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Five Years of Action
for the Development of
Mountain Regions



12th WORLD CONGRESS ON SNOW, MOUNTAIN AND WELLNESS TOURISM

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MOUNTAINLIKERS “Sustainability and Wellbeing, Keys to Mountain Tourism” **KEY INSIGHTS**



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SUSTAINABILITY AND WELLBEING, KEYS TO MOUNTAIN TOURISM

In the framework of the **United Nations' Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain regions**, the 12th World Congress on Snow, Mountain and Wellness Tourism convened in Andorra on 20-22 March 2024, with the participation of over 300 participants from 14 countries, including a substantial online presence. Continuing its bi-annual tradition, the congress, a collaboration between UN Tourism and the Government of Andorra, has been a cornerstone of the global dialogue on mountain tourism for over two decades.

Amid these developments, Andorra, in collaboration with the UN Tourism, is spearheading initiatives to enhance training and education across various tourism areas. Emphasis is being placed on snow and mountain tourism, as well as wellness tourism—segments recognized for their potential in promoting sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, and economic prosperity in rural and mountainous regions. Andorra is committed to championing tourism in these areas as a catalyst for economic growth, inclusive development, and environmental sustainability. Nonetheless, challenges such as climate change, global competition, and the need to adapt to evolving traveler demands call for innovative and diversified strategies to elevate the quality and competitiveness of the tourism offerings.



In the context of these evolving trends, the 2024 edition of the Congress has for the first time introduced "wellness" into its agenda, with the title of the Congress now also reflecting the importance of this segment for mountain tourism. Topics of paramount importance under discussion included sustainability as the foundational element of tourism, the diversification of the sector and emerging trends that align with modern travelers' preferences for nature, health, and well-being. Additionally, the integration of new technologies, artificial intelligence, and digitalization in tourism, alongside the emphasis on education and training, were crucial discussions as they are poised to shape the future of the tourism sector. This strategic approach not only aims to foster sectoral growth but also to ensure the sector's resilience and adaptability in the face of future challenges.



From left to right: Laura Mas Barrionuevo, Mayor of Encamp, Andorra, Xavier Espot Zamora, Prime Minister, Principality of Andorra and Natalia Bayona, Executive Director, UN Tourism

KEYNOTE 'OUR MARVELOUS MOUNTAINS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES'

By Alice Morrison, Adventurer, TV presenter and author

Alice is an adventurer. She has traveled by bicycle from Cairo to Cape Town, slowly ran around Everest, and walked from Mauritania to the Mediterranean with six camels. After her great adventures in the mountains, she has observed how the world changes through walking, cycling, or running from a small perspective and over the long term.



Alice Morrison, adventurer, TV presenter and author

She lives in the Atlas Mountains in Morocco and acknowledges that her community depends greatly on tourism, which has positively transformed the village and brought prosperity to its community. Nowadays, people have access to medical and dental care, education and thus have improved their standard of living.

HIGH-LEVEL PANEL

The high-level panel, led by Ms. Natalia Bayona, Executive Director of UN Tourism and featuring **H.E. Mr. Jordi Torres Falcó, Minister of Tourism and Trade of Andorra**, **H.E. Ms. Rosana Morillo Rodríguez, Secretary of State for Tourism of Spain**, and **Ms. Alessandra Priante, President of the National Tourism Agency (ENIT) of Italy**, focused on how to develop policies that promote innovation, diversification and sustainability in mountain destinations.

The discussion underscored the intrinsic value of mountain areas—not just as natural treasures, but as keystones in the ecological and economic fabric that defines their identity.

Minister Falcó highlighted the economic significance of tourism in Andorra, representing over 50% of the nation's GDP, while emphasizing the importance of all-year-round tourism strategies and sustainability.

Secretary of State Morillo Rodríguez noted the critical role of mountain tourism in diversifying and addressing seasonality in Spain. She emphasized how mountain tourism can revitalize depopulated rural areas, turning them into hubs of vibrant, sustainable tourism.

Priante's insights revealed Italy's approach to leveraging mountain tourism through the lens of the upcoming Milan Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics. The event is seen not just as an opportunity for infrastructural development and global spotlight, but as a catalyst for long-term sustainable tourism practices that go beyond the event itself.



From left to right: Natalia Bayona, Executive Director, UN Tourism, Jordi Torres Falcó, Minister of Tourism and Trade of Andorra, Rosana Morillo Rodríguez, Secretary of State for Tourism of Spain, and Alessandra Priante, President of the National Tourism Agency (ENIT) of Italy.

Key takeaways from the panel included the unanimous agreement on the need for balance — a harmonious coexistence between tourism development and environmental conservation. This balance ensures that mountain tourism can continue to thrive, offering immersive, high-value experiences while preserving the natural heritage and promoting social cohesion within local communities.

The panelists concurred that innovation, particularly harnessing new technologies and sustainable practices, is crucial for the future of mountain tourism. Projects and initiatives should be crafted in partnership with local communities, emphasizing tailored experiences that reflect the unique attributes of each destination.

As mountain destinations across Europe and beyond look to the future, the discussions from this high-level panel offer a blueprint for sustainable development. They highlighted the importance of collective action, shared knowledge, and a steadfast commitment to the principles of sustainability, diversity, and innovation in creating immersive, enriching mountain experiences for visitors and residents alike.



UN Tourism/FAO Report: Understanding and Quantifying Mountain Tourism

By Michel Julian, Senior Programme Officer, UN Tourism and Enric Martínez, Director, Pas Grau Internacional

Presenters underscored the critical role of mountain tourism as a resilient and growing segment. They underlined the importance of understanding and measuring tourism to support the sustainable development of mountain tourism. They also highlighted the importance of leveraging natural attractions and cultural heritage to foster sustainable mountain tourism that benefits both visitors and local communities.

Key messages :

- Mountain tourism has become home to an increasingly relevant motivation for travel, yet quantifying its volume represents a challenge due to the lack of data
- Mountain tourism is estimated to represent between 9% and 16% of total international tourist arrivals.
- Measurement is key to monitor and manage tourism flows in mountains and formulate the adequate policies and strategies for the sustainable development of tourism in mountains;
- The collection of data as well as the development of statistical systems and the use of big data and new technologies should be encouraged to enhance measurement in these areas; and
- More granular data is necessary to manage and promote mountain tourism effectively.



From left to right: Enric Martínez, Director, Pas Grau Internacional and Michel Julian, Senior Programme Officer, UN Tourism

The presentation also highlighted key results of the survey undertaken among UN Tourism Member States for the study:

- 78% of the countries in the world—equivalent to 150 countries—possess mountains with elevations ranging from class 1 to class 5. This indicates a broad potential for tourism within this segment.
- Key factors for the development of mountain tourism include elevation, climate, and biodiversity. These factors offer various experiences and activities, making mountain tourism predominantly leisure oriented.
- Between 55% and 60% of global travel is leisure-based. The countries where mountain tourism accounts for more than 40% of international tourists include Andorra, Nicaragua, Switzerland, Austria, Lesotho, and Peru.
- According to a survey conducted by UN Tourism for this report to its Member States, about half of countries (52%) responding to the survey offer a year-round mountain experience, . Additionally, 60% of respondents indicate that visitors to their mountain destination are both domestic and international. Furthermore, 41% of respondents define their mountain destination as established. Similarly, 41% define themselves as emerging destinations. This shows that there is a mix of established and emerging destinations, and there may be a potential for further development. .
- In terms of activities undertaken by mountain tourists, the predominant activities related to mountain tourism in their destinations are walking and hiking, as well as nature tourism. .
- The main purposes for the development of mountain tourism,are to create opportunities , and create opportunities for local communities , generate economic revenues and create sustainable tourism products.



Entering the World of Wellness

The dialogue with **Csilla Mezösi, Secretary General of the European Spas Association**, moderated by **Michel Julian**, looked into the burgeoning field of wellness and well-being. The conversation revealed a shift towards a more holistic approach to health and relaxation, driven by nature's healing powers and evidenced-based practices. Mezösi's advocacy for integrating medical competencies into wellness offerings underscores a transition towards catering not just to the body but also to the mind and spirit.



From left to right: Michel Julian, Senior Programme Officer, UN Tourism and Csilla Mezösi, Secretary General of the European Spas Association

These discussions, set against the backdrop of the serene and healing mountain landscapes, are a testament to the evolving dynamics of tourism and wellness. They reflect a growing demand for destinations that offer more than just leisure but a comprehensive well-being experience. As the world gravitates towards health-conscious travel, mountain destinations have an opportunity to develop as hubs of wellness and healing, promising a rejuvenated and holistic experience for the modern traveler.

Sharing is Caring

By Sandra Carvao, Director of Market Intelligence, Policies and Competitiveness, UN Tourism

Sandra Carvao led the audience in a brainstorming session to reflect on what participants believe the challenges and opportunities are in mountain tourism. The most relevant words that came into the discussion were nature, freedom, and peace. This triad forms the bases and development of mountain tourism.



Sandra Carvao, Director, UN Tourism

General conclusions:

- When asked about the biggest challenges, the audience identified climate change, managing the flows of visitors, and how to benefit local communities and make them part of the tourism development.
- Other challenges in mountain tourism were also identified, including public-private collaboration and mobility, accessibility to destinations, awareness of the destination, high costs, and offering differentiated and sustainable options.

Major Challenges for Tourism in Mountains?



- Asked about what specific actions they are taking to address climate change, participants highlighted addressing solid waste and recycling, followed by reducing energy and water use.
- The challenges identified in mountain destination management include territorial dispersal, restricting vehicle access to mountain areas, setting clear goals, systematic visitor data collection, clean mobility, managing public transport, and promoting the purchase of local products.
- Regarding the question on how to deal with seasonality, participants suggested that it is important to create events throughout the year, offer personalized experiences for families, develop new products, focus on MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) and promote local tourism.
- The strategies to attract and retain talent, which is crucial for tourism development, include offering better working conditions, such as long-term contracts, better salaries, and continuous training, as well as supporting local projects. A key factor is ensuring accommodation for workers.
- As for the travel preferences that are expected to emerge over the next five years, the top three were: couple trips for adventure and wellness, followed by individual adventure activities.



Health Tourism

In a conversation dedicated to health tourism, **Laszlo Puczko, Director General of Health Tourism Worldwide**, and **Joan Muro, President of the Health Tourism Association of Andorra Health Destination**, explored how destinations could enhance their position as health tourism destinations.

Puczko emphasized the need for destinations to offer clear, evidence-based health benefits, moving towards participatory health where tourists actively seek out health solutions. Muro shared insights on Andorra Health Destination's efforts, highlighting its diverse health and wellness services, and underscored the importance of integrating medical treatments with wellness experiences tied to nature.

Both speakers agreed on the significance of developing tailored health tourism offerings that cater to the specific needs of health-conscious travelers, stressing the importance of continuous innovation and evidence-backed services to attract tourists and position Andorra as a leader in the health tourism sector.



From left to right: Laszlo Puczko, Director General of Health Tourism Worldwide, and Joan Muro, President of the Health Tourism Association of Andorra Health Destination.

Get Inspired: Sustainability is the Way

During the panel, leaders shared their strategies for harmonizing environmental preservation with tourism.

While **Gottfried Bachler, President of Slow Food Carinthia (Austria)** discussed the transformation of regions into bastions of sustainability through local food movements, **Mattia Storni, Director, Marketing and Communications of Saas-Fee Tourism Board in Switzerland**, and a Best Tourism Village by UN Tourism 2021, highlighted the village's success in balancing tourism with nature conservation, emphasizing shared community efforts and public transportation investments. **Sarisher Mann, Founder of the Sustainable Alpine Tourism Initiative (United Kingdom)** stressed the importance of collaboration across sectors to address environmental challenges, urging a stronger role for youth and innovative approaches in sustainability. The session underscored the critical role of community engagement, education, and cross-sector partnerships in driving sustainable practices in mountain tourism areas.



From left to right: Gottfried Bachler, President of Slow Food Carinthia (Austria), Sarisher Mann, Founder of the Sustainable Alpine Tourism Initiative (United Kingdom), Christian Tammegger, representative from Slow Food Carinthia (Austria), and Mattia Storni, Director, Marketing and Communications, Saas-Fee Tourism Board, Switzerland

Andorra al Natural, the environment where ideas germinate

By Javier Corso, Explorer of National Geographic

Andorra is carrying out an innovation process, together with the Imagine Creativity Center, with the aim of addressing the specific challenges that the country faces in terms of Health, Sports and Premium Tourism.

Inspired by the personal and success stories of some key actors, different working groups analyze and propose innovative, viable and effective solutions that improve the tourist experience of those who visit Andorra, at any time of the year, in a sustainable, conscious and responsible way.

Ultimately, the project encourages to reflect and become aware of the relationship as human beings with Mother Nature. The ideal setting to analyze, innovate and improve tourism practices in communion with the natural environment. An environment conducive to the germination of new ideas.



SESSION 1: Health and Wellness Tourism

In this session, **Judit Hidalgo, Director of Andorra Business** moderated a panel of prominent speakers including **Carlos Cendra, Director of Marketing and Communication of Mabrian (Spain)**, **Athina Babakou, Director of Strategic Planning of the Ministry of Tourism of Greece**, **David Astrié, Director of Iconic Andorra**, and **Emma Haefeli, Director of Marketing and PR of CHENOT GROUP (Switzerland)**.

Hidalgo introduced the session by highlighting the alignment of health and wellness tourism with current global trends. She stressed, "Health and wellness tourism is a growing trend in tourism. The emergence of concepts such as selfness, finding meaning in life, finding oneself spiritually, and integrative aspects of well-being in general are benefits sought in personal life."

The panel provided a platform to discuss the evolution and future trajectory of wellness tourism, particularly in the context of mountain territories like Andorra.

Andorra's unique proposition as a health and wellness destination was explored, leveraging its natural beauty, high-quality health system, and status as one of the safest countries in Europe.



From left to right: Judit Hidalgo, Director of Andorra Business, Carlos Cendra, Director of Marketing and Communication of Mabrian (Spain), David Astrié, Director of Iconic Andorra, Athina Babakou, Director of Strategic Planning of the Ministry of Tourism of Greece, and Emma Haefeli, Director of Marketing and PR of CHENOT GROUP (Switzerland).

Hidalgo elaborated on Andorra's approach to tapping into this market: "Andorra is a mountainous country related to health. Last year, we welcomed 9 million visitors. We are a country with the lowest crime rate in Europe, one of the best health systems in the world, a country which has Spas and where most of the country is regarded as being an open natural area... how can we not sell this country as a health and wellness tourism destination?"

The session delved into the economic potential of wellness tourism, with forecasts suggesting substantial growth in this sector. The discussion highlighted the need for destinations like Andorra to capitalize on their natural assets, safety, and quality of life, offering tourists immersive experiences in nature, sports, and relaxation therapies that contribute to their health and wellbeing. The congress underscored the importance of adapting to new trends in wellness tourism, such as the demand for experiences that promote physical and mental health, the integration of wellness into everyday lifestyle, and the pursuit of personal fulfillment through travel.



Judit Hidalgo, Director of Andorra Business

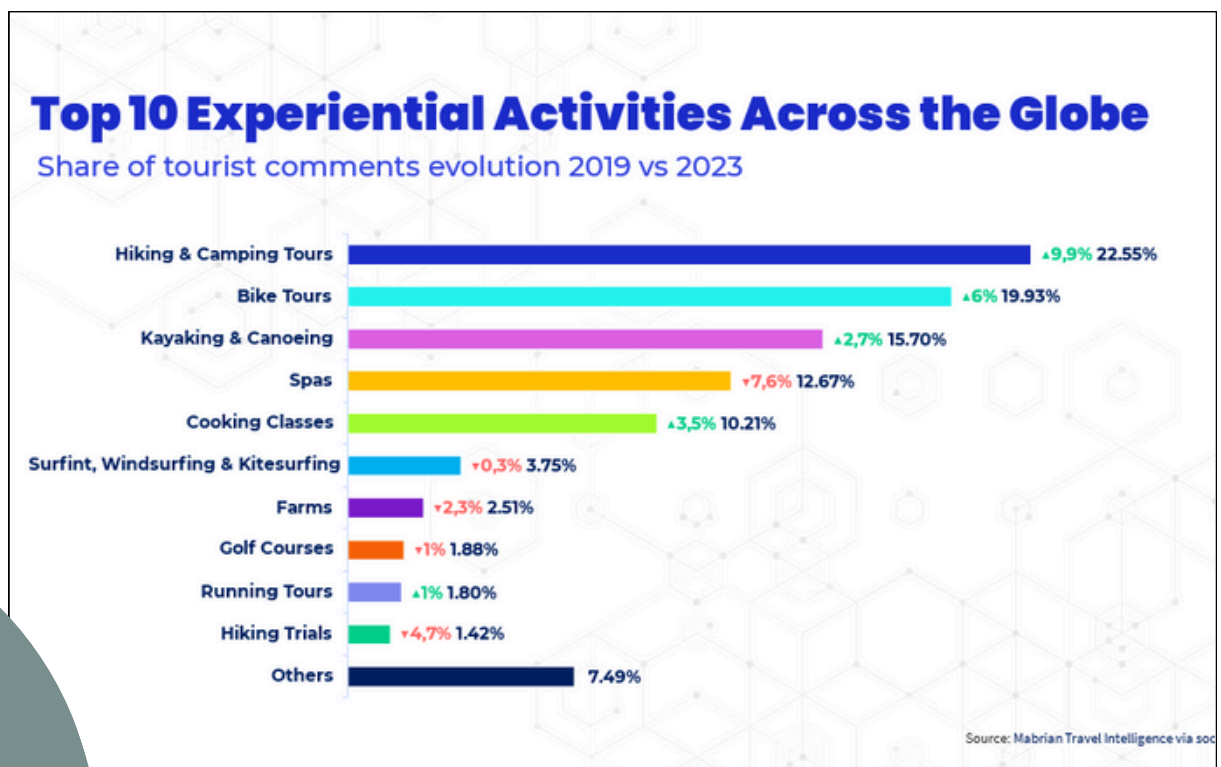
Some key insights are highlighted below

Carlos Cendra, Director of Marketing and Communication of Mabrian (Spain):

- Wellness tourism is typically associated with activities that enhance quality of life, such as physical exercise, relaxation, healthy eating, and personal pampering. However, tourists traditionally seek out cultural activities, followed closely by an active lifestyle when engaging in activities away from home.
- This trend is shifting. According to recent data, outdoor activities have been on the rise, with wellness tourism slightly growing by 1% in 2023 (compared to 3.6% in 2019), alongside nature and active tourism products (+3.3% and +3.7% respectively), while traditional activities have lost market share. Additionally, interest in experiential travel has increased from 40% to 48% over the last four years.



Carlos Cendra, Director of Marketing and Communication of Mabrian (Spain)



Extract from Carlos Cendra's presentation during the Congress

- Analyzing over 6 million comments on TripAdvisor related to wellness tourism, 26% of them mention sports, followed by 24% mentioning soft hiking, and 19% water sports. To a lesser extent, spa and thermal baths and culinary experiences are also noted.

David Astrié, Director of Iconic Andorra:

- Iconic is planned as a high-altitude training center located at 2,508 meters above sea level in Andorra, where athletes can train in various sports disciplines with medical support.
- Many teams and athletes choose to train in Andorra due to the favorable climate conditions and the reduced oxygen levels at elevations above 2,500 meters, which are beneficial for athletic performance and recovery.
- There is a clear trend of people practicing more and more sports. Andorra has the necessary ecosystem to practice sports, not only winter sports, but also summer sports, in terms of infrastructure (mountain roads, for instance) and the weather (average of 300 sunny days per year).
- Personalization is a key factor to strengthen the links between the service you offer and the athletes that come to the center.



David Astrié, Director of Iconic Andorra.

Athina Babakou, Director of Strategic Planning, Ministry of Tourism of Greece:

- The presentation focused on the development of health tourism in Greece, the challenges faced, and future perspectives. According to Greek legislation, health tourism consists of three types: medical tourism, thermal tourism, and wellness tourism. Currently, Greece has 84 thermal baths, 46% of which are municipally owned, 35 thermal spas, and over 350 hotels with a wellness focus.
- The Greek government has a plan to promote health tourism, including calls for the creation of new thermal centers with an investment of 28 million euros. Regarding wellness tourism, there is a growing number of visitors, primarily from Asia, which has boosted the sector.

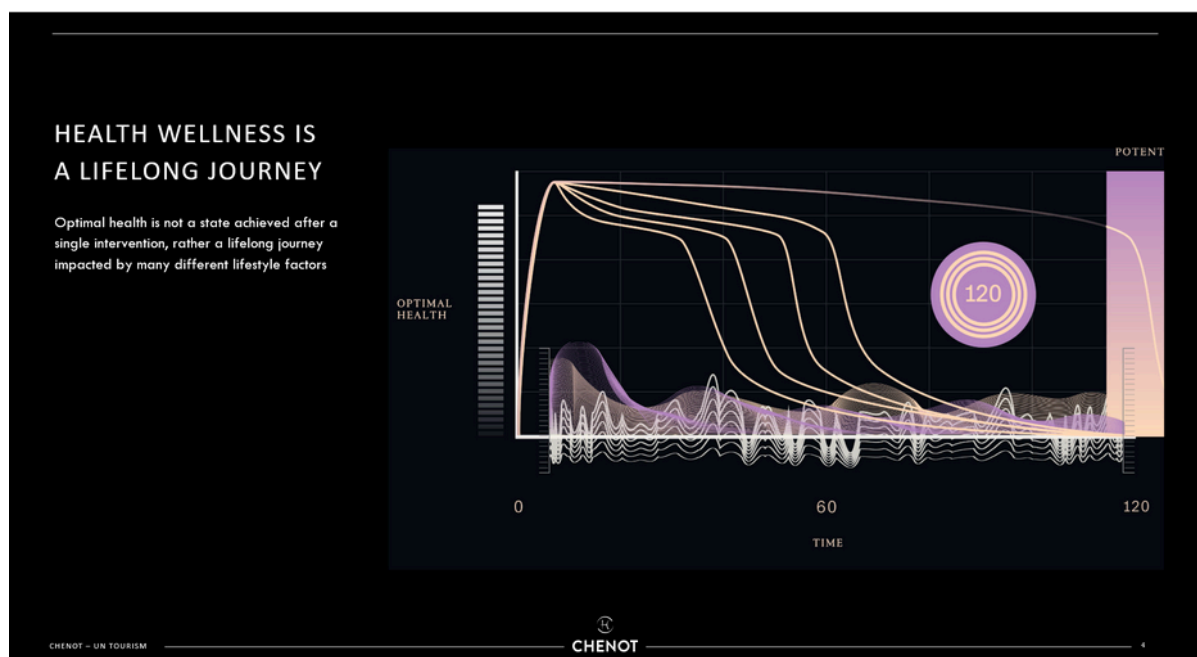


Extract from Athina Babakou's presentation during the Congress.

- The identified tourist profile is predominantly middle-aged married women with medium-high incomes and a high level of education. Medical tourism in Greece is recognized for its high quality, affordability, accessibility, and availability to all tourists.
- The challenges faced include difficulties in promotion, the development of new products, a lack of reliable data for decision-making, the need for improved healthcare personnel skills, stronger regulations, and ensuring sustainability.

Emma Haefeli, Director of Marketing and PR, CHENOT GROUP (Switzerland):

- Chenot Group offers wellness retreats in Switzerland, featuring comfortable spaces dedicated to detoxification.
- Wellness and health are the results of a lifelong journey, not just a moment in time, as many factors influence them over the years. It is crucial for people to understand their life and health in this way. Resilience and adaptability enhance health throughout life.
- Chenot's method is personalized and includes a special diet, hydrotherapy, daily electrostimulation massages combined with Chinese medicine balance, and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) components such as acupuncture, energy medicine, and other alternative therapies. This is a results-oriented program.
- Wellness does not mean a 'spa treatment' anymore; people are recognizing the importance of investing in themselves and they are more willing to spend time to do it.



Extract from Emma Haefeli's presentation during the Congress.

The future of health and wellness tourism in mountain territories like Andorra lies in offering high-quality, personalized experiences that meet the evolving preferences of tourists. By focusing on the development of services that align with international standards and cater to the growing demand for wellness-oriented travel, destinations can position themselves as premier choices for those seeking health, wellness, and rejuvenation amidst nature.

SESSION 2: How to Boost the Growth of Premium Tourism in Mountain Areas All Year Round

In its second session, the Congress focused on premium tourism in mountain areas all year round. Industry experts gathered to share insights and strategies on distinguishing mountain destinations as exclusive, high-quality retreats. The session was moderated by **Betim Budzaku, CEO of Andorra Turismo** with the participation of **Hermann Fercher, Director General of Lech Zürs Tourism (Austria)**, **Caroline Couret, CEO of Creative Tourism Network (Spain)**, **Daniel Soucaze, General Manager of Pic du Midi (France)** and **Carmen Vidales Molina, Expert on initiatives, businesses and gastronomy (Spain)**.

According to the CEO of Andorra Turismo, the key lies in offering "personalized services and unique experiences that cater to tourists with significant purchasing power." The session underscored the importance of sustainable practices and enhancing local infrastructure to position these destinations at the forefront of luxury tourism.



From left to right: Betim Budzaku, CEO of Andorra Turismo, Hermann Fercher, Director General of Lech Zürs Tourism (Austria), Caroline Couret, CEO of Creative Tourism Network (Spain), Daniel Soucaze, General Manager of Pic du Midi (France), and Carmen Vidales Molina, Expert on initiatives, businesses and gastronomy (Spain).

Fercher emphasized on the critical role of architecture in the luxury mountain tourism market. "Building on the mountain presents challenges but also opportunities to create architectural marvels that harmonize with the natural environment," Fercher noted, highlighting the potential for such developments to offer guests unparalleled views and experiences.

The conversation also touched on the delicate balance between development and sustainability. Caroline Couret, CEO of the Creative Tourism Network, pointed out that "promoting sustainable and respectful practices is essential in differentiating a destination." This sentiment was echoed by Daniel Soucaze, who spoke about the efforts to engage visitors in sustainability initiatives and the importance of conserving the natural beauty that attracts tourists to these regions.

One of the pressing challenges discussed was the impact of climate change on mountain tourism.

Carmen Vidales Molina stressed that "improving local infrastructure and focusing on quality tourism establishments are crucial in positioning a destination as a place of quality." This approach is seen as vital in ensuring that mountain areas can attract premium tourism all year round, offering activities and experiences beyond the traditional winter sports season.

As the session concluded, the consensus among speakers was clear: for mountain destinations to thrive as premium tourism spots, they must offer more than just stunning landscapes. Investing in sustainable practices, unique architectural projects, and quality services will be key to attracting a discerning clientele looking for exclusive and environmentally respectful travel experiences.



Caroline Couret, CEO of Creative Tourism Network (Spain)

SESSION 3: Emerging Tourism Products: A Trendy Phenomenon or a Structural Change?

In this session of the Congress, experts discussed how to innovate and diversify mountain tourism to meet the evolving market trends and demands. **Michel Julian, Senior Programme Officer at UN Tourism**, steered the discussion, underscoring the shift towards experiences that leverage natural, cultural, or anthropic resources. This session, which included as speakers **Peter Mall, Director and Coordinator of St. Anton Village (Austria)**, **Domitien Detrie, Director General of l'Agence des Pyrénées** and **Jordi Serracanta, Councilor on Tourism and Sports of Ordino (Andorra)**, explored rural tourism, regenerative tourism, and adventure tourism, among others, highlighting their potential to create differentiated and adaptive tourism offerings.

Peter Mall, from St. Anton Village in Austria, a Best Tourism Village by UN Tourism in 2023, shared insights on the village's journey from a remote pasture to a bustling tourism hub, driven by historical milestones and modern-day innovations. "The metaphorical kiss I'm talking about was the great idea of the Hungarian Austrian Emperor to build a railway from Vienna to Paris...a kiss that awakened the Sleeping Beauty of St. Anton and opened up a whole new world for us," Mall reflected on the transformative power of connectivity and infrastructure in tourism.



From left to right: Michel Julian, Senior Programme Officer, UN Tourism, Peter Mall, Director and Coordinator of St. Anton Village (Austria), Domitien Detrie, Director General of l'Agence des Pyrénées, and Jordi Serracanta, Councilor on Tourism and Sports of Ordino (Andorra)

Domitien Detrie, Director General of l'Agence des Pyrénées (France) emphasized on the importance of cross-border cooperation and sustainable practices. He highlighted projects like LIFE Art'Py and POCTEFA Pon Arle, which aim to adapt mountain tourism strategies to climate change, promote circular economy principles, and foster transnational collaboration. "Cooperation and European cooperation, in a wider sense, is a very useful tool...it helps actors to change much quicker than they would do normally," Detrie noted that such collaborative efforts can accelerate the sustainable transformation of mountain tourism.

Jordi Serracanta, Councilor on Tourism and Sports of Ordino in Andorra, and Best Tourism Village by UN Tourism in 2023, presented the Ribera Moon project as an example of innovative tourism development. This initiative aims to disperse tourist flows, promote sustainable tourism, and highlight Ordino's rich heritage and natural beauty. Serracanta pointed out: "We've created an outdoor escape room that helps people to discover Ordino's valley, some amazing unique places to stay, and secret mountain tents for a unique experience," showcasing how targeted, experiential offerings can enrich tourists' encounters with a destination.

The session highlighted the ongoing shift towards more sustainable, innovative, and experience-centered tourism products in mountain areas. It underscored the importance of embracing change, engaging communities, and fostering collaboration to meet the preferences of modern travelers, aiming not just for economic growth but for the enrichment of ecosystems, communities, and cultures alike.



SESSION 4: Education and Training: How to Prepare the Human Team for Change

During this session, speakers emphasized the critical role of equipping human capital with essential knowledge and skills to thrive in a digitalized world. Moderated by **Sonia Figueras, Programme Manager at the UN Tourism Academy** the session included as speakers **Franklin Carpenter, Director of Tourism Advisory of Horwath HTL (Spain)**, **María Abellanet, President of CETT Barcelona School of Tourism, Hospitality, and Gastronomy (Spain)** and **David Hailstones, Senior Vice President & Chief Operations Officer of the Bella Vista Institute of Higher Education (Switzerland)**.



María Abellanet, President of CETT Barcelona School of Tourism, Hospitality, and Gastronomy (Spain)

Abellanet started by discussing the paradigm shift in tourism, emphasizing the need for new talent to enhance competitiveness, innovation, and sustainability, as well as the importance of collaboration between universities, public institutions, and companies for transitioning toward an economy that benefits both people and the planet. She added that talent should be based on education, both initial and lifelong, applied knowledge, professional experience, as well as on recognition from companies.

Franklin Carpenter highlighted the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in revolutionizing sustainability and tourism workforce strategies. He advocated for a shift toward a regenerative, collaborative, and interconnected model, in order to upskill professionals in renewable energy, technological transformation, digitalization, intelligent infrastructure, and circular economy.

Finally, David Hailstones explored the desire for change, willingness to change, and leadership in driving change with an increase in cross-communications that develops potential pilot programmes, between the private and public sectors stakeholders with discussions driven by collected data. He shared the laws of physics, mountain tourism development, the power of small improvements, and the impact of a 1% daily enhancement as an example.



From left to right: David Hailstones, Senior Vice President & Chief Operations Officer of the Bella Vista Institute of Higher Education (Switzerland), Sonia Figueras, Programme Manager, UN Tourism Academy, María Abellanet, President of CETT Barcelona School of Tourism, Hospitality, and Gastronomy (Spain), and Franklin Carpenter, Director of Tourism Advisory of Horwath HTL (Spain).



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