

Agenda item 4: Implementation of the Programme of Work in Europe (regional and technical activities)

I. Overview of the international tourism trends and outlook in the Region Europe¹

1. Europe, the world's most visited destination region, reached 94% of pre-pandemic levels in 2023, supported by robust intra-regional demand and travel from the United States. According to the US National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO), US travel to Europe grew 28% through November 2023 (compared to previous year) and represents 21% of total US overseas travel.
2. Europe enjoyed a strong summer season with June, July, and August accounting for 37% of the yearly total. September and October were also busy months, partly due to favourable weather conditions.
3. Many destinations in Europe reported arrivals and receipts well above pre-pandemic levels, according to available data for full-year 2023.
4. **Albania** saw the strongest performance in Europe with 56% more international arrivals in 2023 compared to 2019, to reach almost 10 million visitors. **Andorra** recorded 31% more arrivals in the same year, **Armenia** 22%, **Serbia** and **Liechtenstein** both 16%, **Republic of Moldova** 12% and **Malta** 8% more. Large destinations like **Türkiye** (+8%), **Greece** (+4%), **Spain** (+2%) and the **Netherlands** (+1%) also exceeded pre-pandemic tourist numbers in 2023.
5. Southern Mediterranean Europe (+1%) was among the four world subregions that exceeded pre-pandemic visitor levels in 2023. Northern Europe (-2%) and Western Europe (-3%) came close to recovering their 2019 levels.
6. Several destinations also reported strong growth in international tourism receipts during 2023, including **Serbia** (+79% over 2019), **North Macedonia** (+57%), **Romania** (+44%), **Tajikistan** (+46%), **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (+43%), **Montenegro** (+38%), **Latvia** (+34%), **Iceland** (+29%), **Norway** (+26%), **Lithuania** (+25%), **Luxembourg** (+22%), **Malta** (+17%) and **Slovenia** (+15%). **Türkiye** (+39%), **Portugal** (+37%), **Spain** (+19%), **Italy** (+17%), **Greece** (+13%), **France** and the **Netherlands** (both +12%) were among the largest tourism earners to exceed pre-pandemic levels by far in 2023.
7. The sustained recovery is also reflected in the performance of industry indicators. According to the UNWTO Tourism Recovery Tracker, international passenger demand in Europe recovered 93% of pre-pandemic levels in 2023, while international air capacity reached 95% (IATA). Global occupancy rates in accommodation establishments reached 60% in December 2023, with a peak of 78% in September (based on STR data).
8. Following a strong rebound in 2023, international tourism globally is expected to recover pre-pandemic levels in 2024, with initial estimates pointing to 2% growth above 2019 levels. As for 2023, Europe is expected to drive results, with robust European source markets fuelling tourism flows and spending in the region and around the world.
9. Europe will see major sports events in 2024. Paris (**France**) will host the 2024 Summer Olympics in during July and August, and **Germany** the UEFA EURO 2024 in June-July. In terms of travel facilitation, **Romania** and **Bulgaria** have joined the Schengen area of free movement in March 2024.

¹ World Tourism Barometer (English version), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/wtobarometereng>

II. Main challenges and opportunities affecting the tourism sector in Europe

10. The tourism sector in Europe continues to face a multitude of challenges, ranging from economic uncertainty, climate crisis and workforce shortages, to geopolitical tensions deriving from Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the Israel-Gaza Crisis.
11. Ongoing inflation, elevated interest rates, fluctuating oil prices and trade disturbances are likely to continue to impact transportation and accommodation expenses in 2024. Against this backdrop, tourists are expected to continue to prioritize value for money and travel closer to home.
12. Workforce shortage poses a significant hurdle for the sector, with many countries grappling with a lack of skilled workers in hospitality, transportation, and tourism-related services. This shortage not only impacts the quality of service but also jeopardizes the sector's ability to meet the growing demand from travellers.
13. Russia's full-scale invasion of **Ukraine** continues to impact travel in those destinations and between Europe and Asia, due to the closure of Russian airspace. In addition, the Israel-Gaza Crisis is a factor to consider regarding travel disruptions, particularly in **Israel**, where arrivals dropped 80% in December 2023.
14. To address these challenges, stakeholders in the tourism industry must continue to work together to develop resilient and sustainable strategies that prioritize safety, support local businesses, attract talent, and respond to changing consumer preferences.
15. UN Tourism, through the Regional Department for Europe, with the objective of providing Members timely, relevant, and high-quality services, continued to concentrate on the following pillars:
 - a. political outreach, including official visits, diplomatic relations with permanent representations in Madrid and visits of high-level officials to the UN Tourism Headquarters,
 - b. enhanced cooperation with the international community, including regional and sub-regional cooperation and other partnerships,
 - c. initiatives, services, projects, and activities to support members' priorities, including partnerships with the private sector.

III. Political outreach

16. The Regional Department for Europe provided leadership and support in reinforcing the Organization's critical political outreach and collaboration with the European members with the aim of emphasizing the importance of tourism for the continued economic development in the region, advocating for adequate financial and political support at all levels.
17. Official visits and high-level bilateral meetings of the Secretary-General:
 - a. **Israel** (Madrid, 20 July 2023); official visit of the Director-General of the Ministry of Tourism of Israel and his delegation at UN Tourism Headquarters.
 - b. **Israel** (Jerusalem/Tel Aviv, 21-24 August 2023): official visit of the Secretary General, bilateral meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Tourism.
 - c. **Spain** (San Sebastian, 5-7 October 2023): 8th World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism, bilateral meetings with the Minister of Tourism of **Bulgaria**, President of the Tourism Agency of **Hungary** and regional and local authorities of the Basque Country, **Spain**.
 - d. **Uzbekistan** (Samarkand, 16-20 October 2023): 25th session of the General Assembly, 119th and 120th sessions of the Executive Council, 69th meeting of the Commission for

Europe, bilateral meetings with the President, Minister of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change and Chairman of the Tourism Committee of Uzbekistan.

- e. **Georgia** (Tbilisi, 26-27 October 2023): Tbilisi Silk Road Forum: Connecting Today Resilient Tomorrow, participation of the Secretary-General and the Executive Director.
- f. **Spain** (Madrid, 12 January 2024): bilateral meeting with the Minister of Industry and Tourism of **Spain**.
- g. **Spain** (Madrid, 24-28 January 2024): FITUR 2024, bilateral meetings with the Minister of Tourism and Environment of **Albania**, Minister of Tourism and Sports of **Croatia**, Minister of Tourism and Youth of **Serbia** and Deputy Minister of Regional Development of **Czechia**.
- h. **North Macedonia** (Madrid, 5 February): bilateral meeting with the Ambassador of North Macedonia and presentation of the credentials letter as the Permanent Representative.
- i. **Germany** (Berlin, 5-8 March 2024): ITB 2024, bilateral meetings with the Minister of Tourism and Sports of **Croatia**, Minister of Tourism, Ecology, Sustainable Development, and Northern Region Development of **Montenegro**, Minister of the Economy, Tourism and Sport of **Slovenia** and Ambassador of **Turkmenistan**.
- j. **Turkmenistan** (Ashgabat, 27-28 March 2024): official visit of the Secretary-General, bilateral meetings with the President, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Culture.

18. Official visits and high-level bilateral meetings of other officials:

- a. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (Sarajevo, 22-23 June 2023): Co-organization and participation in the final of the national edition of the Students League.
- b. **Slovenia** (Bled, 28-29 August 2023): Visit of the Director for Europe to attend the 18th Bled Strategic Forum 2023 as a speaker in the panel "Knowledge-Based Society and Professions of the Future in Tourism". Bilateral meetings with the Minister of Economy, Tourism and Sports, Director General for Tourism, Director of the Slovenian Tourist Board and Secretary General of the Bled Strategic Forum.
- c. **Armenia** (Yerevan, 5-8 September 2023): Co-organization and participation in the World Tourism Investment Forum.
- d. **San Marino** (San Marino, 16-17 November 2023): Co-organization and participation in the International Conference on Accessible Tourism.
- e. **Spain** (Logroño, 22-24 November 2023): 7th Global Conference on Wine Tourism, bilateral meetings with the Chair of the Tourism Committee of **Armenia** and regional and local authorities of La Rioja, Spain.
- f. **Spain** (Salamanca, 30 November – 1 December 2023): Co-organization of the International Seminar on Tourism Law.
- g. **Spain** (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 19-20 February 2024): Co-organization of the Tourism Tech Adventures – Canarias 2024.
- h. **Andorra** (Andorra la Vella, 19-21 March 2024): Visit of the Executive Director to attend the 12th World Congress on Snow and Mountain Tourism. Bilateral meeting with the Minister of Tourism and Commerce.

19. To further support members in the region, the Secretary-General, Director for Europe and other officials participated in a number of other events, either virtually or through pre-recorded messages, including European Conservatives & Reformists Party's European Culture Weekend: "Tourism - Europe's Engine of Development" (**Italy**, June 2023), Condast TTG Travel Experience Fair (**Italy**, October 2023), 4th Montreux International Tourism Forum (**Switzerland**, 8-9 November 2023), 1st National Congress on Sustainable Tourism in World Heritage Sites of the Ambrosetti House (**Italy**, November 2023), "Viaggio nel futuro. Il ruolo della qualità e dell'inclusione nel Piano strategico del turismo 2023-2027" (**Italy**, November 2023), Pact for Decarbonisation of Air Transport, organized

in the Italian pavilion at the COP28 in Dubai (**Italy**, December 2023), National Tourism Conference (**Malta**, December 2023), side event on Coastal and Maritime Tourism, organized by the Ministry of Tourism of Greece at COP28 in Dubai (**Greece**, December 2023), High Level Discussion on Tourism Potential of Uzbekistan: Sustainable Tourism, the Green Agenda, and Engagement with the Middle East, organized by Uzbekistan at COP28 in Dubai (**Uzbekistan**, December 2023).

20. The Department liaised with **Turkmenistan** through political and diplomatic channels the negotiation of a 10-year payment plan of arrears approved by the 25th session of the General Assembly (Resolution A/RES/761(XXV)).
21. The Department continued to foster dialogue with non-members in the region, namely with **Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden**, and the **United Kingdom**. Through bilateral meetings at technical, diplomatic, and ministerial levels, and through mutual participation in different initiatives and events, the Department built on existing synergies and worked towards their potential membership in the Organization.

IV. Enhanced cooperation with the international community

22. The Department has led the Organization's collaboration with the international community in the region and beyond to advance sustainable tourism development across the continent. Through partnerships and other initiatives, the department advocated for the implementation of sustainable tourism policies and strategies, showcasing exemplary practices that prioritize the wellbeing of local communities, prioritize the conservation of natural and cultural assets, and cultivate capacity building and knowledge exchange to empower tourism professionals and enterprises.
23. **European Union**: Continued representation in the UN Brussels inter-agency Taskforce Team meetings on the topics of youth, the European Green Deal, and most recently, the Transition to the new EU political cycle in view of the European Parliament elections in June 2024. The Department participates in the dedicated expert group, "Together for EU Tourism", set up by the European Commission in September 2023 and tasked with monitoring pledges made by stakeholders, including UN Tourism, as part of the EU's "Transition Pathway for Tourism".
24. Participation of the Director for Europe in the high-level breakfast with Member of European Parliament, Ms Claudia Monteiro de Aguiar, organised by the EU-funded project DATES, Data Space for European Tourism (September 2023).
25. In the context of the joint Action Plan between UN Tourism and European Committee of the Regions, and in line with the objective of enhancing the visibility of tourism policy at both regional and local levels, a joint study on Tourism and Rural Development is expected to be finalized in the first half of 2024. Overall coordination with the Committee of the Regions is ensured by the Department while technical contributions are made by the Tourism Market Intelligence and Competitiveness Department.
26. The Department coordinated UN Tourism's contribution to the mapping of transport-related activities conducted by the United Nations Office in Brussels, Task Force meetings on youth and the EU's Green Deal, and European Parliament's Transport and Tourism (TRAN) Committee meetings.
27. The Department coordinates UN Tourism's contribution to planned advocacy events in the future on sustainable tourism initiatives, e.g. food waste and loss in tourism, together with UNEP's Brussels Office and UNDP.
28. Participation in the European Youth Event (June 2023), at the premises of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, to present UN Tourism's youth-related initiatives of UN Tourism, particularly the Global Youth Tourism Summit.
29. **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**: The Department engaged in in-depth strategic talks with FAO's GIAHS (Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems) Secretariat to identify priority

intervention areas for collaboration, mainly to boost the tourism potential of GIAHS sites across the world. As a result of this strategic dialogue, the Department together with Tourism Market Intelligence and Competitiveness Department secured an UN-to-UN transfer agreement for a total of USD 39,800 which will be destined to developing a guidebook on tourism in GIAHS sites, with the aim of boosting tourism potential and enhancing livelihoods of communities in rural areas. as per the overarching aims of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between UN Tourism and FAO in September 2020.

30. **UN Youth Office:** The Department coordinated the organization-wide contribution to the Youth2030 Progress Report for UN entities, joining more than 40 UN entities and 130 UN Country Teams that had previously already reported against the Youth2030 UN Entities Scorecard and Youth2030 UNCT Scorecard.
31. **WHO Europe:** The Coalition of Partners on Health and Tourism, jointly coordinated by WHO Europe and UN Tourism, aims to compile lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic for health and tourism and to elaborate policy recommendations that address the intersection between health and tourism. It held its introductory meeting in February 2024 and counted with the participation of 25 Member States that are Members of WHO Europe and of UN Tourism, as well as four WHO Europe Member States – **Estonia, Iceland, Latvia and Luxembourg**, that participate in their Small Countries Initiative (SCI).
32. As an extension to the above, the Working Group on Health and Travel and Tourism was created in 2023, drawing lessons from the COVID crisis to generate greater resilience within travel and tourism and to ensure preparedness in the face of future threats. Two online meetings have been held since its inception and **Uzbekistan** is the Chair of the group (until 31 December 2024 with the possibility of an extension). Invited observers: World Health Organization (WHO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Air Transport Association (IATA) and European Commission.
33. **Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC):** UN Tourism continued to collaborate with the BSEC for the benefit of the 12 Member States that the two organizations have in common.
34. **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM):** The Director for Europe participated in the 2nd UfM Stakeholder Conference on Sustainable Blue Economy by way of a prerecorded message for the session on sustainable maritime and coastal tourism.

V. Other initiatives, services, projects, and activities

35. **Agenda for Europe:** As per the conclusion and recommendation CEU/CR/6(LXVIII), paragraphs 3-5, the Secretary-General proposed for the endorsement of the 119th session of the Executive Council and the approval of the 25th session of the General Assembly, the “Agenda for Europe – Tourism Leading the Change”. The Agenda for Europe is a crucial commitment to return value to the UNWTO members in the region of Europe.
36. By way of A/RES/757(XXV), paragraphs 6-7, the General Assembly approved the process of the Agenda and requested the Secretary-General to support the process, including through fundraising efforts with a view to implementing activities responding to the Agenda.
37. The Chair of the Commission, **Ukraine**, on behalf of the Working Group for the Agenda for Europe (also including **Armenia, Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania, Spain and Switzerland**) submitted to the Secretariat for review and comments the draft Rules of Procedure of the Working Group for the Agenda for Europe as well as the draft document outlining Project Selection Criteria and Key Performance Indicators. The Secretariat provided to the Chair a comprehensive revision of the documents with recommendations for amendments to comply with the legal framework of the Organization.
38. **Exchange of information:** The Department continued holding bilateral meetings with Focal Points

of the members in the region, providing valuable insight into their situation, identifying main challenges and priorities during the recovery process, as well as focused bilateral meetings with relevant stakeholders in interested Member States, with the aim of supporting their work in the areas of common interest.

39. In addition, the Department held a series of thematic informative webinars for the Focal Points. The platform EuropeConnect, which now has more than 110 users from all countries in the region, is the primary environment for the exchange of information between members in the region and UN Tourism. The Regional Department encourages members to use the platform for their own information sharing as well.
40. **Data management:** The Department continued to develop a centralized database for the collection of structured historical and current information (political, economic, tourism policy and UN Tourism collaboration) for the members and non-members in the region.
41. **Infographics:** The Department maintained updated the visual presentation of the most relevant tourism data and initiatives in each Member State, including matching priorities, making them available through a QR code on the Organization's website.
42. **Publications:** The Department released the *"#Youth4Tourism – A Handbook to Champion Youth Participation in Tourism at the National Level"*, now available in English, French and Spanish. It aims to harness the enormous potential of youth by encouraging Member States to support young people in becoming the creators of innovative tourism experiences with a global impact. Through interactive workshops, quizzes, engaging sessions and other activities, this publication promotes youth participation in tourism at the national level, as well as within the wider context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
43. **Students' League** aims to promote tourism education, research, and innovation, and to engage the next generation of tourism professionals in shaping the future of the tourism industry. In 2023, Bosnia and Herzegovina joining the initiative and the global final took place in Madrid, **Spain**, with teams from **Switzerland** and **Bosnia and Herzegovina**.
44. **Rural Development:** During the third edition of the Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism, 22 members from the European region participated, presenting a total of 74 applications (28.7% of all applications received).
45. 19 villages (from **Andorra, Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Türkiye** and **Uzbekistan**) received the Best Tourism Villages label and 8 (from **Israel, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain** and **Türkiye**) were included in the upgrade programme.
46. **One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme:** The Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, as of 31 December 2023, had 478 signatories from 33 European countries, including 9 non-members.
47. **International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO):** Out of the total of 44 observatories in the INSTO Network, one is in **Greece**, one in **Croatia**, one in **Italy**, four in **Portugal**, six in **Spain**. Another observatory is expected to be launched in **Ireland** in the coming weeks.
48. **Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST):** The Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism was adopted by the UN Statistical Commission during its 55th session (27 February – 1 March 2024), thereby becoming the internationally agreed reference framework for measuring the economic, social and environmental aspects of tourism.
49. The Statistical Commission expressed overwhelming support, with 35 countries, 3 world regions, and international organizations actively participating in the deliberations. This included full endorsement from the entire European Statistical System, as voiced by **Finland**, along with another 11 European countries: **Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Greece, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain**, and **Tajikistan**.
50. The adoption by the UN Statistical Commission is the fruit of a seven-year UN process led by **Austria** and **Spain** as co-chairs of the UN Tourism Committee on Statistics. The Statistical

Framework for MST has been developed thanks to the extraordinary work of Expert Group on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism, led by **Austria**, and composed of 40+ countries (of which 16 European countries) and 30+ international and regional organizations, including the European Commission and Eurostat.

51. **Innovation in tourism:** Europe leads the global entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem in tourism, standing out with 42% of the total of 350 UN Tourism Top innovators.
52. The **Startup Competition on mega events and MICE tourism** received 164 applications, of which 25% were from Europe, from 69 countries. Three out of five winners were also from the region: Circular Unity (**Portugal**) developed an automated carbon footprint management tool for events, touch2see (**France**) presented an immersive and tactile experience allowing visually impaired people to follow sport games, and Sentimantle (**Israel**) shared an Artificial Intelligence-based platform to enhance service management. All winners presented their solutions at the Global Investment Forum during the 25th session of the General Assembly in **Uzbekistan** and were offered networking opportunities for future close collaborations and/or funding.
53. During the 8th World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism in San Sebastián, the **4th Gastronomy Startup Competition**, launched in collaboration with the Basque Culinary Centre, concluded with the Startups Pitch Competition. From the 5 participating solutions, the winner was Oh Les Chefs (**France / Senegal**), a specialized platform for food delivery.
54. The **Startup Competition for Tourism Technologies and Solutions in Hotels**, powered by INFECAR Canarias (**Spain**), received 120 applications, 40% of which were from Europe-based applicants, from 70 countries. During the Tourism Tech Adventures forum, one of the winners announced was Europe-based: Twisitc (**Spain**), which seeks to change the user experience through mobile applications, digital signature, or electronic tags, was offered a contract with the TUI Group as a consequence of the visibility given during the programme. Other finalists from the region were: Schulering (**Czechia**), Hotels for Tress (the **Netherlands**), Effiwaste (**Spain**).
55. UN Tourism, in collaboration with Plug and Play, provided a special networking event for European entrepreneurs at the innovation event 4 Years from Now (4YFN) within the **Mobile World Congress 2024** in Barcelona (**Spain**), making possible for innovators to showcase their solutions to the global ecosystem.
56. **Women Empowerment:** With the support of the **Estonian** Development Cooperation, UN Tourism continues to implement the project Empowering Young Women: Sustainable Livelihoods through Tourism in the **Republic of Moldova**.
57. **Legal Instruments:** **Lithuania** adhered partially to the International Code for the Protection of Tourists in October 2023. No members ratified the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics and its Optional Protocol in the reporting period.
58. **Education in Tourism:** UN Tourism signed the following Memoranda of Understanding:
 - a. With the Agency for International Development Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of **Israel** to support the development and implementation of joint training and capacity building activities for human workforce development nationally and internationally, the development of capacity building and projects to promote tourism as a vehicle for rural development and the development of projects with the aim of enhancing innovation in tourism.
 - b. With the Hague Hospitality School (the **Netherlands**) to help accelerate and support startups from the hospitality industry.
59. The **Global Education Forum** was held during the 25th session of the General Assembly in **Uzbekistan** and served as the platform to launch two landmark initiatives:
 - a. The **UN Tourism Education Toolkit** for the incorporation of tourism as a subject at the secondary school level, including three leading methodologies: International Baccalaureate Organization – IBO (**Switzerland**), American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute – AHLEI (**United States**) and Cambridge Assessment International Education (**United Kingdom**).

It is now actionable upon request of Member States to create curated implementation plans.

- b. **Samarkand Academy (Uzbekistan)** in collaboration with UN Tourism with a new building exclusively dedicated to tourism education with three main education tracks: hotels operation and innovation, hospitality management, and sustainable destinations management. In all of them, there will be two types of programmes: "train the trainers" for educators and re-training for students.
60. Welcoming its first students in September 2024, the **Bachelor of Science in International Sustainable Tourism** is offered by UN Tourism and the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (**Switzerland**). Ongoing negotiation for active participation in the Partnership Programme to secure scholarships for over 1,000 students to participate in this degree.
61. **UN Tourism Online Academy** currently has over 26,700 students, with **Spain, Italy, Portugal, United Kingdom** and **Greece** registering the highest representation among users from the region. While the global share of female students in the Academy is 54.5%, Europe features a 65%. In terms of content creation, half (9 out of 18) of academic partners are from the region, with 5 new courses available in the platform (*Your journey to more sustainable energy management, Your journey to more sustainable community engagement, Your journey to more sustainable food management, Your journey to more sustainable water management, Negotiations in Tourism*).
62. **UN Tourism.TedQual** certification was awarded for the University of Tuzla (**Bosnia and Herzegovina**) for one programme, renewed for Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (**Spain**) for one programme, and renewed for University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons (**Switzerland**) and Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University (**Azerbaijan**) for two programmes each.
63. **Investments in tourism**: In recent years, tourism investment has become one of the most important strategic priorities for the countries in Europe, as the sector has been the recipient between 2019 and 2023 of several announced greenfield tourism fDI projects (812) in the amount of almost 26 billion USD in capital investments – a strong sign of confidence, expecting to create almost 64.000 jobs in the region.
64. The leading fDI receiving countries (by number of projects in 2019-2023) are: **Germany** (122), **Spain** (111), **France** (63), **Italy** (48), **Portugal** (46), **Türkiye** (45), **Poland** (28), the **Netherlands** (22), **Romania** (21) and **Austria** (19).
65. Knowledge creation and investment promotion through reports and guidelines: The Secretariat crafted informative materials aimed at guiding potential investors and policymakers. These resources facilitate informed decision-making processes and contribute to the promotion of economic development:
 - a. Soft launch of the *Tourism Doing Business: Investing in Armenia* during the World Tourism Investment Forum in collaboration with UN Tourism (6-8 Sep 2023, Yerevan, **Armenia**).
 - b. Presentation of the *Tourism Doing Business: Investing in Uzbekistan* during the 25th session of the General Assembly (17 Oct 2023, Samarkand, **Uzbekistan**).
 - c. Presentation of the *Tourism Doing Business: Investing in Albania* during the 70th meeting of the Commission for Europe (9 Apr 2024, Tirana, **Albania**).
 - d. Preparation of the *Tourism Doing Business: Investing in Georgia* with the foreseen presentation during the World Tourism Day 2024 celebration (Sep 2024, Tbilisi, **Georgia**).
66. The Secretariat participated in our own forums and key investment events to expand the Organization's active role in shaping traditional and non-traditional investments on the European agenda:
67. **Technical Cooperation**: A detailed list of the technical assistance projects is included in Annex III.
68. With the continued support of the Development Cooperation of **Estonia**, UN Tourism will continue to work with the Ministry of Culture of the **Republic of Moldova** to advance female leadership in tourism and boost the sector's contribution to gender equality. The "Empowering Young Women: sustainable livelihoods through tourism" initiative supports women at every stage of their careers in

the sector, advancing the Sustainable Development Goals related to gender equality, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

69. **Human Workforce Development:** In collaboration with the members in the region and educational institutions, the Department offered the following opportunities to students and young professionals from the region:
- a. Officers on Loan: By way of the Capacity Building Scheme through the Loan on the part of the member State of an Official, UN Tourism currently receives 2 officers from **Azerbaijan**.
 - b. Junior Professional Officer: By way of a Fixed Term Appointment through the Loan of a Staff Member on the part of the United Nations Development Programme, and with co-payment from the Government of the **Italian Republic**, the UN Tourism currently receives 1 Junior Professional Officer.
 - c. Internships: The Department maintained internship cooperation agreements with educational institutions from **Czechia** (2), **Hungary** (1), **Lithuania** (3), the **Netherlands** (2), **Poland** (1), and the **United States** (1), offering internship opportunities to 20 students per year. The Department is currently negotiating an agreement with a Flemish university, with possible direct funding from the **Flanders** Chancellery and Foreign Office.
70. **Partnerships:** The Department, in support of the Organization's wider outreach, fostered collaboration with the private sector in Europe to advance sustainable tourism development across the region as a key driver of tourism growth and innovation:
- a. European Travel Commission: Through the DataLab initiative, technical webinars have been conducted on a regular basis covering different data and intelligence topics, aiming at exchanging knowledge and best practices on the use of (big) data and market intelligence among European National Tourism Organizations. Webinars have featured presentations by several European NTOs, data providers, statistical bodies, and other stakeholders.
 - b. European Cyclists' Federation (ECF): Renewal of the existing Memorandum of Understanding with a focus on data on cycling tourism in Europe and a possible collaboration for a start-up challenge.
 - c. European Spas Association: Participation in the European Spas Association General Assembly and Congress in Karlovy Vary (October 2023).
 - d. Expedia: Continued exchange of data on tourism trends and developments, both at the global and local level. This helps achieve informed decision-making, producing data-based policies aimed at tourism's sustainable recovery and future growth.
 - e. IBTM World: Collaboration to enhance innovation in MICE tourism. IBTM participated as a jury member in the Event Tourism Start-up Competition and offered in-kind support to present the winning solutions at IBTM World in Barcelona (November 2023).
 - f. International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA): Collaboration to enhance innovation in MICE tourism. ICCA participated as a jury member in the Event Tourism Start-up Competition.
 - g. Union of European Football Associations (UEFA): Collaboration in the context of the Event Tourism Start-up Competition. Participation of the Director for Europe in the 1st UEFA Respect Forum, speaking in the panel "Event Sustainability: From Risk to Opportunity" (June 2023). Ongoing discussion on possible collaboration in the development of sustainability standards/criteria for event hosts as well as advocacy campaigns on tourism's contribution to the event host communities and inclusion.

Annex I: List of UN Tourism events in Europe from 1 June 2023 to 31 March 2024

- 68th meeting of the Commission for Europe (31 May – 2 Jun 2023, Sofia, **Bulgaria**)
- High level panel on Tourism Ocean Action for a Net Zero Future (8 Jun 2023, Copenhagen, **Denmark**)
- Students' league: Bosnia and Herzegovina Final4 Event (10 Jun 2023, Sarajevo, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**)
- Meeting of the Secretary-General with the accredited Ambassadors in Spain (4 Sep 2023, Madrid, **Spain**)
- World Tourism Investment Forum (6-8 Sep 2023, Yerevan, **Armenia**)
- 24th meeting of the Programme and Budget Committee (11 Sep 2023, Madrid, **Spain**)
- 4th Meeting of the Expert Group on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (19-20 Sep 2023, Marbella, **Spain**)
- 8th World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism (5-7 Oct 2023, San Sebastian, **Spain**)
- 25th session of the General Assembly (16-20 Oct 2023, Samarkand, **Uzbekistan**)
 - 69th meeting of the Commission for Europe (16 Oct 2023)
 - 25th meeting of the Programme and Budget Committee (16 Oct 2023)
 - 17th meeting of the Committee on Tourism and Sustainability (16 Oct 2023)
 - Extraordinary meeting of the Committee on Statistics (16 Oct 2023)
 - 44th Affiliate Members Plenary Session (16 Oct 2023)
 - 119th session of the Executive Council (17 Oct 2023)
 - 13th meeting of the Committee on Tourism and Competitiveness (17 Oct 2023)
 - 5th meeting of the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership (17 Oct 2023)
 - Global Investment Forum (17 Oct 2023)
 - Global Forum on Education: The Foundation for Building Tourism (19 Oct 2023)
 - Central Asian Tourism Workshop (19-20 Oct 2023)
 - 120th session of the Executive Council (20 Oct 2023)
 - 26th meeting of the Programme and Budget Committee (20 Oct 2023)
- Education Forum (6-9 Nov 2023, London, **UK**)
- 59th meeting of the Board of Affiliate Members (8 Nov 2023, London, **UK**)
- International Conference on Accessible Tourism (16-17 Nov 2023, **San Marino**)
- 2023 Annual INSTO Meeting (21-22 Nov 2023, Madrid, **Spain**)
- 7th Global Conference on Wine Tourism (22-24 Nov 2023, Logroño, **Spain**)
- 1st International Seminar on Tourism Law (30 Nov – 1 Dec 2023, Salamanca, **Spain**)
- Students' League Global Final (14-15 Dec 2023, Madrid, **Spain**)
- 14th meeting of the Committee on Tourism and Competitiveness (23 Jan 2024, Madrid, **Spain**)
- 60th meeting of the Board of Affiliate Members (24 Jan 2024, Madrid, **Spain**)
- 18th Meeting of the Committee on Tourism and Sustainability (25 Jan 2024, Madrid, **Spain**)
- 12th World Congress on Snow and Mountain Tourism (20-22 March 2024, Encamp, **Andorra**)

Annex II: List of new Affiliate Members from Europe

The following entities became Affiliate Members by virtue of the decisions taken by the 119th session of the Executive Council on 17 October 2023:

- Alpitour S.P.A. (Alpitour World) (**Italy**)
- Avoris Corporación Empresarial SL (**Spain**)
- Eventisimo SLU (**Spain**)
- Green Climate International (**Netherlands**)
- Széchenyi István University (**Hungary**)
- TUI Care Foundation (**Netherlands**)
- University of Donja Gorica (**Montenegro**)

Annex III: Detailed list of technical assistance projects in Europe

Project Name	Duration and Location	Beneficiary	Donor Institution	Key steps and Remarks
Providing Tourism Recovery Technical Assistance on Marketing and Promotion and Residents Study to Skiathos Island, Greece.	2022-2023 Skiathos Island, Greece	Municipality of Skiathos	Municipality of Skiathos	Key Steps: The project included two activities, (i) a Marketing assessment and (ii) a Resident Study. Remarks: Marketing Activity completed in July 2022 and Resident Study completed by August 2023.
UN Tourism Technical Assistance for the post-Covid-19 tourism recovery of Thassos Island	2023 Thassos Island, Greece	Thassos Municipality Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace	Thassos Island	Key Steps: The project includes two activities, specifically (i) a Marketing Assessment and (ii) a Residents Study 8 March 2024: Project Kick-Off Meeting Project completion expected for November 2024 Remarks: Project being currently implemented alongside UN Tourism Affiliate Member, ICF.
Empowering Young Women: Sustainable Livelihoods through Tourism	2020-2024 Republic of Moldova	Tourism Agency of Moldova	Estonia Development Corporation	Key Steps: Agreement signed in December 2018. Activities commenced in May 2020, all remotely. Phase I implemented in 2022: conducted a rapid tourism training needs assessment through focus groups with local tourism stakeholders and devised a work plan for Phase II. Phase II launched in 2023 and ongoing: Moldova State University as the lead training institute appointed by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture for the implementation of the multicomponent training programme. From February to May 2024: Implementation of

				10 tourism skills training to women entrepreneurs in select areas of Moldova, training programme to public and private stakeholder groups on gender equality in tourism, preceded by training of trainers on this topic. Remarks: Successful review and monitoring mission to Chisinau carried out at the end of February 2024. The mission aimed to oversee project implementation. Met with key stakeholders and UN agencies on the ground. Raised awareness of the two main outputs of the project: Provided tourism skills training to approximately 200 rural women entrepreneurs. Delivered training on gender equality in tourism.
Sustainable Tourism Development Project	2020-2023 Tajikistan	Committee of Tourism Development under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan	Asian Development Bank (ADB)	Key Steps: Agreement signed between UN Tourism and Tajikistan, under the auspices of ADB, in August 2020. Three project pillars successfully completed: (i) International and Domestic Tourist Profile Studies, (ii) TSA Assessment Report and (iii) trainings, and Sustainable Tourism Plan and workshops. Remarks: All deliverables successfully completed in October 2023. Regional Central Asian Capacity-building workshop implemented within UN Tourism's GA25 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.
Facilitating Tourism Recovery in Aftermath of Covid-19 – Turkey	2021-2023 Türkiye	Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	Key Steps: Agreement signed in June 2021. Activities included: Digital Marketing Tourism

(Within the UN Tourism/EBRD collaboration to support COVID-19 Tourism Recovery)				Product Assessment Report and Capacity-building workshops. Remarks: Project activities successfully concluded in June 2023.
Uzbekistan: Integrated Cultural Heritage Framework – Tourism Diversification Strategy for the Khorezm Region (outside Khiva) Uzbekistan	2022-2024 Khorezm and South Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan	Khorezm Region and South Karakalpakstan Regional Tourism Authorities	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	Key Steps: Project activities commenced in 2022. Technical cooperation project focused on: Development of a Tourism Diversification Strategy (completed in June 2023), Capacity-building workshops (completed in June 2023), together with the Urgench University of Uzbekistan. Case Studies on tourism heritage and legislation, and cultural tourism (completed in January 2024) Remarks: Project successfully completed in January 2024

Conclusions and Recommendations CEU/CR/4 (LXX)²

The Commission for Europe,

- Taking note of the written report of the former Director of the Regional Department for Europe on the implementation of the Programme of Work in Europe, dated 29 February 2024,
 - Having heard the report of the Executive Director on the implementation of the Programme of Work in Europe, including regional and technical activities and engagement with the Affiliate Members,
 - Having heard the intervention(s) of the delegations of XXX,
1. Appreciates the activities carried out to foster regional cooperation and support the members in the region;
 2. Welcomes the reports of a continued strong post-pandemic recovery in the region;
 3. Notes with concern the impact that Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the Israel-Gaza Crisis have had on tourism in the region;
 4. Reaffirms the necessity for all tourism stakeholders to continue working together to develop resilient and sustainable strategies that prioritize safety, support local businesses, attract talent, and respond to changing consumer preferences;
 5. Notes with interest that the Regional Department for Europe responds to these challenges with structured political outreach, enhanced cooperation with the international community and by implementing a series of different initiatives, services, projects and activities, adapted to the needs of the Members in the region;
 6. Welcomes the efforts to position tourism in the wider international political agenda at the regional and subregional level;
 7. Appreciates the recognition of 19 new Best Tourism Villages in the region and the inclusion of 8 village in the BTV Upgrade Programme;
 8. Takes note of the different modalities of collaboration to offer students and young professionals from the region an opportunity to work in the Organization;
 9. Thanks former Director and the team of the Regional Department for Europe for their dedication and valuable assistance to the members in the region.

² This is a draft of the conclusions and recommendations for the corresponding agenda item. For the final text adopted by the Commission, please refer to the Conclusions and recommendations document issued at the end of the session.