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The European Ocean Pact: Building Synergies for Sustainable Tourism in the EU



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20 years of CSTI: Sustainable Tourism Leadership in Cyprus

Since 2006, CSTI has shown sustainability and competitiveness can advance together.

Through its work, CSTI:

- Protects ecosystems and heritage while supporting communities.
- Reduces tourism's environmental footprint.
- Aligns tourism supply with local needs.
- Shows tourism can be economically viable and environmentally responsible.
- Positions Cyprus as a leader in responsible tourism.

Built on stakeholder cooperation, CSTI proves sustainability works through coherent governance. This model reflects the **European Ocean Pact**.



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The European Ocean Pact



Commission européenne
European Commission



The European Ocean Pact



- Presented at the UN Ocean Conference in Nice (June 2025) by President von der Leyen and myself.
- Ensures coherence across EU ocean policies.
- Priorities:
 - ✓ Ocean health and sustainability.
 - ✓ A stronger Sustainable Blue Economy.
 - ✓ Empowered coastal communities and islands.
 - ✓ Robust marine knowledge.
 - ✓ Maritime security and defense.
 - ✓ Global ocean governance and diplomacy.

➔ **A unified agenda for sustainable and resilient coastal tourism.**



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The European Union as an Ocean Union

- EU has the world's largest collective maritime area, with 25 million km² of EEZs.
- 40% of Europeans live within 50 km of the sea.
- Maritime routes carry 74% of EU external trade.
- Undersea cables transmit 99% of intercontinental internet traffic.
- Blue economy generates 5 million jobs and €250 billion annually.

➔ Europe's prosperity, connectivity and strategic autonomy depend on the ocean.



From Political Commitment to Implementation



- Implementation of the Ocean Pact is underway with full political commitment.
- The forthcoming Ocean Act, a strong and inclusive governance framework, will modernise maritime spatial planning.
- Governance will become more integrated and predictable.
- Particularly critical in high-pressure basins such as the Mediterranean.

➔ **Sustainability requires structure, long-term planning and clear rules.**



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Tourism at the Core of the Blue Economy



- Coastal and maritime tourism is the largest sector of Europe's blue economy.
- It sustains livelihoods in rural, island and remote regions.
- It showcases Europe's cultural richness and natural heritage.
- It builds bridges between peoples and strengthens European identity.

→ **Tourism is both an economic engine and a strategic asset.**

Economic Weight and Territorial Cohesion

- Tourism contributes nearly 10% of EU GDP.
- It creates millions of jobs across Europe.
- It is vital for economies such as Cyprus and many Mediterranean regions.
- It strengthens territorial cohesion and balanced regional development.

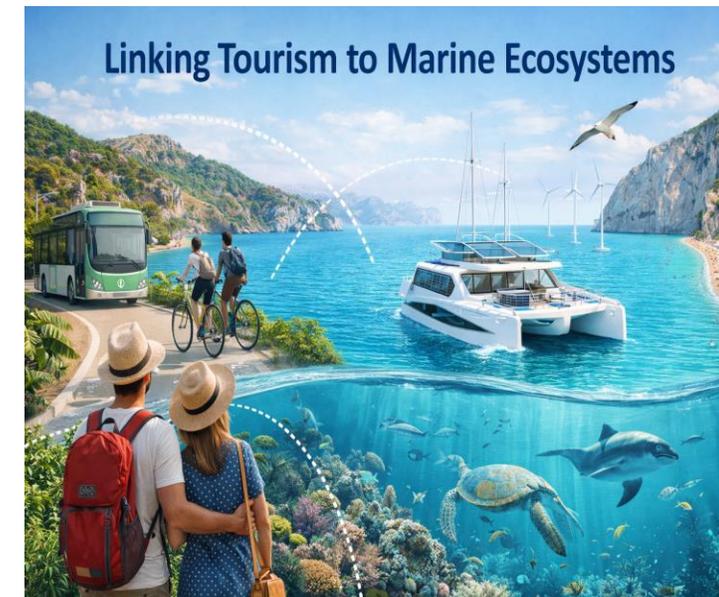
➔ Given tourism's scale, sustainability is not optional but essential.



Linking Tourism to Marine Ecosystems

- Tourism depends directly on healthy marine and coastal ecosystems.
- Unmanaged growth increases ecological vulnerability.
- The Ocean Pact integrates tourism into marine protection objectives.
- Mitigation, adaptation and resilience are key to long-term viability.

➔ **Environmental protection is the precondition for tourism's future.**



The European Strategy for Tourism: A Strategic Turning Point for European Tourism



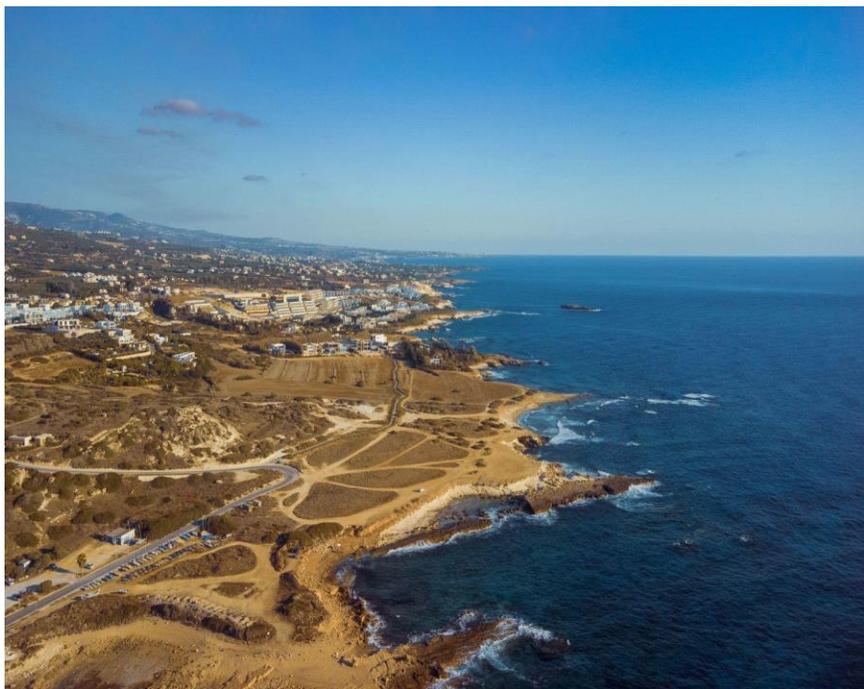
- The first-ever European Strategy for Tourism will be presented in May.
- It builds on the Transition Pathway and the European Agenda for Tourism 2030.
- It reflects extensive stakeholder consultation across Europe.
- It aims to secure Europe's global leadership in sustainable tourism.

The priorities of the Strategy:

- Embedding sustainability within competitiveness.
- Addressing labour shortages and upgrading skills.
- Leveraging data, digitalisation and artificial intelligence responsibly.
- Reinforcing Europe as the world's leading destination.



European Tourism Strategy aligned with Islands and Coastal Communities Strategies



- Integrating tourism within broader coastal and marine resilience strategies.
- Recognising the specific vulnerabilities and strengths of island and maritime destinations.
- Ensuring that policy responses are tailored and place-based.
- Safeguarding biodiversity and marine protection goals.

➔ **Policy alignment ensures that tourism development strengthens resilience, competitiveness and territorial cohesion across Europe.**

Towards a regenerative tourism model

- Tackling unbalanced and seasonal tourism patterns.
- Integrating marine conservation into visitor experiences.
- Using tourism as a driver for biodiversity restoration.
- Strengthening cultural vitality and local resilience.

➔ Moving from “do less harm” to “create positive impact”.



Putting People at the Centre of the Transition

- Addressing seasonality, labour shortages and an ageing workforce.
- Investing in youth and in green and digital skills.
- Supporting quality jobs and long-term career pathways.
- Ensuring the transition is socially fair and inclusive.

➔ A sustainable tourism model must be economically strong and socially just.



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Europe's Tourism Model for the Next Decade



- More sustainability in every destination.
- Greater resilience to environmental and economic shocks.
- Investment in innovation, skills and local communities.
- Stronger competitiveness of the EU blue economy.
- Sustained global leadership in tourism.
- Deeper synergies between European, national and local levels.
- Continuous dialogue and structured stakeholder consultation.

➡ **This is how Europe reconciles prosperity with responsibility and delivers tourism that is competitive, resilient and inclusive.**

Thank you for your attention



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