia-Pacific region, focusing on sustainability, innovation, and collaboration. Key components of our approach include:

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT:

PATA emphasizes the importance of sustainable tourism practices to protect the region's natural and cultural resources. This includes promoting eco-friendly travel, supporting conservation efforts, and encouraging responsible tourism behaviors among travelers and businesses.



CAPACITY BUILDING AND EDUCATION:

PATA organizes training and educational programs to improve the skills and knowledge of tourism professionals. This includes workshops, webinars, and online certification courses on various topics such as crisis management, and sustainable tourism practices.

RESEARCH AND INSIGHTS:

PATA publishes several reports throughout the year and via our member network provides valuable insights into tourism trends, consumer behavior, and market dynamics. The various research reports and data analytics help stakeholders make informed decisions and identify opportunities for growth and innovation.

ADVOCACY AND POLICY SUPPORT:

PATA advocates for policies that support the growth and development of the tourism sector. The Association engages with governments, international organizations, and industry

stakeholders to influence policy decisions and create a favorable environment for tourism.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION:

PATA collaborates with destination marketing organizations to promote the Asia-Pacific region as a diverse and attractive tourism destination. The Association leverages digital marketing, social media, and partnerships to reach a global audience and showcase the region's unique attractions and experiences.

INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY:

PATA encourages the adoption of innovative technologies to enhance the tourism experience. This includes supporting the development of smart tourism solutions, digital platforms, and data-driven decision-making tools that improve efficiency and customer satisfaction.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND RECOVERY:

PATA provides guidance and support for crisis management and recovery efforts. The Association

offers resources and best practices to help destinations and businesses navigate challenges such as natural disasters and health crises, ensuring a resilient tourism sector.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION:

PATA promotes community-based tourism initiatives that involve and benefit local communities. This approach ensures that tourism development is inclusive, equitable, and contributes to the socio-economic well-being of residents.

Through these strategic initiatives, PATA aims to foster a resilient, sustainable, and inclusive tourism sector in the Asia-Pacific region. By leveraging collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to sustainability, PATA strives to enhance the region's attractiveness as a global tourism destination and support its long-term growth and prosperity.



CATALINA VALENTINO
Group CEO of ELIXR

ELIXR is setting new standards in urban development with its innovative Planet2030 initiative, aiming to create over ten technology companies aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As the world's first Global Giga-Project, ELIXR focuses on retrofitting existing cities rather than building new ones, promoting a connected Smart City ecosystem through accurate, ethical, and live data. By working with global partners like UN-Habitat, Pinsent Masons, and the UK Department for Business and Trade, ELIXR is fostering a global network of smart solutions across various sectors, from infrastructure and health to education and tourism.

ELIXR'S PLANET2030

PIONEERING SUSTAINABLE SMART CITIES WITH CATALINA VALENTINO

Join us for an insightful conversation with Catalina Valentino, Group CEO of ELIXR, as she discusses the groundbreaking Planet2030 initiative. ELIXR, the world's first Global Giga-Project, is revolutionizing urban development by retrofitting existing cities with smart, sustainable technologies. With a commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and collaborations with global partners, ELIXR is creating a human-centric smart city ecosystem. In this interview, Catalina Valentino sheds light on the challenges and successes of integrating cutting-edge technologies across various sectors, including travel and tourism, and the importance of ethical AI in shaping the future of urban living.

Q ELIXR is known for its ambitious Planet 2030 vision. Can you tell us more about how this vision translates into tangible projects around the world, particularly in travel and tourism sectors?

A ELIXR is the World's first Global Giga-Project, and as a part of its Planet2030 vision, is developing 10+ technology companies each aligned with the UN SDGs across major Smart City verticals.

We are helping to “retrofit the world”. The world already has giga-projects which are creating new cities; but what about our existing cities?

By utilising the underpinning of accurate, ethical and live data across the ecosystem, ELIXR is creating 10+ hardware and software technologies across different sectors under its umbrella with its mission to bring to life its vision for a connected Smart City ecosystem.

Working across the U.K., Middle East and US with major global partners and initiatives such as UN-Habitat, Pinsent Masons, UKRI, The Department for Business and Trade and so on, we are creating a global ecosystem of smart solutions

to create smart nations.

From the minerals we mine from the Earth, to building infrastructure which enables societies, to reducing our energy bills, improving our health, better transport and better education, improved tourism and entertainment for economic growth right through to the end use of our carbon and how we can reduce it. Each technology focuses on addressing one of these issues.

Because ELIXR isn't just focused on infrastructure of smart cities, but an end-to-end solution for the return of a human-centric way to plan smart cities.

Q As a globally recognized tech entrepreneur, what challenges have you faced in integrating sustainable practices within tech development, and how do these practices influence your projects in diverse global regions?

A There will always be challenges across every sector and geographic location. Whether that be regulations, frameworks, policies... But it's about how you solve those challenges; for example early adoption of technologies. ...

“
ELIXR ISN'T JUST FOCUSED ON INFRASTRUCTURE OF SMART CITIES, BUT AN END-TO-END SOLUTION FOR THE RETURN OF A HUMAN-CENTRIC WAY TO PLAN SMART CITIES.
”

ELIXR'S PLANET2030

PIONEERING SUSTAINABLE SMART CITIES WITH CATALINA VALENTINO

... The tech we've developed in the past Ana continue to develop is 5-10 years ahead of the market, so naturally initially there was always pushback.

The solution? Finding industry allies to help drive change.

With MetaConnex, ELIXR's digital twins platform for urban planning, when we found our first council who was ready to adopt this technology early (Bolton Council), we were then able to prove the concept worked, adding £500m GDP on a site in 3 days using the tool.

Once we had them, it was easier to get buy in from partners such as Pinsent Masons, a leading legal firm who would help us with tender frameworks, business development, data and of course legal services.

Once we had them, we approached banks such as Barclays and Lloyds in the U.K., and once we had this buy in we were able to expand to other councils in the U.K.

Finding the first original believer is the hardest part. But once you have them, life gets a little easier.

Q ELIXR focuses on creating Smart Nations. How do you see the role of technology in transforming not just urban centers but also remote travel destinations into smart, sustainable environments?

A Technology has the power to completely transform the way we currently interact with our environment. From immersive experiences, gamification and or better experiences technology has lots to offer to tourism.

The trouble is, there's a huge lack of innovation in the sector, and everyone just jumping on the "ai" wagon is missing a huge trick.

It's about creating unique experiences, and attracting more people to destinations for customer benefit. Customers don't care about how "unique" your algorithm is, they just want the best experience with the least amount of friction.

So when creating and traveling tech in the future (or any technologies for that matter!) we must always put the end user at the heart of our decision making processes.

What impact will this have on our users?

Does this make their life easier?

Can they get this anywhere else?

If so why will they come to us?

One thing people get wrong as tech founders or even teams is: sell the benefit, not the innovation.

And of course we can't miss the opportunity to discuss the impact social media has had on places like Dubai, and the role social media has played in idolising Dubai as the place to be for young startups. It's now seen as innovative and forward thinking in its efforts to become a "smart and sustainable city". That amongst a multitude of factors including policy, taxation and an attractively promoted lifestyle has changed the game for the UAE and

other countries over the last decade.

Q With the increasing integration of AI in various aspects of our lives, the concept of ethical AI has gained significant importance. Could you share your perspective on what constitutes ethical AI, and what steps companies and researchers should take?

A Ethics in ai is simple. As AI and technology becomes more integrated into our daily lives, ensuring it's ethics is crucial. Ethical AI is fair, transparent, respects privacy, and is accountable.

It means creating technology that treats people equally, explains its decisions clearly, protects user data, and holds companies responsible for its actions.

By focusing on these principles, we can build AI systems that people trust and rely on.

This means integrating a number of different things early on — not just when it suits public perception. True ethics should be considered every step of the way. From the data sets which we integrate, right through to how the data is stored, managed and distributed later on.

Not only this, but consider sustainability in the data storage systems we use, and consider finding more energy efficient solutions.

It's not only about security in the data, but also how that data is used. Data has the power to do good and bad, but if we use it to inform our decision making we can enable a better society for us all.



NEW CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE NORDICS

ANDY FAIRBURN

Founding Director, The Nordic Tourism Collective



The pursuit of sustainability has been the cornerstone of Scandinavian and Nordic societies for decades. The acknowledged world leader in sustainability, which underpins every aspect of Nordic life and which extends to architecture, design, lifestyle, food, fashion and tourism.

The development of sustainable tourism in the Nordic regions now faces existential challenges compounded by fresh contradictions. Two of the most pressing issues facing Nordic tourism today are the growing debate over the marketing of long-haul tourism and the relatively new phenomenon of 'cold-tourism'.

Long Haul marketing

In 2018, Greta Thunberg embarked upon her Skolstrejk för klimatet” (School strike for climate) outside of the Swedish Riksdag (Parliament) demanding action from political leaders to prevent climate change and for the fossil fuel industry to transition to renewable energy.



Since approximately 2.5 percent of global human carbon emissions come from commercial flights, This led, in Sweden and across Scandinavia, to the concept of flygskam (flight shame) where flying was identified as anti-climate and anti-social.

Whilst the industry generally acknowledges that the Nordic tourism infrastructure needs to undergo decarbonization by reducing the number of flights, particularly from long-haul destinations, this has created a dilemma for the National Tourism and Marketing Organisations (NTOs) who still seek to attract visitors from all over the world.

Studies show that 17% of the most distant arrivals from long-haul markets cause 62% of the emissions (1) and so marketing in many long-haul destinations is condemned by many. Against this, NTOs seek to balance the drive for sustainable tourism against an economic reality with many regions dependent on long-haul visitors from Japan, Far East and the United States - without which whole destinations, economies and societies would fall into decline. This has been exacerbated by the closure of the Russian market, once an important source of visitors to many Nordic countries, particularly Finland, with NTOs seeking to replace visitor numbers from elsewhere.

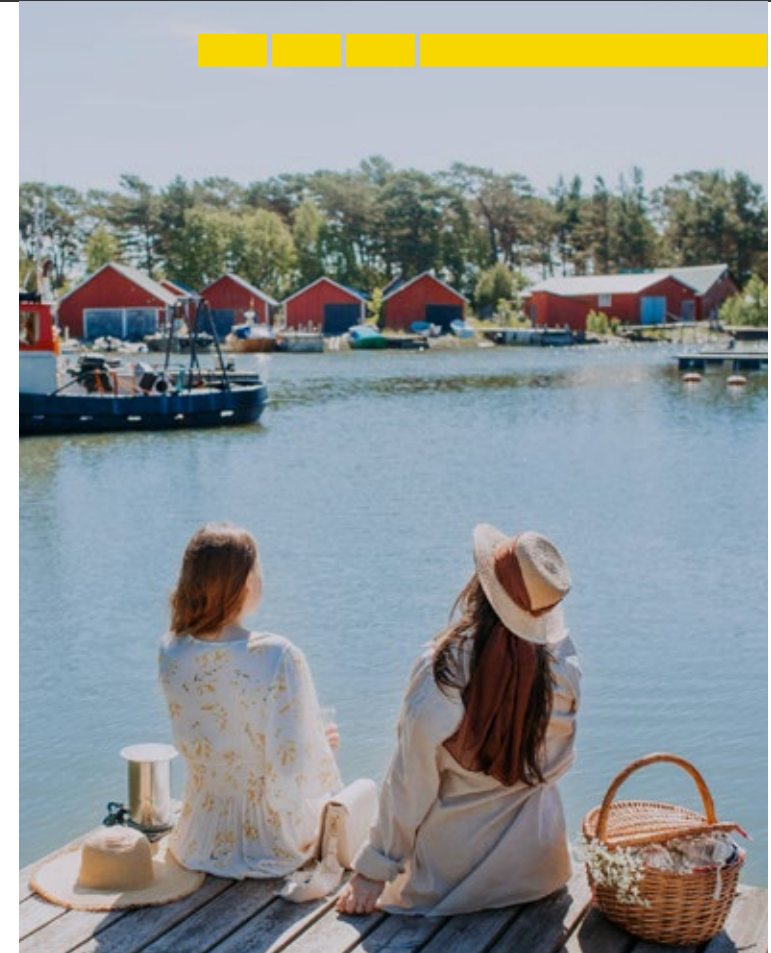
The question on whether to market and attract visitors from long-haul destinations continues and is likely to become increasingly divided as the Asian markets recover. The Japan-Nordic market is yet to return to pre-2019 levels and the China market is yet to start travelling again in any real numbers.

Cold Tourism

We are beginning to witness a critical shift in traveller patterns which will radically change business to the Nordic region. This is Cold Tourism (sometimes referred to as coolcations) and describes the shift in traveller patterns away from the intensely hot conditions in the South of Europe during the summer months and towards the cooler, more temperate conditions of Northern Europe, Scandinavia and the Nordics.

A survey for US travel network Virtuoso found that 82 per cent of its clients are considering destinations with more moderate weather with destinations such as Iceland and Finland becoming more popular. Many UK operators have also seen an increase in those holidaying further north with Scandinavia offering lovely beaches, forests and lakes for both relaxation and adventure activities. Cooler temperatures are also particularly well suited to family travel.

Many in the Nordic region recognise the benefits that may come from a new influx of visitors taking 'coolcations'. The Nordic region differs tremendously from one area to another and there are already bottlenecks in some areas. Cold Tourism may offer a way of promoting so-called secondary destinations. Seasonality is also a critical issue in the Northern part of Scandinavia with businesses desperate for visitors in the summer months (the arctic low-season). Coolcations could provide an opportunity to



There is, however, a clear conflict between the idea of 'Cold Tourism' and sustainability and the industry is alert to the dangers. No one can be seen to be promoting any 'benefits' of climate change nor to be identified as profiting from climate change. Unfortunately, we have already seen some examples of destinations promoting 'coolcations' as part of their advertising campaigns.

Most Nordic regions are aware and alert to the dangers of potential over tourism and conscious of the need to prepare for a possible increase in visitors with associated impacts on transportation, infrastructure and even allemannsretten (right to roam) in Norway,

Most Nordic destinations would be simply unable to accommodate a significant increase in visitor numbers - they do not have the hotel capacity nor the transportation infrastructure to enable this. Some destinations such as Bergen in Norway are looking at the introduction of local taxes to help with infrastructure developments and improvements.

NEW CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE NORDICS

Good communication and messaging on cold tourism is critical and Nordic destinations and industry players are trying to agree how best to communicate the opportunities that can arise through cold tourism without acknowledging climate change in any positive way. The balance between the advantages and challenges represented by Cold Tourism may be represented in the diagram with communication and messaging being the key between the two.

Crucial to the discussion, however, are the individual Nordic communities and the people who live across the region. Whilst there are economic benefits to be gained from increased tourism, with longer seasons and visitors to so-called 'secondary destinations' what do the communities think? Nordic Marketing Organisations now increasingly involve local communities in their strategic decision making.

One very good example of this approach is by Visit Faroe Islands. Entitled 'Heim' (Faroese for home), the Faroese tourism strategy balances the needs for tourism with the needs of the Faroese people to ensure tourism is used to build, share and preserve their 'home'. Their strategy sets out a clear cooperation between the local people, guests, businesses and organisations and shows how tourism is away of building a better 'home' and a means of preserving and developing natural and cultural heritage.



ALLESUND, NORWAY



ASIAN TOURISTS IN NORTHERN SWEDEN

BEACH IN JUTLAND, DENMARK





**WORLD
TOURISM
FORUM**
Institute



POWER 30

Tourism Power 30, an authoritative compilation meticulously curated by the World Tourism Forum Institute. In a world marked by rapid change and evolving landscapes, the tourism industry stands as a dynamic force, constantly shaped by innovation, sustainability, and shifting consumer preferences. As we delve into the realms of travel and hospitality, we witness not only the emergence of groundbreaking trends but also the trailblazers who spearhead these transformative movements.

In the year 2023, the global tourism sector witnessed a convergence of trends that reshaped the way we explore the world. From the rise of sustainable travel practices to the integration of cutting-edge technology, and the growing demand for authentic, immersive experiences, the industry underwent a profound metamorphosis. At the heart of these trends stand visionary individuals whose ingenuity and leadership have propelled the tourism sector into new frontiers.

The Tourism Power 30 is a testament to the influential figures at the helm of these trends, driving innovation, shaping policies, and redefining the boundaries of what it means to travel in the 21st century. From CEOs revolutionizing sustainable tourism initiatives to researchers offering invaluable insights into consumer behavior, each name on this list represents a beacon of excellence in their respective domains.

As we embark on this journey through the Tourism Power 30, we invite you to explore the multifaceted landscape of the tourism industry and discover the individuals who are not only leading the charge but also shaping the future of travel for generations to come. Join us as we celebrate innovation, sustainability, and the boundless possibilities that lie ahead in the ever-evolving world of tourism.



Eric Adams

Mayor of New York City

Eric Leroy Adams (born September 1, 1960) is an American politician and former police officer, currently serving as the 110th mayor of New York City since 2022. An ideologically conservative member of the Democratic Party, Adams was an officer in the New York City Transit Police and then the New York City Police Department (NYPD) for more than 20 years, retiring at the rank of captain. He served in the New York State Senate from 2006 to 2013, representing the 20th Senate district in Brooklyn. In November 2013, Adams was elected Brooklyn Borough President, the first African-American to hold the position, and reelected in November 2017.



Ed Bastian

CEO of Delta Airlines

Edward Herman Bastian is an American business executive. He is the ninth and current chief executive officer of Delta Air Lines, serving in this role since May 2, 2016.



Ahmed Al Khateeb

Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia

Ahmed bin Aqil al-Khateeb is a Saudi Arabian bureaucrat who has been serving as Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia since February 2020. He previously led the country's General Entertainment Authority as its inaugural president between May 2016 and June 2018 and was previously Minister of Health from January to April 2015. He is also a former advisor at the Saudi Royal Court and has served as the chairman of Saudi Arabian Military Industries as well as the Saudi Fund for Development.



Sebastian Bazin

CEO of Accor

Sébastien Bazin is a French businessman. He is the chairman and chief executive officer of AccorHotels. As CEO of Accor, he has committed to the UN's HeForShe campaign that seeks to promote women's and men's rights by pledging to reach parity in pay and equality between genders by 2020.



Paolo Ardoino

CEO of Tether

Paolo Ardoino, chief executive officer of Tether. Tether is one of the most important companies in crypto and also one of the most notorious. Its business is going gangbusters as its namesake stablecoin has swollen to over \$90 billion in market value, which lets Tether make fat margins in this era of 5.5% Fed rates.



Brian Chesky

Co-founder and CEO of Airbnb

Brian Joseph Chesky is an American businessman and industrial designer and the co-founder and CEO of Airbnb. As of January 2024, Chesky is the 232nd richest person in the world according to Forbes, with a net worth of \$9.4 billion, mostly due to his ownership of 76 million shares of Airbnb.



Anthony Capuano

President and CEO of Marriott International

Anthony Capuano is President and CEO of Marriott International, Inc. In his role, Mr. Capuano presides over the world's largest hospitality company and some of the most iconic brands in travel. The company now has nearly 8,700 properties across 139 countries and territories and over 30 brands. It also has the travel industry's largest customer loyalty program, Marriott Bonvoy, which has more than 192 million members.



Sebastian Ebel

CEO of TUI Group

Sebastian Ebel has been CEO of the TUI Group since 1 October 2022. Prior to that, he had been Chief Financial Officer of the Group since 2021.



Luigi Cabrini

Chair Person of Global Sustainable Tourism Council

Luigi Cabrini chairs the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, leading global initiatives on sustainable tourism. He directed the UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Programme until 2014 and previously held positions in Europe and as Secretary of the General Assembly and Executive Council. With 20 years of UN engagement in development and refugee protection, Cabrini is multilingual and has authored numerous articles and speeches.



Glenn D. Fogel

CEO of Booking Holdings

Glenn D. Fogel is Booking Holdings' Chief Executive Officer and President, a position he has held since January 2017, and Chief Executive Officer of Booking.com, a position he has held since June 2019.



Bilal Ekşi

CEO of Turkish Airlines

Bilal Ekşi began his career at Turkish Airlines in 2003, holding various leadership roles including Head of Overhaul Workshops and Chief Ground Operations Officer. He later served as Chief Production Officer at Turkish Technic and as Executive Vice President at Turkish Engine Center. In 2010, Ekşi transitioned to become General Manager of Cyprus Turkish Airlines. In April 2011, he left Turkish Airlines to lead the Directorate General of Turkish Civil Aviation. Finally, on October 21, 2016, Ekşi was appointed as Chief Executive Officer and Deputy Chairman of the Board and Executive Committee of Turkish Airlines.



Gianni Infantino

President of FIFA

Giovanni Vincenzo Infantino is a Swiss-Italian football administrator and the president of FIFA since February 2016. He was re-elected in June 2019 and in March 2023. In January 2020, he was also elected a member of the International Olympic Committee.





Robert Isom

CEO of American Airlines

Robert Isom is Chief Executive Officer of American Airlines Group and American Airlines, its principal subsidiary company. He also serves on the airline's board of directors. Robert assumed the role of CEO in March 2022. Robert served as President of American from 2016 to 2022.



Olga Kefalogianni

Minister of Tourism of Greece

Olga Kefalogianni is a Greek politician who served as Minister of Tourism of the Greek Government from 2012 to 2015 and again since 27 June 2023. She was appointed in this position by Prime Minister Antonis Samaras in June 2012. She is a Member of Parliament, representing the New Democracy party.



Amit Jain

CEO of Emaar

Mr. Amit Jain, Group Chief Executive Officer of Emaar Properties, joined the company in 2006. He is responsible for driving the Group's strategy and overall management of its operations. He has over 22 years of experience at senior positions with Real Estate, Banking industries and as Management Consultant. He is a Chartered Accountant from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India and a CFA Charter holder from the CFA Institute, USA.

EMAAR



Peter M Kern

CEO of Expedia Group

Kern has been a director of Expedia Group since completion of the IAC/Expedia Group Spin-Off, has served as Vice Chairman of Expedia Group since June 2018, and has served as Chief Executive Officer of Expedia Group since April 2020.



Paul Kagame

President of Rwanda

Paul Kagame is a Rwandan politician and former military officer who has been the fourth President of Rwanda since 2000. He was previously a commander of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a rebel armed force which invaded Rwanda in 1990.



Sadiq Khan

Mayor of London

Sadiq Aman Khan Hon FRIBA is a British politician serving as Mayor of London since 2016. He was previously Member of Parliament for Tooting from 2005 until 2016. A member of the Labour Party, Khan is on the party's soft left and has been ideologically characterised as a social democrat.





Dara Khosrowshahi

CEO of Uber

Dara Khosrowshahi is an Iranian-American business executive who is the chief executive officer of Uber. He was previously CEO of Expedia Group, a company that owns several travel fare aggregators.

Uber



Neşet Koçkar

Founder of ANEX Tour

Neşet Koçkar founded ANEX Tourism Group, which operates as ANEX Tour in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Germany, and as OREX Travel in Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland. With 26 Boeing aircraft and three airline companies under AZUR Air, ANEX is a major player in air transportation. Additionally, it includes AZEX brokerage, ADO Aviation, and AZUR Aviation. ANEX Tour serves 3 million tourists annually across various countries, with 318 tour operator offices in Russia and 29 sales offices worldwide.



Jason T. Liberty

CEO of Royal Caribbean Group

Jason Liberty is President and Chief Executive Officer for Royal Caribbean Group, which consists of three global cruise brands, Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises and Silversea Cruises, as well as TUI Cruises and Hapag-Lloyd Cruises, of which it is a 50% owner in a joint venture.



Ma Xu Lun

Director & General Manager at China Southern Air Holding

Xu Lun Ma is a businessperson who has been the head of 6 different companies and currently is Director & General Manager at China Southern Air Holding Co.



Luis Maroto

CEO of Amadeus

Mr. Maroto became President & CEO of Amadeus on 1 January 2011. From January 2009 to December 2010, he was Deputy CEO of Amadeus, with responsibility for overall company strategy as well as line management of the finance, internal audit, legal and human resources functions.



Christopher J. Nassetta

CEO of Hilton Worldwide

Christopher J. Nassetta is an American businessman, who has served as president and chief executive officer of Hilton Worldwide since October 2007. He attended the University of Virginia.





Cristiano Ronaldo

Football Player

Cristiano Ronaldo dos Santos Aveiro GOIH ComM is a Portuguese professional footballer who plays as a forward for and captains both Saudi Pro League club Al Nassr and the Portugal national team.



Xu Xiaoliang

CO-CEO of Fosun International

Fosun International Limited is a Chinese multinational conglomerate holding company. Founded in 1992 by Guo Guangchang and four others, the company is headquartered in Shanghai and was incorporated in Hong Kong in 2004. Its Co-CEOs are Chen Qiyu and Xu Xiaoliang.

FOSUN 复星



Stephen Squeri

CEO of American Express

Stephen Squeri is the CEO of American Express. He has been in the position since February 1, 2018. He has been a vice chairman of American Express since 2015 and was group president of Amex's global corporate services group before that.



Sun Yeli

Minister of Culture and Tourism of China

Sun Yeli is a Chinese politician who is the current director of the State Council Information Office, a deputy head of the Publicity Department of the Chinese Communist Party and the Minister of Culture and Tourism.



William M. Walsh

Director General of IATA

William Matthew Walsh is an Irish airline executive who is currently the Director General of the International Air Transport Association. Until 2020, he was CEO of International Airlines Group, and had previously been CEO of Aer Lingus and British Airways.



Mark Zuckerberg

CEO of Meta

Mark Elliot Zuckerberg is an American businessman and philanthropist. He co-founded the social media service Facebook, along with his Harvard roommates in 2004, and its parent company Meta Platforms, of which he is executive chairman, chief executive officer and controlling shareholder



HOW REBOUNDTAG IS TRANSFORMING LUGGAGE TRACKING FOR TRAVELERS



In the ever-evolving world of travel technology, ReboundTAG has emerged as a game-changer, offering an innovative solution for tracking and recovering lost luggage. We sat down with Max Rangeley, the founder and CEO of ReboundTAG, to discuss the inspiration behind the company, how it sets itself apart from other luggage tracking solutions, and what the future holds for travel convenience and security.

Q ReboundTAG has revolutionized the way travelers can track and recover lost luggage. Can you share the inspiration behind creating ReboundTAG and how it differentiates itself from other luggage tracking solutions on the market?

A When somebody finds your bag, they scan it and you are updated in real-time by SMS and email, but at all stages your details remain secure. At ReboundTAG, we will help you get your bag back to you but we also never reveal your details. We wanted to ensure from the start that all of our members' details are kept secure at all times. We also integrate with baggage handling companies, but even in this case they only send us notifications—we still keep your details private.

A With ReboundTAG, the core idea is that we incorporate all of the main IATA-approved baggage technologies into one tag - radio frequency identification (RFID), NFC, QR code and also a unique ID printed on the tag. Anybody, anywhere in the world who finds a tag can either scan it using one of the layers of technology or go to our website (no need for an app). The owner is notified in real time, including the GPS coordinates of where it was found along with the finder's details, while the owner's details remain secure. I patented the system, so that it is completely original. It has also been battle-tested by major airlines - Lufthansa gave ReboundTAGs to all of their station managers around the world in 2010, when we were still in development, and there was not a single bag lost. Since then we have continued to develop the technology. Our customers now include not only airlines, but most of the major hotel chains and also tech companies including Facebook, Google, Paypal and Sony among others.

Q With the rise of smart luggage solutions, security is a major concern for travelers. How does ReboundTAG ensure the safety and privacy of user data while providing reliable tracking and recovery services?

Q ReboundTAG has also introduced other products, can you elaborate on these?

A The ReboundTAG microchip luggage tag went on to win many accolades, including at the Business Travel Show Disrupt Awards in the London Olympia and at the Frontier Awards in Cannes among many others and was also featured on media such as BBC World News—so we knew the next step was to look at how we can expand the same concept to other fields. We then introduced the microchip sticker, for phones, laptops, tablets and also other items such as glasses cases. With the microchip sticker, your details remain secure but if your laptop, for instance, is lost on a train and is found, you are notified in real time and you also receive an SMS and email with the GPS coordinates of where it was found. Additionally, we introduced the microchip key ring and are currently introducing the microchip pet tag. It has been very exciting, the new products are also well received, like the microchip luggage tag was.

Q As someone deeply involved in travel technology, what trends do you foresee in the future of travel, especially concerning luggage handling and traveler convenience? How is ReboundTAG preparing to stay ahead in this evolving landscape?

A The most important aspect is that the large companies in the travel industry should adopt the latest technology, whether this be RFID or artificial intelligence. The airline industry has a reputation for using technology that is years old, and often decades old. The consequences for lost bags are apparent for all to see. At ReboundTAG we are always looking at the latest technologies to see what can be integrated. Additionally, we recently worked through a series of partnerships so that it is easier for companies to brand the microchip trackers with their logo—for instance companies can buy microchip stickers with their logo on. What item does almost everybody have with them all the time in this day and age? It is their phone of course, yet you hardly ever see corporate branding on someone's smart phone (other than the logo of Apple, Samsung etc). With the microchip sticker, we can print them with your logo on so that your logo is seen around the world when people travel! This is not only good for hotels and other travel companies, but really any company that wants their brand to be visible.



Founder and CEO of ReboundTAG, Max Rangeley's making a speech in the European Parliament on the Economics of Artificial Intelligence



SSELS 2021

GTF HIGHLIGHTS

BAZIN



Sébastien Bazin,
Chairman and CEO of AccorHotels

GTF HIGHLIGHTS



Valentina Superti, the director in charge of tourism at the DG grow responsible for internal market industry entrepreneurship and SMEs at the European Commission, emphasized the importance of the tourism ecosystem for Europe.



Transportation and tourism go hand in hand, and without efficient transport, the tourism industry can suffer. Adina-Iona Valean, the European Commissioner for Transport, emphasized this point during her keynote speech at the GTF Leaders Summit Europe 2022 in Brussels.



François Hollande, former president of France suggested that blockchain technology could be used to facilitate transportation, simplify procedures, and enhance transparency and security for travelers and destination countries.



Federico J. Gonzalez, the CEO of Radisson Hotels Group emphasized five key factors: (1) the ability to change and adapt, (2) having a clear plan, (3) securing the right people, partners, or culture, (4) putting the consumer or customer first, and (5) effective leadership.



Willie Walsh, Director General IATA has discussed the critical role air cargo played during the pandemic, acting as a lifeline for vaccines, supply chains, and airline revenues.



One of the highlights of the GTF was a special one-on-one conversation about the impact of the FIFA World Cup on tourism with special guest His Excellency Akbar Al Baker, Chairman of Qatar Tourism and Group Chief Executive of Qatar Airways.

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