

Ending tourism seasonality and diversifying supply to reach new markets are the current challenges for European tourism

Representatives of the European Parliament, Finland, Italy, France and Spain have identified at TIS2022 the main challenges facing European destinations to become more resilient

Cooperation at an European level in the promotion of destinations and adapting the offer to tourists from different cultures such as the United States, Latin America or China are some of the tourism strategies to face in the coming years

Seville, 4th November 2022. [TIS - Tourism Innovation Summit 2022](#) focused the debate of its second day on the main challenges facing European tourism to continue growing in a sustainable and sustained manner over time.

Supranational cooperation for the promotion of tourism in Europe

Europe is made up of very diverse and very attractive destinations in different areas. A fact that the experts who took part in today's debates at the Tourism Innovation Global Summit highlighted as a value to be promoted. They all stressed the need to promote supranational collaboration at an European level to diversify the tourism offer and reach new markets beyond Europe.

The Vice-President of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism, **István Ujhelyi**, stressed that "*we must have good agreements with tour operators, and the European Union must promote tourism in Europe in general, not just in Spain, Italy or Finland*". This view was shared by other experts, such as **Morena Diazzi**, Director General for Knowledge, Research, Employment and Enterprise of the Emilia Romagna region (Italy), who emphasised collaboration beyond the territory to promote tourism and bring about a stronger recovery. "*Europe needs to invest more in collaborative promotion. We are different and very attractive destinations, and it is important to have a policy from the European Commission that reaches out to national governments, regions and territories*".

The war in Ukraine and the loss of Russian tourists

István Ujhelyi began his speech by saying that "*tourism is the industry of peace. Progress and tourism are built in times of peace*". This message clearly alluded to the geopolitical situation in Europe, which is affecting tourist destinations at different levels. In this sense, **Kristiina Hietasaari**, Senior Director of Visit Finland - Business Finland, the tourism agency in charge of promoting Finland as a destination, stated that "*our largest tourism market is Russia, and the current situation is impacting our tourism industry significantly, which in turn is having repercussions in other areas*". According to Hietasaari, this situation has caused the country's tourism industry to turn its attention to Europe, with an "*incredible growth in tourists from destinations such as France and the Netherlands*", and she confirmed that "*the stronger we are in Europe, the more sustainable our industry will be in the future*".

Felipe Formariz, general director of strategy and services for the tourism sector at Turespaña, has gone further and pointed out that the main challenge for the Spanish market to be more resilient is to build an equitable portfolio among the country's regions. *"Some regions are dependent on tourism from the UK, and suffered with Brexit, others are dependent on the Russian market, and are suffering now, Madrid and Barcelona have not yet fully recovered from the impact of the Covid pandemic because of their dependence on Asian tourism. That is why we must balance their portfolio so that these events do not create a crisis for the sector"*.

The arrival of tourists from China

And as the tourism industry faces the reduction of tourists from Russia, experts on the second day of TIS also stressed the need to prepare for and welcome tourists from China, as China's borders are about to open in the wake of the pandemic. *"We need the opening of China's borders, but this will mean a flood of Chinese citizens wanting to travel. And this is good economically, we need it, but we need to look beyond that and manage it so that it is also sustainable"*, said **István Ujhelyi**, Vice-Chair of the European Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee. Another challenge of China's future openness is culture. *"It is important to understand that the Chinese market has a different culture, and we must adapt our offer to make it accessible. But we must also work on introducing Chinese tourists who visit us to our culture"*, concluded István Ujhelyi.

From Turespaña, Felipe Formariz also stressed that *"the closure of the Chinese borders has meant new opportunities to bring Spain closer to other destinations, such as the American one, with which we also have close cultural ties in the case of Latin America"*. Formariz assured that the Spanish industry has *"consequently created new products adapted to these new tourists, increased the connections between Spain and different destinations in America, and recovered the interest of tourists in Spain"*.