Ex-ante assessment of the "Sustainable Tourism" thematic area under the Urban Agenda for the EU. *Final Report*

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Disclaimer

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Executive Summary

This Report [*v. 03*] provides an ex-ante assessment of the "Sustainable Tourism" theme under the Urban Agenda for the European Union. The new thematic partnership (TP) will be established within a complex policy scenario characterized by a method of collaborative, "co-creation" process, to be followed by an equally collaborative "co-implementation" phase. It will also build on the experience of previous TPs and in particular of the TP on "Culture and Cultural Heritage".

With regard to **multi-level governance**, such approach appears to be not only compatible with, but necessary to tackle the multiple issues of sustainable urban tourism. The drive towards the multi-level governance approach is strengthened by bottom-up instances of collaboration among a variety of actors (networks of cities). Some critical aspects also emerge. In the actual management of multi-level governance, one should consider the differences in the distribution of competences among Member States. Furthermore, there are inclusivity challenges concerning small and medium size cities, new enterprises and labour.

With regard to the **policy environment**, this theme is aligned with the strategic priorities of the EU emerging in the time of the post-pandemic recovery, as summarized in the European Commission's 2022 document on the Transition Pathway for Tourism. More specifically urban tourism is engaged by several "green deal" strategies and related targets. Concerning the contribution of tourism to local socio-economic development, the competitive sustainability approach has been integral to the EU tourism policy for years. Significant inputs for the tourism industry will come from the New European Urban Mobility Framework, the programme Creative Europe 2021-2027, and the short-term rental initiative launched in 2021.

With regard to the **regulatory environment**, a number of legislative initiatives will characterise the green transition also of tourism in the years ahead. Regulatory efforts are to be expected also in other areas impacting on urban tourism, namely multimodal travelling and digital interoperability. The industry will be certainly affected by two important forthcoming acts such as the Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act.

With regard to **existing identified gaps and recommendations**, it will be important to capitalise the results of the previous thematic partnerships and have some coordination with the new thematic partnership on greening cities. Emerging issues include mobility, climate change, food waste, eco-certifications, digitalisation, skills, accessibility, social inclusion and social innovation. A critical issue concerns short-term rentals in cities as part of a well-balanced tourist ecosystem.

With regard to **trends and evidence about EU cities**, emerging issues concern the use of land and of public spaces, the excessive specialisation in tourism of some territories, product innovation, and the new entrepreneurship and tech start-ups. A major and cross-cutting issue concerns the availability and appropriate use of data.

The Report provides the following **recommendations**, that are specifically related to the "sustainable tourism" priority:

a) concerning the set-up of the TP and the related call,

To interpret and focus the thematic scope of the subject
in drafting the call, to adopt a working definition of sustainable urban tourism
The most suitable form of multi-level cooperation (Partnership/OFC)
to confirm the partnership as the most suitable form of multi-level cooperation
The timing for successful implementation
to require no delays for the start of the activities
The suggested type of expertise of the members
to achieve a clear relationship between the specific expertise developed by the member and the specific issue or set of issues that motivate the applicant to be part of the TP
to give value and promote the specific expertise of small and medium-sized cities
to assess the diversity of members also based on a refined typology of tourist areas
Potential institutions/stakeholders of interest, relevant and related to the thematic issue, to be involved in the multi-level cooperation set-up
to adopt a realistic approach to the issue of "uneven engagement" of actors: the set-up of the TP could recognize different levels of engagement, while prioritising the consolidation of the hard core of participants
with regard to small and medium-sized cities, to implement the adjusted criteria suggested by the MaWP: "- The readiness of partner to participate in the technical work with own resources should not be the prevailing criterion […]; - Readiness of partner to participate with experience and expertise on one particular aspect of the topic addressed should be sufficient"
to provide information and evidence from the experience of cities participating to previous TPs
to engage relevant sectoral DGs, specifically DG GROW (because of its role in transition pathway) and the EIB
to involve destination management organisations (DMO) and research and higher education institutions
Type of support that will be required for the implementation
to clarify the secretariat's role and to provide an early communication about the kind of support that will be provided
to require a detailed plan for dissemination by the applicants for the role of coordinators

b) concerning the design and management of actions within the TP:

To interpret and focus the thematic scope of the subject
to achieve a balanced focus on the three pillars (Better Regulation / Better Funding / Better Knowledge)
to make the actions' added value explicit
to provide an evidence-based assessment of the relevance of each action

to require that any proposal overlapping with previous TP actions clearly states the nature of the expected advancement and/or expansion with respect to the previous work, based on an assessment of its results
The most suitable form of multi-level cooperation (Partnership/OFC)
to consider experimenting the OFC option (to complement the TP) when the aim is to realise the capitalization of the results of previous work by TPs, by setting up "spinoff projects" that are limited in scope (e.g., pilot implementations of the results of the concerned action; extension of the scope to other actors, such as small and medium sized cities) and supposed to deliver results in a much shorter time
to consider experimenting the OFC option (to complement the TP) when dealing with very specific issues, that are related to ongoing policy processes and require some experimentation or that show some urgency in the present context
The timing for successful implementation
to synchronize the delivery of the actions' results with the deadlines of the EU regulatory and policy processes
to consider, when appropriate, shorter timeframes for the delivery of the actions' results
Potential institutions/stakeholders of interest, relevant and related to the thematic issue, to be involved in the multi-level cooperation set-up
to make the active participation of smaller cities an element that is valued in funding procedures under different EU or national programmes
to provide smaller cities with financial resources to cover current expenses for the participation to the TP activities
for smaller cities, to support the hiring of junior staff or to finance bursaries or similar grants to involve young graduates, young professionals, post-doc researchers etc. for the time required to perform the activities
to actively support the acquisition by smaller cities of funds for the realisation of projects (e.g., pilot projects) related to the TP activity
to formalise the role of the TP in relevant policy processes
to align the activity within the TP with Cohesion policy activities
Type of support that will be required for the implementation
to entrust the secretariat with a specific task to support external communication in a more proactive and creative way
to revise and enhance the role of the Futurium platform
to provide timely communication about the views and the results of the TP to the Commission and the European Parliament as well as to the national and regional authorities
to set up a mechanism of cross-partnership coordination with the TP on "greening cities"

In conclusion, based on the consideration of the timing of the proposed TP and its coincidence with the post-pandemic resurgence of urban tourism, this EAA confirms a positive evaluation on the opportunity for a partnership under the UAEU.

Introduction

Objectives and criteria of the Ex-Ante Assessment

The Ex-Ante Assessment (EAA) is a process introduced by the "Ljubljana Agreement" of November 2021[1]. It regards the two new themes of the Urban Agenda of the European Union (UAEU), "Greening Cities" and "Sustainable Tourism", to be launched in 2022 (art. 31) and has an "experimental" character (as no previous experience exists within the UAEU).

The **aims of the EAA** are defined by Multiannual Working Programme (MaWP) for the UAEU, issued by the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Urban Matters of the 26th of November 2021. The EAA should

> *"enable the deployment of a **pragmatic, effective and result-oriented** approach aiming at increasing the impact of future UAEU deliverables. EAA will look at the proposal to help **optimise focus, timing and activities** of the multi-level cooperation and safeguard suitable level of **partners' thematic and procedural expertise**. However, it should still allow the flexibility in the work and decision making of Partnerships according to the spirit of the UAEU"[2].*

The same MaWP indicates that: "The purpose of the EAA is:

- To ensure the relevance and focus of the theme in the policy and regulatory context;
- To guide and ease the work of the Partnership in stocktaking and preparatory actions phases;
- To secure suitable level of partners' expertise in Partnership;
- To optimise the workflow of the Partnership".

In order to reach these objectives, the present assessment is rooted in and adds to **the evaluation of the previous stages of the UAEU**. A thorough analysis of this initiative was performed at the end of 2019 (EC et al., 2019), reaching the conclusion that the UAEU "has been a qualified success" and that "since its formal launch in 2016, the UAEU has contributed to establishing a more effective integrated and coordinated approach to EU policies and legislation with a potential impact on urban areas"[3].

The same assessment study specified several key strengths and achievements and of key weaknesses and issues to be addressed, that are summarised in table 1.

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[1] "Ljubljana Agreement", Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Urban Matters, 26 November 2021, Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia (https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/brochure/ljubljana_agreement_2021_en.pdf).

[2] https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-11/Multiannual%20Working%20Programme%20UAEU%202022-2026.pdf (emphases added)

[3] The latest monitoring of the actions of the UAEU is available at https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/urban-agenda/monitoring-actions/monitoring-table/table-actions-update-september-2021?language=en

Table 1 – Key strengths and key weaknesses of the UAEU, 2016-2019

Key strengths and achievements	Key weaknesses and issues to be addressed
Its **multi-level, multi-stakeholder approach**: innovative and ground-breaking feature, has fostered significant collaboration	The **implementation of many actions is uncertain**. Therefore, there is a risk that the UAEU will ultimately fail to have the desired impacts.
A **unique opportunity** for stakeholders at all relevant levels to enter into dialogue and for cities to be involved in future EU policy making.	Relatively **few actions focus on Better Regulation or Better Funding** (the first two pillars of the UAEU), **compared with Better Knowledge** (the third pillar), which accounts for nearly half of all actions, and whose share has grown from wave to wave of TPs. Although many of the Better Knowledge actions are undoubtedly relevant and important, their prevalence raises questions about the TPs' level of ambition and ultimate impacts. Arguably, Better Knowledge actions tend to be 'easier' to formulate and implement (because they do not require legislative changes that cities have no direct control over). However, they are also less likely to have as significant (potential) impacts.
The **Thematic Partnership (TP) approach**: All of the themes were highly relevant. Similarly, the three pillars (Better Regulation, Better Funding, and Better Knowledge) were highly relevant	The high degree of flexibility and experimentation was necessary to get the TPs "off the ground", but it had the drawback of a widely felt **lack of clear and transparent processes, requirements, and specific objectives**
the **flexible, 'experimental' nature** of the TPs: a genuinely **'bottom-up'** approach. Although this process was frequently difficult and time-consuming, the overall **level of engagement** among participants was high	The **level of engagement of stakeholder in and with the UAEU was uneven**. The progress of the TPs relied heavily on a relatively small 'hard core' of active and engaged members, especially coordinators. Some other members were quite passive. Lack of engagement by Member States and Commission services (other than DG REGIO) was also perceived.
The 114 actions are beginning to generate **tangible impacts**, including a few legislative proposals by the EC as well as a large number of best practices, guides, toolkits and roadmaps	The **outreach to stakeholders who are not directly involved in the UAEU has been limited**. Although some TPs have been reasonably successful in reaching out to and disseminating information about their work to **a**

to contribute to the generation and dissemination of Better Knowledge	**"second circle" of cities**, others have been more inwards focused. Overall, the profile and visibility of the UAEU remains quite low
A certain, albeit limited **influence in terms of strengthening the urban dimension** in the design and implementation of EU as well as certain national policies	**Resource constraints** were a challenge for the TPs: time; funding
It became the "common frame" for urban policy initiatives at EU level, with other EU programmes, policies and initiatives relating to urban policy being aligned to the topics of the TPs	The **governance mechanism for the UAEU is not effective**. The guidance provided by UDG and DGUM, due to the large number and specialised thematic focus of TPs
	Internal communication within and between the different elements of the UAEU has been lacking. This has contributed to the perceived lack of transparency and awareness of key issues.
	The **internal and external coherence of the UAEU is low**, resulting in a certain degree of "working in silos".

Source: author's elaboration from European Commission, Ipsos Mori, Technopolis Group and Economisti Associati (2019). *Assessment Study of the Urban Agenda for the European Union (UAEU). Final Report*.

The Multiannual Working Programme also defined **the criteria "chosen to establish [each theme's] relevance in terms of scope and timing".** The criteria are presented in table 2, with the addition of keywords derived from the Terms of reference for the present expertise work. The MaWP also requires that "findings and recommendations based on additional research and analysis" provide the elements listed in the following table 3.

Table 2 – EAA criteria

Assessment criteria	Keywords
1. Multi-level governance	*compatibility of multi-level governance // outreach stakeholders // involvement of small and medium-sized cities*
2. Policy environment	*alignment to EU priorities*
3. Regulatory Environment	*transposition in the national regulatory framework // possible bottlenecks at national and sub-national level*
4. Existing identified gaps and recommendations	*Better Regulation / Better Knowledge / Better Funding // lessons from first generation of partnerships and challenges not addressed // "linking matrix"*
5. Trends and evidence about EU cities	*available evidence // proposal for indicators*

Table 3 – Elements to be provided by the EAA

- Deliver recommendations to help interpret and focus the **thematic scope** of the subject;
- Identify the most suitable **form of multi-level cooperation** (Partnership/OFC);
- Recommend the **timing** for successful implementation;
- Identify the suggested **type of expertise** of the members;
- Identify **potential institutions/stakeholders of interest**, relevant and related to the thematic issue, to be involved in the multi-level cooperation set-up;
- Identify the **type of support** that will be required for the implementation;
- Provide an **assessment on the opportunity** for a Partnership/OFC.

This report

This is the final report *(v.03)* of the EAA process, as described in Fig. 1.

Figure 1 – Timeline of the EAA
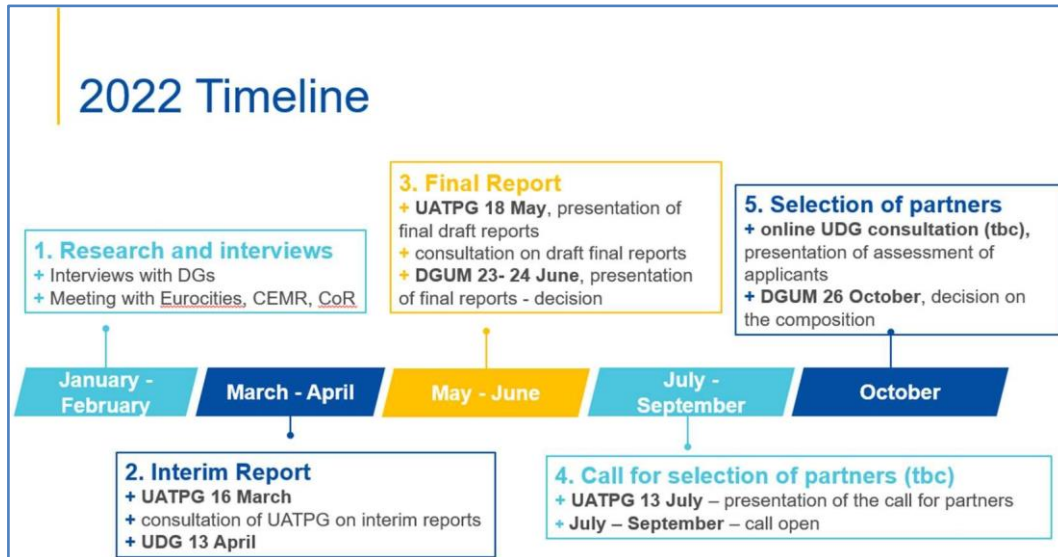
The report is organized in two sections.

Section A presents the assessment already included in the Interim Report, based on desk analysis, on interviews with DGs and on a meeting with Eurocities, CEMR, CoR (see annex 2). The materials of the Interim Report have been thoroughly revised, with some addition, following the suggestions emerged in the discussion of the Report and in the consultation process. Section A discusses "sustainable urban tourism" as concept, in the EU policy context, and in the previous partnerships under the UAEU, and proposes a possible articulation of the concept. Furthermore, it presents the results of the assessment following the five criteria defined by the Multiannual Working Programme (Multi-level governance / Policy environment / Regulatory Environment / Existing identified gaps and recommendations / Trends and evidence about EU cities).

Section B includes all the recommendations that derive from the EAA. The recommendations concern both the set-up of the TP (and the drafting of the related call) and the design and management of actions within the new TP. They are based on the set of guidelines included in the MaWP of November 2021 and they are aimed at specifying their implementation with regard to sustainable urban tourism.

Recommendations do not include issues of more general relevance, such as matters concerning accountability. They are based on a thorough review of previous assessments of the working of the UAEU, on additional analysis and on a series of formal and informal exchanges with participants to previous TPs. The initial disclaimer is here especially emphasized: the opinions here expressed are in the full and only responsibility of the author.

A. The analysis

A.1 A multi-faceted concept

Sustainable tourism is per se a complex concept. Complexity derives from the coexistence and interaction of **different dimensions of sustainability**, which implies the **need to integrate a wide variety of policy objectives and tools**.

Following the UNWTO **definition**, sustainable tourism is

"tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities".

Sustainable tourism should:

"1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.

2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.

3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation" (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005, p. 11-12).

According to the recital 27 of the Regulation on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund,

"Sustainable tourism requires a balance between economic, social, cultural, and environmental sustainability. The approach to supporting sustainable tourism should be in accordance with the Commission Communication 'Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism'. In particular, it should take into account the welfare of tourists, respect the natural and cultural environment

Adopting a more specific focus on cultural tourism, the OMC Working Group report on sustainable cultural tourism has defined sustainable cultural tourism as "the integrated management of cultural heritage and tourism activities in conjunction with the local community, creating social, environmental and economic benefits for all stakeholders in order to achieve tangible and intangible cultural heritage conservation and sustainable tourism development." (European Union 2019, p.8).

Further evidence of the multi-dimensional character of sustainable urban tourism comes from its consistency with practically the whole range of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** (UNWTO - UNDP 2017)[4]. The following table 4 summarizes the main contributions that sustainable urban tourism in the EU can give to SDGs.

Table 4 – The contribution of sustainable urban tourism in the EU to the SDGs

SDG	The contribution by sustainable urban tourism in the EU
1 NO POVERTY	Job creation at local level also for less favoured groups, such as youth, women and migrants
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	Tourism contributes to financing public services, including health care and services.
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	Tourism has the potential to promote education, as skilled workforce is essential for its competitiveness, as well as social inclusiveness.
5 GENDER EQUALITY	Tourism can be especially effective to empower women, through non-discrimination.
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	As an energy-intensive sector, tourism may contribute to accelerating the shift towards increased renewable and clean energy sources.

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[4] Only SDG 2 "Zero hunger" and SDG 14 "Life below water" are not considered specifically relevant for European cities.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	Tourism, as a dynamic industry, has a great potential to provide opportunities for sustainable growth and decent work.
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	Tourism can impact on innovation and infrastructure upgrade, attracting investments.
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	Tourism can contribute to the reduction of inequalities within and among countries, by engaging local populations of less developed areas and through urban renewal.
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	Tourism can advance urban infrastructure and accessibility, promote regeneration and preserve cultural and natural heritage, assets on which tourism depends. Investment in green infrastructure (more efficient transport, reduced air pollution) should result in smarter and greener cities for, not only residents but also tourists.
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	Tourism can adopt sustainable consumption and production modes, accelerating the shift towards sustainability.
13 CLIMATE ACTION	Tourism can contribute by reducing its environmental footprint, also considering the impact of climate change on the tourism activities of specific localities (e.g., maintain, coastal areas).
15 LIFE ON LAND	Tourism cab be engaged in protecting green and natural heritage within urban destinations as an additional motivation to visit them.
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	Urban tourism contributes to inter-cultural encounters, fostering multicultural tolerance and understanding, also in post-conflict societies.
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	Due to its cross-sectoral nature, tourism has the ability to strengthen private/public partnerships and engage multiple stakeholders to work together to achieve the SDGs

Source: author's elaboration based on UNWTO – UNDP 2017

An additional reason for complexity comes from the realisation that sustainability may only derive from the combined behaviour of **three different kinds of actors**, responding to different motivations, opportunities and constraints (figure 2):

- the territories, i.e., the "**destinations**", pursue sustainability in order to balance the opportunities linked to the development of the tourist ecosystems with constraints deriving from other concerns, such as the conservation of cultural and natural assets, the environmental impact, the potential conflicts with residents etc.;

- individual **companies** belonging to the tourism industrial ecosystem, focus on sustainability because of a combination of motivations related to competitiveness, to the compliance with social belief and actual regulations and to ethical concerns regarding their social and ecological responsibility;

- the **tourists** are increasingly empowered in co-designing their experiences and share with the other actors the responsibility to implement sustainability through their behaviour as "temporary citizens" in destinations and as "post-modern consumers" of tourist services.

Figure 2 – Different actors in sustainable urban tourism
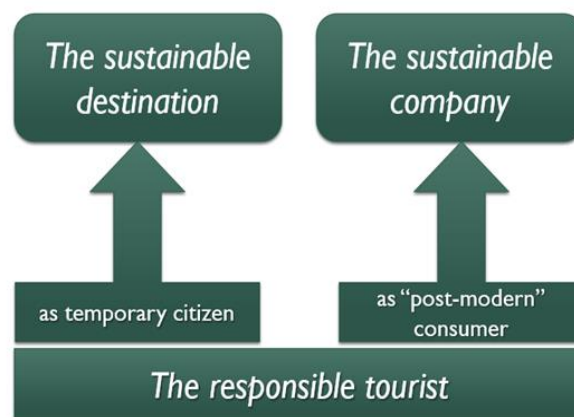
The co-existence and interaction of these three different kinds of actors implies that **three different kinds of policy approaches** are required:

- a (place-based) development policy that frames tourism into an overall vision and strategy for territorial development;

- an industrial policy for tourism that supports sustainability-oriented and "go green" decisions;

- regulations and incentives that may influence the behaviour of tourist, also including the kind of sustainability-oriented information that empowers their choices.

Furthermore, we should consider the specificities related to **the urban character** of tourism. Sustainable *urban* tourism requires attention to variables that are specific to urban settings, notwithstanding the obvious overlap with more general sustainability issues that pertain also to other kind of territories. The evolution itself of urban tourism (leading to greater attention to peri-urban areas

and the urban-rural connections) makes borderlines less clearcut than in the past. Still some sustainability issues are especially relevant in cities or assume peculiar configurations in that context. One could also add that, for several reasons (e.g., the role of historic centres in shaping the local identity, the emergence of mono-functional "tourist ghettos", the relevance of "anti-tourism" movements, etc.), European cities deserve an even more specified approach. In the end, this could be a very significant contribution to the global perspective that has been outlined in the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations, where sustainable tourism is seen as a crucial component of the urban economies in creating "quality, decent and productive jobs"[5].

For the purposes of this work, we propose to "deconstruct" the concept of sustainable urban tourism according to three major sub-themes. Each sub-theme includes issues that are relevant in the present policy scenario (table 5).

[5] Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements for All (2016)

Table 5 – Proposed articulation of the "sustainable urban tourism" theme

Sub-themes	Issues
ENVIRONMENT *The environmental impact of the tourism industry in cities*	The reduction of environmental footprint
	Climate change
	Land use
	Circular economy
	Good practices; certifications
	Planning and design of sustainable tourism
DEVELOPMENT *The contribution of tourism to urban socio-economic development*	Vulnerability and resilience
	Post-pandemic changes in tourism markets; diversification of tourism products; seasonality
	Renovation of tourist infrastructures and physical assets
	Mono-functional areas
	Mobility (green mobility, multimodality, intermodality, shared mobility)
	Small and medium-sized cities
	Culture and creativity
	Alternative hospitality; short-term rentals
	Smart cities, smart destinations, digital services
	Labour, green sustainable labour, up-and re-skilling, entrepreneurship
	Digitalisation of tourist services
	Accessibility – Tourism for all
	Social inclusion
	Social innovation
UNBALANCED GROWTH *The congestion of tourism flows in cities (overtourism)*	Redistribution of flows
	The limits to growth
	The impact of cruise ports
	The policy toolbox; good practices
	Product innovation for urban travellers

A.2   Sustainable urban tourism in the EU policy context

As suggested by figure 3, the object of the present assessment is positioned at the crossroad of at least three major policy areas within the European Union:

- the whole set of strategies that are designed to guide the green and digital transitions;

- the policies designed for cities and urban development[6];

- the tourism policy.

Figure 3 - Sustainable urban tourism within the EU policy context
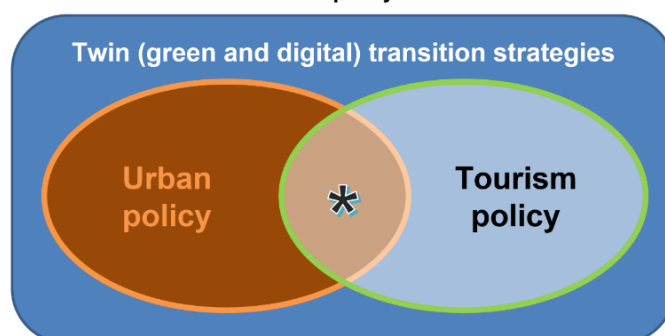
Considering **urban policies**, it is worth noticing that tourism-related issues or issues that are likely to have an impact on the management of tourist flows are dealt with in various programmes, such as the Urban Innovative Actions[7] (table 6) and Urbact[8] (table 7), as well within Horizon 2020 (table 8).

Table 6 - Tourism-related projects under the UIA initiative

Acronym	Project title	Reference
BRICK-BEACH	Artificial regeneration of urban beaches with eroded recycled aggregates	https://uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/velez-malaga
A2UFood	Avoidable and Unavoidable Food Wastes: A Holistic Managing Approach for Urban Environments	https://uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/heraklion
UFIL	Urban Forest Innovation Lab	https://uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/cuenca

Source: UIA Knowledge Lab (https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/knowledge-lab)

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[6] As summarised in https://ec.europa.eu/info/eu-regional-and-urban-development/topics/cities-and-urban-development_en

[7] https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en

[8] https://urbact.eu/

Table 7 – Tourism-related URBACT Networks

Network	Topic addressed	Reference
Tourism Friendly Cities	how tourism can be made sustainable in medium-sized cities	https://urbact.eu/tourism-friendly-cities
BeePathNet Reloaded	urban environmental, biodiversity and food self-sufficiency challenges linked to urban beekeeping	https://urbact.eu/beepathnet
Interactive Cities	how digital, social media and user generated content can improve today's urban management in European cities	https://urbact.eu/interactive-cities

Table 8 - Urban tourism related projects funded under Horizon 2020

Project Acronym	Project Title
INNOVATE	The innovation journey of tourism entrepreneurs: evidence from the UK and Spain and policy implications
CHARMED	Characterisation of a Green Microenvironment and to Study its Impact upon Health and Well-Being in the Elderly as a Way Forward for Health Tourism
RIGHTS UP	The Right to the City and the Ambivalence of Tourism: A Comparative Approach to Media Discourses and Social Movements' Dissent in Venice, Amsterdam and Barcelona
WomENt	Women's journey through entrepreneurship in the tourism industry
Living in the Media	Analysing the Impact of Media Tourism on Locals' Identities and Sense of Belonging
YouthExistInTourism	Youth negotiation of tourism-based employment in Goa and Lisbon
WeCENT	Weather, Climate and ENvironmental information for Tourism
UrBAN-WASTE	Urban strategies for Waste Management in Tourist Cities
Be.CULTOUR	Beyond CULtural TOURism: human-centred innovations for sustainable and circular cultural tourism
SmartCulTour	Smart Cultural Tourism as a Driver of Sustainable Development of European Regions

Source: European Commission (2021c). *EU Research and Innovation for and with Cities. Yearly Mapping Report – June 2021* (author's elaboration)

The role of **Cohesion policy** in support of sustainable tourism has been of an especially great importance especially in the difficult pandemic phase, when the vulnerability of tourist regions and cities was dramatically revealed, as described also in the Eighth Cohesion Report (EC 2022c).

According to a study on the contribution to regional/local development of tourism related projects co-financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), "tens of thousands of ESIF projects related to tourism in the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods. In the 2014-2020

period, close to EUR 10 billion were earmarked from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), and the Cohesion Fund (CF) to support activities linked to tourism" (EC 2020). As shown by figure 4, planned ESIF funding directly related to tourism amounts to 1% of the overall ESIF funding. Funding directly and indirectly related to tourism is on average 2,8% of the total ESIF funding, with significant variations among Member States.

Figure 4 – Planned (direct and indirect) tourism-related ESIF funding

Volume of planned ESIF funding *directly* related to tourism and share within the overall ESIF funding (2014-2020)

Volume of planned ESIF funding *both directly and indirectly* related to tourism and share within the overall ESIF funding (2014-2020)
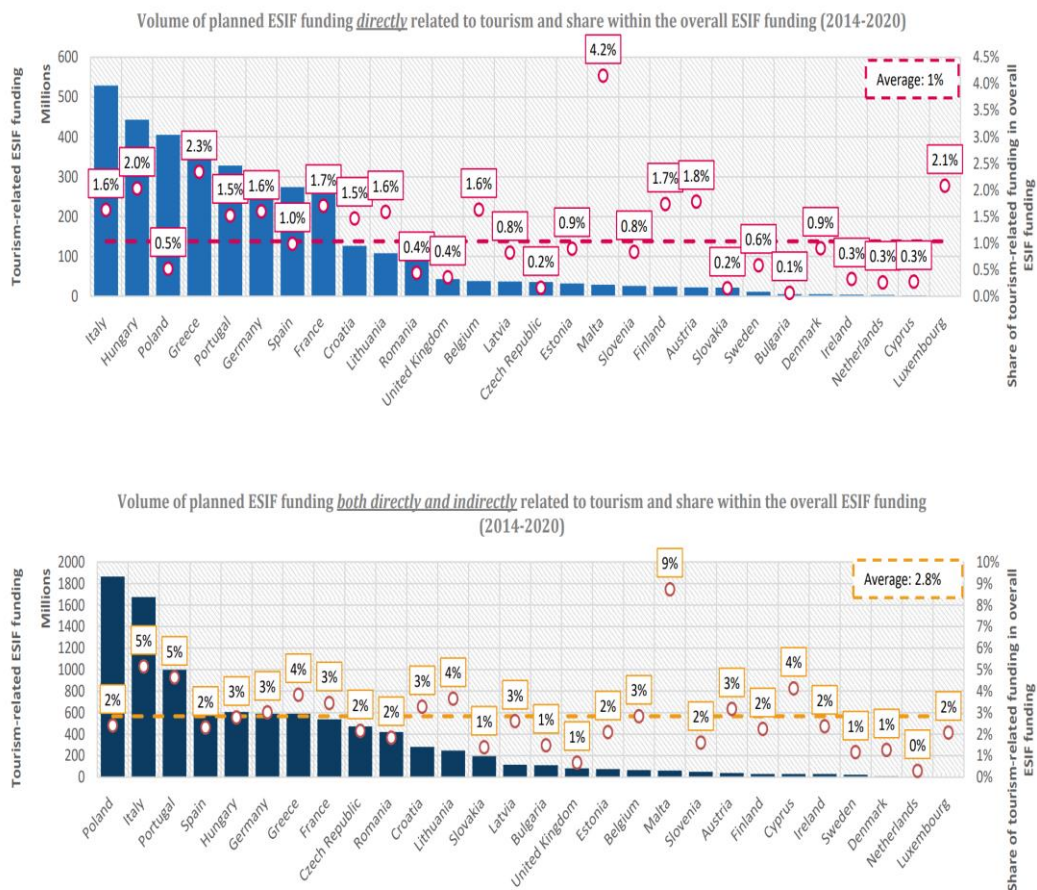
Source: Ecorys based on ESIF viewer

Source: European Commission (2020). *Study on the Contribution of Tourism to Local and Regional Development - Evidence from the European Structural and Investment Funds 2012-2018*

A significant contribution also comes from the smart specialisation strategies[9], whenever tourism is directly or indirectly included in the selected priorities. This happens for more than 140 priorities, as listed in Annex 1.

Nonetheless, an analysis realised by the European Court of Auditors found that "during the 2014–2020 period the Commission's actions in supporting the EU's tourism industry were partially effective" with "mixed results". The Court recommended that the Commission should "set out a new strategy for the EU tourism ecosystem, which explicitly aims at supporting investments that contribute to a

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[9] https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/home

more sustainable form of tourism" and "encourage Member States to apply selection procedures for ERDF-funded tourism investments to support this new strategic orientation" (ECA 2021).

Finally, it must be noticed that the tourism sector also benefited from the REACT-EU reprogramming of the 2014-2020 cohesion policy programmes. As of 5 November 2021, direct REACT-EU support for tourism amounts to €182,625,490[10].

In the Programming Period 2021-2027

> *"the ERDF should support sustainable tourism in an integrated manner, in particular through strengthening cooperation within functional territories. In order to boost the impact of sustainable tourism on the economy, enterprises and public authorities should systematically cooperate to deliver quality services more efficiently in areas with a high potential for tourism, taking due care to create a stable legal and administrative environment conducive for sustainable growth of such areas. Supported actions in the area of sustainable tourism could take into account best practices in this area, such as the 'tourist district' approach"* [11]

Furthermore

> *"a dedicated specific objective should be provided for supporting the regional economies strongly dependent on the tourism and cultural sectors. This would allow to exploit the full potential of culture and sustainable tourism for an economic recovery, social inclusion and social innovation, without prejudice to the possibilities to provide support from the ERDF to those sectors under other specific objectives".*

With the Policy Objective 5 "A Europe closer to citizens" the urban dimension is reinforced "fostering the integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental development, culture, natural heritage, *sustainable tourism* and security in urban areas" and with special attention to "sustainable urban development"[12]. Furthermore, Policy Objective 4 ("more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights") includes a specific objective of "enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social

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[10] see data story on REACT-EU Fostering crisis repair and resilience

[11] Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund, Article 3 (emphasis added)

[12] Art. 11: "Special attention shall be given to tackling environmental and climate challenges, in particular the transition towards a climate-neutral economy by 2050, to harnessing the potential of digital technologies for innovation purposes, and to support the development of functional urban areas."

innovation"[13]. Coherent support will be offered to cities for the implementation of sustainable urban development also from the new European Urban Initiative[14].

The state-of-the-art of **tourism policies** within the EU adds further complexity to this assessment exercise. The EU tourism policy has evolved through the years and the focus on sustainability has been a major element of continuity[15]. Within this perspective, the Lisbon Treaty clearly recognises the importance of tourism and realises "a step forward which provides the necessary clarification and enables the setting up of a coherent framework for action" (COM(2010) 352 final).

The Treaty limits the EU powers to a complementary role with respect to national jurisdictions[16]. This institutional design is not unproblematic: "due to the relatively limited competences of the EU in the field of tourism, it is not possible to harmonise and implement policies directly and indirectly related to tourism" (Knezevic Cvelbar et al 2021). The fact that Next Generation EU does not include direct financing to the tourism industry has been formally "deplored" by the European Parliament, calling for "a new governance model" (PE657.187)[17].

Nonetheless, the present policy context is characterised by a very large number of regulations, actions and initiatives within the EU framework that deal with issues of interest for the tourism ecosystem and by policies that do not address specifically tourism and yet impact significantly on it. Many EU programmes include opportunities for funding actors in the tourism ecosystem (Table 9) and these opportunities are increased by the role that tourism and especially tourism-related investments play in the post-pandemic recovery policies (European Tourism Manifesto alliance, 2021).

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[13] It must be added that support for tourism is possible under all five policy objectives provided that the main objective of the investments is to contribute achieving those objectives and comply with the relevant enabling conditions or minimum requirements established for the concerned policy objective. Overall, a minimum 8% of the ERDF resources in each Member State must be invested in priorities and projects selected by cities themselves and based on their own sustainable urban development strategies

[14] https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/eui/european-urban-initiative

[15] Over the years, a number of principles have emerged to characterize the EU approach to tourism. To these principles one could make reference in designing further initiatives, such as the new UAEU thematic partnership. In particular it is worth recalling the 2007 communication from the Commission "Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism" (COM(2007) 621 final) and NECSTouR's 2018 Barcelona Declaration "Better Places to Live, Better Places to Visit" (https://necstour.eu/better-places-to-live-better-places-to-visit).

[16] Article 195 TFEU:

"1. The Union shall complement the action of the Member States in the tourism sector, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings in that sector. To that end, Union action shall be aimed at: (a) encouraging the creation of a favourable environment for the development of undertakings in this sector; (b) promoting cooperation between the Member States, particularly by the exchange of good practice.

2. The European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, shall establish specific measures to complement actions within the Member States to achieve the objectives referred to in this Article, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States."

[17] These issues have been raised also within the present TPs under the UAEU: "a crucial gap remains, namely the lack of an autonomous, cohesive and structured framework for tourism all over the EU, a stable common cooperation and knowledge sharing framework, which is further potentially problematic with an eye on current and future challenges of sustainable tourism in the EU" (UAEU - Partnership on Culture / Cultural Heritage, 2020, p. 119).

Table 9 – Funding for tourism in EU programmes

Programme relevant for	Academic institutions	Businesses (non-SME)	Private individuals	NGOs	Public authorities	SME and micro-companies
Creative Europe Programme	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Digital Europe Programme	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Erasmus+	✓			✓	✓	
EAFRD[18]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EGF[19]			✓			
EMFAF[20]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ERDF[21] and Cohesion Fund	✓	✓			✓	✓
ESF+[22]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Horizon Europe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
InvestEU	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
JTF[23]		✓			✓	✓
LIFE Programme	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
REACT-EU	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Recovery and Resilience Facility	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
SMP[24]	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Support by EBRD[25]		✓			✓	
Support by the EIB[26]		✓			✓	

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/funding-guide_en (author's elaboration)

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[18] European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

[19] European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers

[20] European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund

[21] European Regional Development Fund

[22] European Social Fund Plus

[23] Just Transition Fund

[24] Single Market Programme

[25] European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

[26] European Investment Bank

The combination of the two (i.e., of the merely complementary nature of the EU competences and of the multiplicity of tools impacting on the industry) justifies **the emergence of two strategic approaches** in the EU tourism policy, that are very likely to shape the future scenario:

- An effort to **give visibility to existing opportunities** deriving from policies that are not explicitly or uniquely targeted at tourism and yet can be activated on actors and activities related to this ecosystem ("also for tourism"). The most important and most consistent expression of this approach is the "guide on EU funding for tourism", an online tool that is designed to help the retrieval of appropriate funds for activities in tourism[27];

- A **collaborative, "co-creation" method**, that has been experimented in the process of the transition pathway for tourism. "Transition pathways are co-created with stakeholders, as an essential collaborative process to help the transformation of industrial ecosystems", to be followed by an equally collaborative **co-implementation** phase. Tourism "was the first industrial ecosystem in which a co-creation process was launched to develop a transition pathway", in view of how this ecosystem was the hardest hit during the pandemic[28].

The above-mentioned process has produced a report, published in February 2022, that is an excellent overview of the EU tourism policy, - as of today - for sure the most comprehensive and systematic one. It lists "the areas where stakeholders, often in collaboration, should take action, in order to accelerate the twin transition and promote more resilience in the tourism ecosystem" (EC 2022b). Table 10 summarises the structure and topics discussed in the report.

Table 10 – Transition pathway for tourism 2022: topics

REGULATION AND PUBLIC GOVERNANCE
Topic 1: Fair measures for short-term rentals (STR)
Topic 2: Regulatory support for multimodal travelling
Topic 3: Improving statistics and indicators for tourism
Topic 4: Comprehensive tourism strategies development or update
Topic 5: Collaborative governance of tourism destinations
GREEN AND DIGITAL TRANSITION
Topic 6: Sustainable mobility
Topic 7: Circularity of tourism services
Topic 8: Green transition of tourism companies and SMEs
Topic 9: Data-driven tourism services
Topic 10: Improving the availability of online information on tourism offer

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[27] https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/funding-guide_en . It is important to stress that, at this stage, the guide is available only in English language. The Report on the Transition Pathway for Tourism (Topic 27: Support visibility of funding opportunities for tourism actors) suggests enhancing the guide on EU funding for tourism "by providing information on recently funded projects and upcoming calls" (European Commission 2022b, p. 32 f.).

[28] The process was launched on 21 June 2021 with the publication of the staff working document SWD (2021) 164 final on the potential scenarios for the transition, based also on the outputs of Tourism Convention 2020 (https://webcast.ec.europa.eu/european-tourism-convention).

Topic 11: Easily accessible best practice, peer learning and networking for SMEs
Topic 12: Research and innovation projects and pilots on circular and climate friendly tourism
Topic 13: Promoting the use of the PEF and OEF methodology and the development sectorial category rules for the tourism ecosystem
Topic 14: Technical implementation for tourism data space
Topic 15: R&I for digital tools and services in tourism
Topic 16: Support for digitalisation of tourism SMEs and destinations
RESILIENCE
Topic 17: Seamless cross-border travelling
Topic 18: Coordinated management and updated information on travelling
Topic 19: Awareness raising on skills needs for twin transition in tourism
Topic 20: Awareness raising on changes in tourism demand and the opportunities of twin transition for tourism
Topic 21: Educational organisations to engage in developing and renewing tourism education
Topic 22: Pact for skills in tourism
Topic 23: One-stop shop for learning opportunities for tourism SMEs
Topic 24: Fairness and equality in tourism jobs
Topic 25: Enhancing accessible tourism services
Topic 26: Tourism services for visitors and residents alike
FUNDING
Topic 27: Support visibility of funding opportunities for tourism actors

Source: European Commission (2022b). *Transition Pathway for Tourism*.

As far as **the UAEU** is concerned, the new TP will also build on the experience of the TPs that were previously launched under the UAEU (table 11).

Table 11 – Previous thematic partnerships

Wave 1 (Amsterdam, 2016)	Wave 2 (Bratislava, first half of 2017)	Wave 3 (Malta, second half of 2017)	Wave 4 (Vienna, end of 2018)
Air Quality	Circular economy	Climate Adaptation	Culture and Cultural Heritage in Cities
Inclusion of migrants and refugees	Digital Transition	Energy Transition	Security in Public Spaces
Urban Poverty	Jobs and Skills in the local economy	Innovative and responsible public procurement	
Housing	Urban Mobility	Sustainable Land Use and Nature Based Solutions	

In fact, most of themes include aspects and dimensions that are relevant for tourism and, at least in some cases, this emerges from the available documentation (while in other cases a reference to tourism is not explicitly made). As recalled also in the "linking matrix" exercise (October 2021), relevance for tourism occurs in five cases:

- Thematic partnership on Digital transition (UAEU 2018a),
- Thematic partnership on Housing (especially with reference to speculative tendencies linked to the growth of short-term rentals: UAEU 2018d),
- Thematic partnership on Urban Mobility (UAEU 2018c),
- Thematic partnership on Jobs and skills (especially under actions 8 and 10: UAEU 2018b),
- Thematic partnership on Culture and Cultural heritage (UAEU 2020).

The tourism dimension has been especially relevant in one case, i.e., in **the TP on "Culture and Cultural Heritage"** (UAEU - Partnership on Culture / Cultural Heritage, 2020). In this case tourism has been recognised as one of the "pillars" of an urban policy on culture and cultural heritage and two actions have been explicitly framed in a strategy of "rebalancing and managing touristic flows for a more sustainable management of heritage" and other actions have been targeted at the tourist revitalisation of degraded places. Although the whole action plan impacts on tourism dimensions, this last TP is especially significant because of two actions:

- action n° 01 (action leader: URBACT) – Regulating phenomena of sharing economy,
- action n° 07 (action leader: City of Florence) – Data collection and smart use applied to the management of tourist flows.

The capitalisation of the results of these two actions will certainly require the greatest attention during the process of designing the new partnership. There will be opportunities in extending the analysis and propositions beyond the cultural focus, although culture remains in many cases the most important attractor for urban tourism.

Finally, some degree of **coordination with the new TP on the "greening cities"** could also be useful to integrate in the sustainable tourism discourse the role of green and nature-based attractors[29].

A.3   Multi-level governance

Sustainable urban tourism requires a place-based approach. The local knowledge of context-dependent specificities is crucial. Local authorities must be able to mobilise local actors in order to design interventions and need to use their regulatory powers in ways that are tailored to the characteristics and needs of each place[30]:

"To make the national or regional tourism strategies specific and usable, they
need to be complemented with locally developed and adapted work plans.

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[29] The importance of greening urban spaces is emphasised, among others, by the European Tourism Manifesto alliance (https://tourismmanifesto.eu/accelerate-social-and-economic-recovery-by-investing-in-sustainable-tourism-development/).

[30] This definition is inspired by the so-called Barca Report (*An agenda for a reformed cohesion policy. A place-based approach to meeting European Union challenges and expectations*, April 2009).

> *Depending on the local destination, the responsibility for developing or managing work plan may lie with the local authority or destination management organisation" (EC 2022b, p. 9).*

At the same time sustainable urban tourism is confronted with issues that are originated in a much wider spatial dimension and involve actors operating at a regional, national, European, and sometimes (e.g., in the case of platforms and of major hotel chains and airlines) truly global scale.

Thus, the multi-level governance approach appears to be not only compatible with, but necessary to tackle the multiple issues of sustainable urban tourism. The awareness of the importance of a multi-level governance approach and of multi-level stakeholder involvement is an established feature of the "European way" to sustainable tourism. The 2007 "Agenda" made already very clear that:

> *"in order to achieve more significant results, existing – and future – initiatives should unite their efforts and act together, in a more visible and synergic way. This "Agenda" aims at strengthening such a **voluntary and continuous process**. It should be **promoted by all tourism stakeholders in Europe:** the different levels of government – local authorities, destination management organisations, regions, Member States – and the European Commission itself, businesses, tourists and all other bodies that can stimulate, support and influence tourism" (COM(2007) 621 final, p. 6; emphasis added).*

Also, the TP on "Culture / Cultural Heritage" has forcefully advocated

> *"setting up participatory multi-level, multi-stakeholder, and multi-sectoral governance and management frameworks: in terms of setting up participatory multi-level, multi-stakeholder, and multisectoral governance and management frameworks, the following things are important to consider: (i) creating the right balance between the needs of local residents, the welfare of tourists, the needs of the natural and cultural environment and the development and competitiveness of destinations and businesses necessitates a long-term holistic and integrated approach, whereby all stakeholders share the same objectives; (ii) develop long term national spatial plans and improve coordinating Actions between different levels of government and policy areas, including tourism, environment and innovation, to support the shift to more sustainable tourism investment and financing practices" (UAEU - Partnership on Culture / Cultural Heritage 2020, p. 130).*

The drive towards the multi-level governance approach is strengthened by **bottom-up instances of collaboration** among a variety of actors, representing an exceptional asset of relations and ideas that may have been only partially explored and exploited so far.

Networks of cities have been taking shape around common issues, like overtourism, short term rental regulations etc. Noticeable examples are provided by:

- the Living-in.EU movement, a collaborative platform for cities and communities to accelerate their digital transformation[31] raising very relevant issues for tourism (such as the business-to-government data sharing[32]),

- the "European Alliance on Short-term Holiday Rentals", which has produced detailed and thoughtful documents on that issue[33].

As exemplified by the interesting work on sustainable tourism realised within several Interreg programmes[34] (e.g., Sustainable Tourism Community of the INTERREG MED 2014-2020 programme[35], Digitourism[36], Smart Tourism[37], ADRION[38], SLIDES[39], ECTN[40] etc.), **interregional cooperation** could also provide a fruitful policy arena[41].

Some **critical aspects** also emerge.

First, **the actual management of multi-level governance** implies several problems which cannot be underestimated.

On the one hand, the efforts of coordination of territorial actors need to realistically recognise that European tourist destinations often perceive each other as competitors and that this may weaken the sense of urgency of collective actions at a wider scale. The severe impact of the pandemic on European regions where tourism is important (as discussed in the Eighth Cohesion Report: EC 2022c) and now the rush to recovery are conditions that do not necessarily favour cooperation over competition.

On the other hand, the distribution of competences between the different levels of government varies remarkably among the Member States. Even a very basic institution of tourism policy, the DMO (destination management organisation), is realised in different countries in very different ways concerning their structure, powers, legal status, financial sources, geographical scope etc. Of course,

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[31] https://living-in.eu/

[32] See the five workshops organised in May – July 2021 on the initiative of Amsterdam and Florence (https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/events/b2g-data-sharing-cities-series-5-workshops)

[33] The "alliance" includes Eurocities and the following cities: Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Bologna, Bordeaux, Brussels, Cologne, Florence, Frankfurt, Helsinki, Krakow, Lille Metropole, Lisbon, Madrid, Milan, Munich, Paris, Porto, Prague, Utrecht, Valencia, Vienna, and Warsaw.

[34] https://interreg.eu/interreg-highlights/how-interreg-supports-europes-ambition-for-a-sustainable-and-competitive-tourism-sector/

[35] https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/catalogue-of-projects-outputs-and-policy-targets/

[36] https://projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/digitourism/

[37] https://interreg-maritime.eu/web/smart-tourism

[38] https://www.adrioninterreg.eu/. See in particular: Selimovic 2020; Catellani et al 2021.

[39] https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/slides

[40] https://www.culturaltourism-network.eu/interreg-iiic-ectn.html

[41] As suggested by the Report on the Transition Pathway for Tourism: "In cross-border areas, such as in coastal communities, it could be beneficial to develop a comprehensive strategy at a sea basin or at a macro-regional level, aligned with the existing initiatives, which would support the coordination and collaboration of stakeholders across borders. It could be appropriate for EU regions such as the outermost regions to develop such cooperation for sustainable tourism strategies together with third countries and territories in their direct geographic proximity" (European Commission 2022b, p. 8).

this must be taken into account, e.g., in considering the actual transferability of the proposed actions and regulations[42].

Finally, effective multi-level governance is also not favoured by the complementary nature of EU jurisdiction on tourism, notwithstanding the significant effort made in collaboratively co-designing the transition strategy and the promising perspectives opened by this achievement.

Second, there are still several **inclusivity challenges** that concern actors who are likely to be underrepresented unless a positive approach is adopted in the design and management of partnerships. These challenges concern:

- **small and medium sized cities**: the problem of reaching out to a wider circle of stakeholder was clearly outlined in the assessment of previous partnerships (EC et al 2019) and has been the object of specific prescriptions in the MaWP. However, the specificity of the tourism ecosystem could not facilitate improvements in that direction, as the disparity with the larger metropolitan areas in terms of resources and knowledge assets combine with the specificity of both challenges and opportunities. Therefore, a specific effort seems to be required, also through the active support of national associations;

- among SMEs, the **new enterprises**: while new enterprises may be weaker in voicing their role and needs, their sole in sustaining the transformation of the tourism ecosystem, and in particular its green and digital transitions, is crucial;

- **labour**, in order to advance in the direction of "fairness and equality in tourism jobs" (topic 24 of the Report on the "Transition Pathway for Tourism": EC 2022b, p. 26).

A.4 Policy environment

Overall, the alignment of this theme with the strategic priorities of the EU is unproblematic, at least as far as the general principles and lines of actions are concerned. This is true both for the strategies guiding the twin (green and digital) transitions and for those shaping the EU urban policy according to the idea of a "transformative power of cities" based on the "integration of the social, ecological and economic dimensions of sustainable development" (New Leipzig Charter, 2020, section B.2). However, focusing on more specific issues may require closer attention to constraints and opportunities arising from specific EU policies.

Regarding the environmental impact of the tourism industry, tourism has been interested by several European initiatives also in the past. A major programme such as LIFE, funding projects on environment and climate action, does not have specific tourism focus, but tourism activities may benefit from this funding. This is relevant in particular for "tourism projects supporting the circular economy, energy efficiency and renewable energy measures, as well as climate neutrality"[43].

The pandemic crisis has brought more specific attention to this ecosystem. The EC communication updating the 2020 New Industrial Strategy states that:

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[42] To this aim, a useful tool is the CCRE-CEMR Country Comparison Tool (https://terri.cemr.eu/en/country-profiles/country-comparison-tool.html).

[43] https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/funding-guide/life-programme_en

> *"**Priority should be given** to the ecosystems and sectors that face the most important challenges meeting climate and sustainability goals and embracing the digital transformation, and whose competitiveness depends on this, such as energy-intensive industries (including the chemical and steel sectors), and construction, as well as **to sectors heavily affected by the crisis, which benefit from accelerating their twin transition in order to boost their recovery (such as tourism and mobility)"** (COM(2021) 350 final, p. 16 – emphasis added).*

The Report on the Transition Pathway for Tourism recalls that

> *"several policy strategies highlight the objectives of the European green deal, which also should be followed by the tourism ecosystem" (EC 2022b, p. 10).*

More specifically, urban tourism is engaged by strategies and related targets concerning sustainable mobility for climate-neutral cities, the energy and resource efficiency of buildings, the reduction of the environmental footprint of hospitality and all tourism services ("This includes halving the amount of residual (non-recycled) waste by 2030 and reducing food waste, single-use plastics, air pollutants, and water pollution while increasing water efficiency"), and the improvement of water efficiency (EC 2022b, p. 11).

The same Report, under "topic12: Research and innovation projects and pilots on circular and climate friendly tourism", emphasizes the relevance of tourism in the Research & Innovation policy initiatives ("although tourism operators typically are not investing in R&I in other related sectors") and in particular the synergies with Horizon Europe on calls such as: "Climate-neutral and smart cities mission; Climate, energy and mobility cluster; Food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment cluster; Culture, creativity and inclusive society cluster" (EC 2022b, p. 14).

The Report also reminds that "the European Green Deal calls for a standard method to substantiate green claims, and the circular economy action plan commits that 'the Commission will also propose that companies substantiate their environmental claims using Product and Organisation Environmental Footprint methods' (PEF and OEF)". Topic 13 suggests "promoting the use of the PEF and OEF methodology and the development of sectorial category rules for the tourism ecosystem" (EC 2022b, p. 15).

Regarding the contribution of tourism to local socio-economic development, the EU has repeatedly affirmed the strong link between the green and digital transitions and the competitiveness of European industry:

> *"Europe needs an industry that becomes greener and more digital while remaining competitive on the global stage. This will help transform and grow*

The competitive sustainability approach has been integral to the EU tourism policy for years. The 2007 Agenda already stated that:

Over the years, the EC has set up a support system for the tourism businesses that covers some of the main issues relevant especially for SMEs. The following table 12 summarises the support given by the EC.

Table 12 - EC support for tourism businesses

Guide on EU funding for tourism	information on sources of EU funding of interest to the European tourism industry
Tourism Business portal	information on digital technologies and innovative business practices
Professional Skills	support to strategic cooperation in skills development, by stimulating investment and a better use of existing funding opportunities
ICT for tourism businesses initiative	actions to boost the competitiveness of small businesses in the European tourism sector, integrate them into global digital value chains, and improve their ability to create more jobs
Enterprise Europe Network	Support to the Tourism and Cultural Heritage Group
Taxation in Tourism	Study on the impact of taxes on competitiveness in tourism

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/support-business_en

With regard to the issues related to professional skills, tourism is one of the six sectors where the "Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills" initiative has been experimented[44]. Under the Erasmus+ programme a project called "Next Tourism Generation Alliance" (NTG, https://nexttourismgeneration.eu/) was financed[45] to be followed by a new consortium named

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[44] https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/support-business/skills_en

[45] The project ends June 2022.

"Pantour". NTG plays a key role also in the Pact for Skills for the tourism ecosystem, a flagship action under the new European Skills Agenda launched in 2020 with a strategic mid- and long-term approach. The Pact for Skills initiative brings together a wide variety of stakeholders committed to reskilling and upskilling the European tourism workforce and promotes the establishment of skills partnerships at national, regional and local levels[46].

The present EU policy environment is providing some very significant inputs on highly relevant issues in the management of urban destinations. Special attention is deserved by:

- the New European Urban Mobility Framework (COM(2021) 811)[47],
- the programme Creative Europe 2021-2027 (EC 2021a) [48],
- the short-term rental initiative launched in 2021 by DG GROW "to facilitate the development of a responsible, fair and trusted single market for STRs services, as part of a balanced and sustainable tourism ecosystem" (EC 2021b)[49].

A.5 Regulatory environment

The regulatory environment of the new partnership is likely **to become more complex and articulated in the perspective of the green transition**. This trend is likely to challenge the swift transposition of new rules in the national regulatory frameworks and their actual implementation by destinations and businesses.

According to the Report on the Transition Pathway for tourism, a number of legislative initiatives will characterise the green transition also of tourism in the years ahead. They are summarised in the following table 13.

Table 13 – Main legislative initiatives relevant for the green transition of tourism

proposing binding EU nature restoration targets as announced in the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030
proposing binding targets to reduce food waste across the EU as announced in the farm to fork strategy
implementing Directive (EU) 2019/904 on single use plastics, making all plastic packaging reusable or recyclable by 2030, proposing measures to restrict intentionally added micro plastics and unintentional release of micro plastics as called for in the circular economy action plan
meeting the objectives of the Urban Waste Water Treatment directive as regards collection and treatment, taking into account the ongoing revision of the directive
proposing harmonised rules on the uptake and supply of sustainable aviation fuels
proposing rules for the use of renewable and low-carbon fuels in maritime transport

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[46] The Pact for Skills is accompanied by a Charter outlining a shared vision from industry, social partners, vocational education and training providers, national, regional and local authorities as regards quality training (https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=25214&langId=en#:~:text=The%20Pact%20for%20Skills%20in,the%20green%20and%20digital%20transition.)

[47] This document states that "tourist attractions should be encouraged to develop mobility management plans and actions that promote low- and zero-emission means of mobility such as public transport, active mobility or shared mobility"

[48] See also the 2022 Annual Work Programme for the implementation of the Creative Europe Programme, indicating sustainable cultural tourism as annual priority (European Commission 2021b).

[49] https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13108-Tourist-services-short-term-rental-initiative_en

boosting a smart and sustainable TEN-T network with long-distance, night and cross-border passenger rail services
revising the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive to require all new buildings to be zero-emission as of 2030, and new public buildings as of 2027
amending the Renewable Energy Directive to increase the current target of 32% to 40% of renewable energy sources in the EU's overall mix by 2030
revising the Energy Efficiency Directive to nearly double the annual energy savings obligations for EU countries from 2024 to 2030
revising the Regulation (EU) 2019/631 on CO2 emission performance standards for passenger cars and vans

Source: European Commission (2022b). *Transition Pathway for Tourism*, p. 6

Regulatory efforts are to be expected also in **other areas** impacting on urban tourism, namely multimodal travelling[50] and digital interoperability (EC et al 2021). A potential impact may also be expected by the implementation of the "accessibility act"[51].

The global tourism industry will be certainly affected by two important forthcoming acts such as the Digital Services Act (COM(2020) 825 final) and the Digital Markets Act[52] (COM(2020) 842 final). In this new scenario it could be important to investigate the **specific effects at the city scale** where the role of digital platforms has been historically very relevant.

On the other hand, the effort of the Commission to simplify EU laws, as supported by the high-level expert group of the "Fit for Future Platform"[53], deserves to be carefully monitored. It concerns wider issues such as environment, climate action, food, but also more specific ones, like the Directive on package travel and linked travel arrangements.

A.6   Existing identified gaps and recommendations

Concerning the environmental impact of the tourism industry, gaps and recommendations have emerged regarding several issues. Among them:

- mobility with high carbon-footprint for tourism transport, including multimodal digital mobility services (SWD (2021) 164, p. 13);

- climate change, namely with regard to the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage (a topic that is mandated to the OMC experts' group on Strengthening Cultural Heritage Resilience for Climate Change, established in October 2020);

- the use of EU green public procurement criteria covering food services, road transport and public spaces (EC 2022b, p. 11);

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[50] See the Report on the Transition Pathway for Tourism, Topic 2: Regulatory support for multimodal travelling (European commission 2022b, p. 6).

[51] Directive (EU) 2019/882 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on the accessibility requirements for products and services

[52] In presenting the proposal on the Digital Markets Act, Executive Vice-President Vestager made explicit reference to the role of Booking.com (https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_20_2450).

[53] https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/evaluating-and-improving-existing-laws/refit-making-eu-law-simpler-less-costly-and-future-proof/fit-future-platform-f4f_en

- the tracking of food waste in the hospitality industry (SWD (2021) 164, p. 20);

- the incorporation of sustainability criteria in the quality rating of tourism establishments (SWD (2021) 164, p. 15);

- the opportunities linked to social innovation regarding "reliable local supply chains, including local renewable energy projects" (C 2022b, p. 14);

- the adoption by tourism companies, including SMEs, of the available EU tools to support the efforts to improve the environmental performance and to certify the achievements, such as EMAS and Ecolabel (EC 2022b, p. 11). A significant contribution may also come from the JRC ongoing project of establishing an inventory and mapping of existing eco-labels for tourism accommodation establishments. The results of this study are due by July 2022. Outputs of this work are two-fold: an inventory of existing eco-certification schemes and their main characteristics; and a geographical database with the number of listings per eco-certification scheme at the highest possible spatial resolution.

Concerning the contribution of tourism to local development, the Report on the Transition Pathway has emphasized, among others:

- the need to ensure the wellbeing of residents, namely by providing "services that benefit both residents and visitors" (Topic 26: EC 2022b, p. 29);

- the opportunities linked to the development of sustainable mobility in the smart and climate-neutral cities, with reference to the 2021 new urban mobility framework (COM(2021) 811 final);

- the need to focus on the challenges and opportunities of digitalisation of tourism services (topic 9) and in particular:

"creating data sharing practices and agreement models that comply with the necessary privacy rules and respect the legitimate commercial interests of each partner. These practices need to be aligned with the upcoming Data Act. From technological point, it is also possible to create services and platforms in which ownership is shared and not in the hands of a few" (p. 12)[54];

This must be related to other initiatives, namely to the 2020 COSME Call "Boosting the uptake of digitalisation, innovation and new technologies in tourism through transnational cooperation and capacity building" (COS-TOURINN-2020-3-04);

- the regulatory needs emerging from the pandemic experience[55]:

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[54] Cf. also:

- Topic 15: R&I for digital tools and services in tourism and Topic 16: Support for digitalisation of tourism SMEs and destinations,
- SWD(2021) 164, p. 16 ff.;
- the Action Plans of the Partnership on Digital Transition (UAEU 2018a) and of the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage (action n.07) (UAEU 2020)

[55] See also: COM(2020) 550 final. The Commission provided guidance to member States on resuming tourism services (C (2020) 3251 final) and on the progressive restoration of transport services and connectivity (C (2020) 3139 final).

> *"The COVID-19 crisis has revealed vulnerabilities in the current regulatory framework in terms of responding to unexpected events that result in mass cancellations of services booked by passengers and package travellers. Vulnerabilities were also revealed in the ability to adapt to additional requirements on the ground of public health (e.g., checking test results, various certificates), which challenged the "seamless travel", which was previously considered a given in the EU. Other regulatory needs relate to the tools available to monitor the ecosystem and its progress towards the twin transition and long-term resilience" (EC 2022b, p. 7);*

- the need for action with regard to skills in tourism (topic 22)[56], with a special focus on digital skills (topic 16)[57] and on the up- and re-skilling on sustainability (SWD (2021) 164, p. 15):

> *"Tourism employees from front-office and back-office level to top management positions in tourism need to improve their knowledge, skills and sustainability competences. Skills and competences will increase the industry's innovative capacity and indirectly raise the profile of tourism as a quality employer" (Knezevic Cvelbar et al 2021, p.27);*

- the need to raise awareness about the importance of accessibility ("tourism for all"[58]) and improve the visibility of accessible tourism services (topic 25).

A critical issue concerns **short-term rentals in cities**. As mentioned above, this topic has been dealt in detail within the TP on Culture and Cultural Heritage (Strategy 1: Rebalancing and managing touristic flows for a more sustainable management of heritage). Action n.01 "Regulating phenomena of sharing economy" (Action Leader: URBACT) has aimed at tackling problems of gentrification and touristification of cities, based on the idea is that sustainable tourism requires "an autonomous, cohesive and structured framework within the EC" and demanding "stricter regulation", differentiations between short-term rental types of services, users and providers, and improved data sharing with cities "to aid oversight and overall to address the current gaps in the ability of cities to regulate such platforms (in a fair and balanced manner)" (UAEU 2020, p. 36).

The SME strategy (COM (2020) 103 final) announced that the Commission would look into developing a framework for "responsible, fair and trusted growth" in short-term rentals, as part of "a well-balanced tourist ecosystem", "offering balanced solutions for cities, peer and professional short-

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[56] Cf Action Plan of the Partnership "Jobs and Skills" Action 10: Job-oriented Ecosystem (UAEU 2018b)

[57] "The low level of digital skills among SMEs are a specific barrier to the take-up of new digital solutions." The relevance of the development of digital skills in tourism has a high profile also in the wider OECD framework (OECD 2021a and 2021b).

[58] See https://www.accessibletourism.org/

term rental providers and platforms, while benefiting in particular small and medium-sized firms". The Commission published an online consultation on this initiative in September 2021[59].

Concerning the congestion of tourism flows in cities, a wide variety of specific features and tools have been discussed worldwide during the past years (UNWTO 2019). In Europe a forthcoming study "Unbalanced tourism growth at destination level – root causes, impacts, existing solutions and good practices" will give us a fresh view on stakeholders' attitude towards this problem[60]. So far, the main issues are raised by action n.07 of the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage. According to its Action Plan, "one of the main challenges is working on methods and tools to balance touristic flows between major touristic hubs and less visited sites and cities" (UAEU 2020, p 15) with a focus on the lack of data to know, monitor and manage the phenomena (UAEU 2020, p. 73 ff.). The potential threats of "excessive tourism pressure" are also considered by the ICOMOS Recommendations on "quality principles" for EU-funded interventions with potential impact on cultural heritage (ICOMOS 2020). Another area of interest concerns cruise tourism because of its fast growth and peculiar impact on coastal cities (SWD (2021)164, p. 13).

A.7 Trends and evidence about EU cities

The desk analysis on which this preliminary assessment is based confirmed the extremely wide range of issues that are included in the "sustainable (urban) tourism" theme. The Report on the Transition Pathway for Tourism (EC 2022b) is the most updated and consistent review of all these issues. Nonetheless, by comparing the documents' base retrieved for the EAA task and the evidence about urban tourism in Europe from the media and scholarly work, some issues appear to be "missing", either because their relevance seems only partially perceived (and the possible impact of EU policies underestimated) or because at the present stage the awareness of the specific constraints of the city / tourism dimension has not been fully perceived. In the opinion of the author of this report, a tentative list of these could include:

- the **use of land** and the **use of public spaces**, also as a consequence of the pandemic (increased need for spaces as a consequence of social distancing practices);

- the **excessive specialisation in tourism of some territories** (raising issues of vulnerability but also about the quality and sustainability of development paths)[61];

- **product innovation** as a response to changes in urban tourism demand ("urban travellers" vs. "urban tourists") combined with the opportunities provided by the twin transition[62]. Product innovation may contribute to dealing with seasonality problems by developing off-season tourism as well as to redirecting flows outside congested areas towards alternative attractors.

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[59] https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13108-Tourist-services-short-term-rental-initiative_en

[60] Within this project's framework, the specific issues concerned urban destinations were discussed in a workshop in Vienna (20/21.01.2022). Cf. also an earlier study on the overtourism phenomenon requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism in 2018 (Peeters et al 2018).

[61] Tourism moderation policies can be detected witinh the regional innovation strategies of some European regions, e.g., the Canary Islands.

[62] Cf. the Report on the Transition Pathway for Tourism, Topic 20: Awareness raising on changes in tourism demand and the opportunities of twin transition for tourism (European Commission 2022b, p. 24 f.).

A growing (but still insufficient) attention has been given to the potential role of **new entrepreneurship and tech start-ups** as a dynamic factor of innovation in the tourism ecosystem. This raises the issue of the possible support to them by public bodies or public-private partnerships. Relevant experiences, ranging from challenges and competitions to incubators and accelerators) are taking place in several European countries[63] and on a global scale (UNWTO 2021).

The Report on the Transition Pathway for Tourism also calls for attention on the relationship between sustainable urban tourism and the **renovation of the physical assets**, namely of tourism-related buildings such as hotels, stations, airports, restaurants etc. with an impact in terms of increased "accessibility, attractiveness and functionality" (EC 2022b, p. 18). In this respect the New Bauhaus Initiative (COM(2021) 573 final) appears especially relevant[64], as it highlights a number of initiatives that, while not necessarily focused on the tourism dimension, are clearly consistent with a sustainable approach to urban tourism[65].

Undoubtedly, a major and cross-cutting issue concerns **the availability and the appropriate use of data**. The Report on the Transition Pathway for Tourism summarises the main aspects in its Topic 3 "Improving statistics and indicators for tourism", emphasising the need for:

- revising harmonised data collection rules on tourism statistics to include elements on economic, social and environmental sustainability,
- improving access to data for producing official statistics,
- including key sustainability indicators on destination level within the harmonised tourism data collection framework,
- implementing the EU Tourism Dashboard to support follow-up of environmental, digital and socioeconomic aspects of tourism on EU, national and regional levels (EC 2022b, p. 8).

Relevant tools are already available or on the way to full implementation. The most significant one is the forthcoming (and above quoted) EU Tourism Dashboard, a sophisticated online tool, developed by the JRC, to provide visualisations of tourism-relevant indicators relating to policy objectives at the highest possible territorial granularity.

Other interesting tools and studies are also provided or in preparation within JRC. The most significant are:

- the development of regional tourism typologies[66];

- the project on the assessment of the regional tourism vulnerability during the 2020 shock;

- the Inventory and mapping of existing eco-labels for tourism accommodation establishments;

- the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor (https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/cultural-creative-cities-monitor);

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[63] The benchmark experience is the French one: https://www.entreprises.gouv.fr/fr/tourismedeveloppement-et-competitivite-du-secteur/france-tourisme-lab-le-reseau-national. Other initiatives have joined the CAST network, co-financed by COSME(2018-2021) (https://castnetwork.eu/).

[64] See also the parallel results of the OMC group on high-quality architecture and built environment

[65] Cf. https://prizes.new-european-bauhaus.eu/finalists

[66] Batista e Silva, F., Barranco, R., Proietti, P., Pigaiani, C., & Lavalle, C. (2021). A new European regional tourism typology based on hotel location patterns and geographical criteria. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *89*, 103077.

- the streamlining of Tourism Satellite Accounts to assess economic impacts of tourism in Europe;

- the assessment of impacts of climate change on regional tourism demand.

These integrate other tools that have been available for some years, such as the European Tourism Indicators System for sustainable destination management – ETIS (https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/indicators_en) and the Global Destination Sustainability Index (https://www.gds.earth/).

Regarding the critical issue of short-term rentals, data on the occupancy of tourist accommodation are now available thanks to an agreement between the most important global platforms (Airbnb, Booking, Expedia Group and Tripadvisor) and Eurostat[67].

Other sources provide information that is relevant to urban tourism in the EU:

- concerning transport, an additional database is TRIMIS, a repository of transport innovation measures, including a wide range of actions on tourism (https://trimis.ec.europa.eu/). DG MOVE also finances an interesting observatory on urban mobility, ELTIS, that includes information on tourism-related issues (https://www.eltis.org/);

- concerning Research and Innovation, actions, programmes and projects "for and with cities" are mapped on a yearly base (EC 2021c).

Finally, within the ESPON framework several projects (studies, conferences, workshops) are relevant for the discourse on sustainable urban tourism. In our perspective, a particularly interesting work, published in 2020, concerns the carrying capacity methodology for destinations[68].

The development of **data at destination level** has also been remarkable in recent years with some outstanding practices being developed, like the Smart City Control Rooms (experimented in Florence and Venice), often within interregional networks, e.g., the Tourism of Tomorrow Lab[69] or the 6Aika Carbon Neutral Tourism Project developed in Finland[70].

In the framework of the Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL), the EC is engaged in developing a smart communities' dataspace and in supporting smart communities in creating Local Digital Twins[71] and AI-enabled data services in support of the Green Deal. The potential for tourism cities is obvious, although additional efforts could be devoted to understanding the specific needs of those communities, especially when dealing with small and medium-sized cities.

While room for improvements still exists, the recent attention about data is in fact yielding significant results. In the next years it could be important to see how data availability can be operationalised and transformed into actual tools for policy practices.

This may concern the management of flows inside the city or at certain attractions and events, but also decisions of a more strategic kind, like the 2021 decision by the Amsterdam Municipality to identify upper and lower limits for tourist presence in the city (a corridor of 10 to 20 million tourist nights, with 12 and 18 million as signal values).

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[67] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_194

[68] https://www.espon.eu/tourism

[69] https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/digitalisation-and-safety-for-tourism

[70] https://6aika.fi/en/frontpage/

[71] Urban digital twins are the virtual representation of a city's physical assets, processes and systems.

Data and substantial information are also relevant when provided to the final consumers to support their responsible behaviour and address their preferences to sustainability-oriented providers. A good example could be the Think Sustainably app launched in Finland in 2019[72].

Finally, the EC has also been engaged in or has supported a number of initiatives aimed at **showcasing and supporting local practices** in sustainable tourism. The most relevant are:

- EDEN – "European Destinations of Excellence"[73],

- the European Capital of Smart Tourism, since 2018 (table 14)[74];

- the ECTN Cultural Tourism award, since 2014, by the European Cultural Tourism Network (ECTN) in partnership with Europa Nostra, the European Travel Commission and NECSTouR[75].

Table 14 – European smart tourism awards

Award / Year	2019	2020	2022
European Capital of Smart Tourism	Helsinki (FI) Lyon (FR)	Gothenburg (SE) Málaga (ES)	Bordeaux (FR) Valencia (ES)
Sustainability award	Ljubljana (SI)	Gothenburg (SE)	-
Accessibility award	Málaga (ES)	Breda (NL)	-
Digitalisation award	Copenhagen (DK)	Ljubljana (SI)	-
Cultural Heritage & Creativity award	Linz (AU)	Karlsruhe (DE)	-
+ shortlisted cities		Bratislava (SK) Bremerhaven (DE) Nice (FR) Ravenna (IT) Torino (IT)	Dublin (IE) Florence (IT) Ljubljana (SI) Palma (ES) Venice (IT)

Additional relevant awards are the following:

- the European Capitals of Culture[76],

- the European Green Capital[77],

- the European Capital of Innovation[78],

- the EU Access City[79],

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[72] https://www.myhelsinki.fi/en/think-sustainably

[73] the initiative ended in 2011, but funding continued through COSME: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/eden_en

[74] https://smart-tourism-capital.ec.europa.eu/ . See also the "compendium" of the best practices 2019 - 2020 (Scholz & Friends 2020).

[75] https://www.culturaltourism-network.eu/award-2021.html

[76] https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/culture-in-cities-and-regions/european-capitals-of-culture

[77] https://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/index_en.htm

[78] https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-prizes/european-capital-innovation-awards_en

[79] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1141

- the European Heritage Awards[80].

All together these awards provide a valuable knowledge base of good practices that could be taken advantage of. The Report on the Transition Pathway for Tourism indicates the opportunity to "support networking and best practice sharing by award-winning cities in Europe on smart tourism, culture, sustainability, innovation, accessibility and European heritage" (EC 2022b, p. 25). Furthermore, to assist the implementation of the Transition Pathway for Tourism, DG GROW will launch a collaboration platform to support access to resources, best practices, and community creation

An additional (and only partially explored) source of interesting practices are the **consortia financed by the COSME programme**. The 2019 call for proposals 'Boosting sustainable tourism development and capacity of tourism SMEs through transnational cooperation and knowledge transfer' (COS-TOURCOOP-2019-3-01) co-financed six projects with 52 partner organisations in 18 countries. 32 other projects were financed by previous calls since 2011[81].

A.8   Themes and municipalities in relevant EU programmes

In this paragraph we re-ordered some of the available information about the tourism-related projects and networks in relevant EU programmes:

- table 15 classifies the content of the selected projects and networks from UAEU, UIA, Urbact and Horizon 2020 along the proposed articulation of the "sustainable urban tourism" theme (table 5);

- table 16 positions along the same lines the municipalities participating to the relevant projects / networks from UAEU, UIA and Urbact;

- figure 5, based on the data of Annex 1, classifies the tourism-related strategic priorities of first generation RIS3 according to the concerned policy domain (JRC classification).

Table 15 – Themes of selected tourism-related projects and networks under EU programmes

	Environment	Development	Unbalanced growth
UAEU		TP "Culture and Cultural Heritage"	
UIA	BRICK-BEACH - Artificial regeneration of urban beaches with eroded recycled aggregates		
	A2UFood - Avoidable and Unavoidable Food Wastes: A Holistic Managing Approach for Urban Environments		
	UFIL - Urban Forest Innovation Lab		

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[80] https://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/

[81] https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/transnational-products_en

	Environment	Development	Unbalanced growth
Urbact	Tourism Friendly Cities - how tourism can be made sustainable in medium-sized cities		
	BeePathNet Reloaded - urban environmental, biodiversity and food self-sufficiency challenges linked to urban beekeeping	Interactive Cities - how digital, social media and user generated content can improve today's urban management in European cities	
Horizon 2020	CHARMED- Characterisation of a Green Microenvironment and to Study its Impact upon Health and Well-Being in the Elderly as a Way Forward for Health Tourism	INNOVATE - The innovation journey of tourism entrepreneurs: evidence from the UK and (ES), and policy implications	RIGHTS UP - The Right to the City and the Ambivalence of Tourism: A Comparative Approach to Media Discourses and Social Movements' Dissent in Venice, Amsterdam and Barcelona
	WeCENT - Weather, Climate and ENvironmental information for Tourism	WomENt - Women's journey through entrepreneurship in the tourism industry	Living in the Media-Analysing the Impact of Media Tourism on Locals' Identities and Sense of Belonging
	UrBAN-WASTE - Urban strategies for Waste Management in Tourist Cities	YouthExistInTourism - Youth negotiation of tourism-based employment in Goa and Lisbon	
		Be.CULTOUR - Beyond CULtural TOURism: human-centred innovations for sustainable and circular cultural tourism	
		SmartCulTour - Smart Cultural Tourism as a Driver of Sustainable Development of European Regions	

Table 16 – Municipalities participating to selected tourism-related projects and networks under EU programmes

	Environment	Development	Unbalanced growth
UAEU		Alba Iulia (RO), Berlin (DE), Bordeaux (FR), Espoo (FI), Florence (IT), Jurmala (LV), Katowice (PL), Kazanlak (BG), Murcia (ES), Nagykanizsa (HU), Úbeda (ES)	
UIA	Vélez-Málaga (ES), Heraklion (EL), Cuenca (ES)		
Urbact	Genoa (IT), Braga (PT), Cáceres (ES), Druskininkai (LT), Dubrovnik (HR), Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (IE), Krakow (PL), Rovaniemi (FI), Venice (IT)		
	Ljubljana (SI), Cesena (IT), Amarante (PT), Bydgoszcz (PL), Nea Propontida (EL), 12th District of Budapest (Hegyvidék) (HU)	Genoa (IT), Palermo (IT), Varna (BG), Alba Iulia (RO), Debrecen (HU), Tartu (EE), Ghent (BE), SemaEst Paris (FR), CLLD Network - Lisbon (PT), Murcia (ES)	

Figure 5 – Policy domains concerned by tourism-related strategic priorities of first generation RIS3

(Number of occurrences)
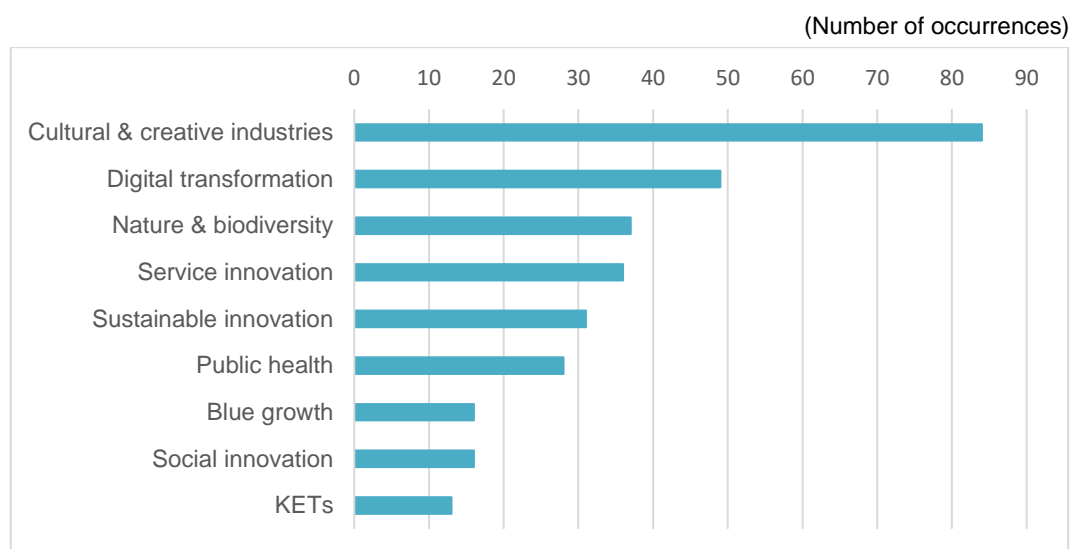
Source: Annex 1

B. Recommendations

B.1 To interpret and focus the thematic scope of the subject

According to the earlier assessment of the UAEU, while "the high degree of flexibility and experimentation that characterised the first phase of the UAEU was necessary to get the TPs 'off the ground'", "the balance needs to shift towards greater clarity and transparency, even if this is at the expense of a certain amount of flexibility" (European Commission et al 2019). Of course, flexibility remains a guiding principle in the design of new TPs, but the issue of "clarity" is of utter importance in the case of sustainable urban tourism.

In Section A of this Report, the complexity and multi-dimensionality of sustainable tourism was repeatedly emphasized. This is not a merely descriptive consideration, but one with important practical implications. "Sustainable tourism" is an umbrella concept within which a wide variety of policy objectives, tools and actors can be included. Within the EU agenda this corresponds to an equally wide variety of processes, that are presently at different stages and are based on different levels of EU powers. Therefore, it could be useful **to adopt a working definition of sustainable urban tourism** in order to enable a well-structured and consistent approach by proponents.

In the design and management of actions this search for a new balance between flexibility and focus may concern the thematic scope of a TP "sustainable tourism" in three ways.

First, the design of the actions should assure the achievement of **a balanced focus on the three pillars (Better Regulation / Better Funding / Better Knowledge).** This could help in overcoming the prevalence of the Better Knowledge pillar that has characterized the previous TPs and the tendency to even increase such prevalence in the succeeding waves. What is at stake is the ability of the UAEU processes to really impact on the context of urban tourism and, notwithstanding the relevance of knowledge exchange on certain issues, more engaging actions are likely to make a greater difference.

Second, it appears to be important that **the actions' added value is made explicit**, either by framing them in the current and prospective EU agenda and policymaking and legislative processes or by exploring emerging issues in the tourist eco-system. The previous analysis suggests that some thematic fields provide a potentially more favourable ground in this respect, as summarized in table 17. This is just a tentative list, that is of course open to revisions and integrations. The call could require that the proposed TP provides **an evidence-based assessment of the relevance of each action**.

Table 17 – Potential thematic fields emerging from the EAA

	Thematic field	*Why*
Better Regulation	Short-term rentals	- a critical problem but also an opportunity for urban tourism - a new framework being developed under the SME strategy
	Eco-certifications	- urban tourism is engaged by strategies and targets under the European Green Deal

		- adoption by tourism companies of EU tools can be improved
	Cross-border transportation	- common regulations and standardization of sustainable cross-border transportation means
	Digital interoperability	- a crucial issue to realise "smart city / smart destination" models
	Data collection	- role of private businesses in tourism data collection and growing collective relevance of data for tourism governance
Better Knowledge	Data "smart" use	- capitalising on the efforts by public bodies and private actors to produce data, investigating their integration in the management of destinations
	Tourism congestion strategies	- the state-of-the-art management of cities and areas within cities being confronted with overtourism is constantly evolving through different experimentations and newer implementation of technologies - the post-pandemic scenario appears to be characterized by a resurgence of overtourism problems but also by opportunities
	Collaborative governance of tourism destinations	- networking, good practice exchanges and promotion focused on similar attractors and themes, itineraries, common challenges etc.
Better Funding	Enhanced guide to funding	- a pragmatic and effective approach to funding tourism-related projects whose visibility and accessibility could be improved
	Urban mobility for tourism	- mobility has a major impact on sustainability (e.g., on the management of congestion) - specifying the challenges of mobility on the tourism dimension
	Digital destinations, digitalisation of tourism services	- a crucial issue for the competitiveness of destinations and companies - insufficient development of digital skills for SMEs
	Innovation in tourism (destinations and businesses)	- responding to the emerging trends of post-pandemic tourism, by providing new products targeting "slow tourism", "urban travellers" etc. - opportunities to support implementation of technologies for the green transition - tourism vulnerability and policies for tourism moderation
	New entrepreneurship and technological start-ups	- focus on supporting a dynamic factor in the tourism eco-system, as emerging from national and international cases

Third, an additional attention must be paid to the overlap with actions developed in previous (and still running) TPs. This problem concerns especially (but not exclusively) the TP on Culture and Cultural heritage and two actions:

- action n° 01 (action leader: URBACT) – Regulating phenomena of sharing economy,
- action n° 07 (action leader: City of Florence) – Data collection and smart use applied to the management of tourist flows.

In both cases one could consider two options:

- the opportunity to avoid actions on these subjects: this is justified by the quality of these actions' results and by the need to capitalise them and rather move on to a further stage where the contribution of the TP is integrated in the EU policy processes; or

- the possibility to follow up and expand the work that has been realised so far, e.g., beyond the prevailing reference to cultural tourism or by involving other actors (cities with a different profile of their tourist economy, small and medium-sized cities etc.).

It is therefore important that **any proposal overlapping with previous TP actions and particularly with the above-mentioned ones, clearly states the nature of the expected advancement and/or expansion with respect to the previous work, based on an assessment of its results**. (This assessment may also be critical, arguing the need for revisiting, amending or updating those results.).

B.2   The most suitable form of multi-level cooperation (Partnership/OFC)

The Ljubljana agreement and the WaMP introduced the possibility to consider "other forms of cooperation" (OFC):

> *"for Partnerships it is recommended that all three pillars are addressed while, when focusing on selected pillars, OFC should be the primary approach […] When a more specific and targeted approach is needed, for example when an urban topic requires a quicker response, targeted delivery or a specific focus on one pillar of the UAEU and/or question/issue, OFC can extend opportunities for the UAEU multi-level and multi-stakeholder cooperation besides Partnerships."*

These basic criteria can be applied flexibly as "the DGUM however can decide differently". In fact, the OFC option is intended to provide "room for innovation and experimentation" and the MaWP provides a number of detailed indications and recommendations about its characters and aims.

However, the lack of previous experience with OFC within the UAEU suggests some prudence in pursuing this option. The initiation of an OFC, as indicated by the MaWP, requires "a justified proposal […] explaining also why an OFC is more appropriate than a Partnership".

According to the MaWP, the EAA can recommend the establishment of an OFC. At this stage no such recommendation is made, and **the TP remains as the most appropriate form of multi-level cooperation also in the case of the "sustainable tourism" priority**. Nonetheless, as a complement to the TP, **the OFC option could be experimented in at least two cases**:

- to realise the **capitalisation of the results of previous work by TPs**, by setting up "spin-off projects" that are limited in scope (e.g., pilot implementations of the results of the concerned action; extension of the scope to other actors, such as mall and medium sized cities) and supposed to deliver results in a much shorter time (following the MaWP recommendation of a timeframe "less than 18 months"); and

- to deal with **very specific issues**, that are related to ongoing policy processes and require some experimentation or that show some urgency in the present context, e.g., because of unforeseen and rapidly emerging challenges for the eco-system or because of the timing of related EU policy processes. Some of the topics suggested in table 10 could be dealt with within this framework.

B.3   The timing for successful implementation

It is important to keep in mind the historic moment when this partnership is launched, i.e., in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic crisis, at the restart of the tourism economy in Europe. The level of activity is rapidly reaching the pre-pandemic levels although some important components are still missing, mainly because of the war in Ukraine and because of the delayed reopening of China. Important questions will be dealt with in the next months and years, such as the possible change in consumption patterns, the competitive repositioning of some destinations, the resurgence (with possible variations) of overtourism situations, the reappraisal of the relationship between tourism and (local) economic growth etc. In the longer term, also the coming back of Chinese tourists is likely to present features significantly different from the earlier "waves". The tourist eco-system needs all possible support in managing a phase that is not a mere "back to normal". And such support is needed now.

Timing is very likely to be an important factor for the successful implementation of the new partnership. The MaWP states that "to enhance the impact of the UAEU at the EU level, the UAEU should be better linked with EU agenda setting, policymaking and legislative processes at different levels". It could be useful **to synchronize the delivery of the actions' results with the deadlines of the EU regulatory and policy processes** in order to increase the possibility to be taken into account.

No delays could be allowed for the start of the activities of the new TP. Shorter timeframes than in the past could be required, at least for some actions. The MaWP recommends that the "timeframe for operation of OFC is less than 18 months". Similar timeframes could be recommended for at least some of the actions of a new TP.

B.4   The suggested type of expertise of the members

Because of the heterogeneity of the "sustainable tourism" theme, it is hard to define a priori a one-size-fits-all type of expertise of members. A generic expertise on "sustainable tourism" could not be sufficient. The call could therefore **require showing a clear relationship between the *specific* expertise developed by the member and the *specific* issue or set of issues that motivate the applicant to be part of the TP**.

The call could therefore focus on the following elements as possible selection criteria:

a) the *issue or set of issues motivating the applicant* (such as: problems related to one or more aspect of sustainability in tourism, need for strengthening the competitiveness of the local tourist sector

through higher level of sustainability, opportunity to support a new approach by promoting appropriate regulations or funding at European and national level, etc.). The applicant could then state its expectations with regard to the participation to the TP;

b) the *expertise* acquired in dealing with the above-mentioned issues, as it may derive from current and earlier projects and active participation to networks within EU or national programmes.

Such expertise may concern:

- the management of complex projects, e.g., projects entailing citizens' participation, public-private partnerships, cooperation between different levels of government, cross border cooperation etc.;
- the legal aspects of relevant regulations or of the funding procedures at national and European level;
- the technical and managerial aspects of the specific sustainability issues and policy objectives that motivate the applicant, The latter may include professional qualifications in a very wide variety of fields, such as destination management and marketing, big data, ICTs, mobility systems, smart city / smart destination technologies, eco-labels, waste management, life-cycle management, climate change mitigation / adaptation, energy efficiency, corporate social responsibility, green procurement, environmental management systems, labour relations, education and professional training, entrepreneurship policies, accessibility, social innovation, social media, cultural policies, urban planning, technology transfer etc.

Expertise may be available in-house or through cooperating entities, such as universities and research centres, governmental agencies, public-private partnerships etc. The call could request that applicants assure that throughout the duration of the TP qualified human resources and the necessary financial resources will be engaged in the TP actions, with possible exceptions aimed at facilitating the participation of small and medium sized cities (see below).

Additional requirements may concern the applicants for the coordination role, such as: a wide, inter-disciplinary thematic expertise; a significant expertise in the management of multi-level, multi-country partnerships; an adequate commitment in terms of human and financial resources.

As – in the words of the MaWP - "a balanced and competent representation of urban authorities of all sizes needs to be secured to account for the rich diversity of the urban and regional fabric in Europe", this can also be reflected in the expertise available to the development of the partnership. It could be important **to give value and promote the specific expertise of small and medium-sized cities**. This may require overcoming a common expectation about the transfer of metropolitan "superior" expertise to smaller cities and towns that underestimates the specific character of the latter and that, in some cases, overlooks the opportunity to transfer expertise in the opposite direction.

Expertise is also related to the different tourism profile of potential members. In this respect it could be useful **to assess the diversity of members also based on a typology of tourist areas**, such as the one designed by JRC (and mentioned in section B.2). Reference to available indicators (e.g., the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor) could also be used in order to assess potential members' expertise.

B.5 Potential institutions/stakeholders of interest, relevant and related to the thematic issue, to be involved in the multi-level cooperation set-up

The assessment of the previous TPs stressed the "uneven" level of engagement: "The progress of the TPs relied heavily on a relatively small 'hard core' of active and engaged members". Opinions collected during this EAA confirmed this problem. In some cases, the progressive "disengagement" of some partners was visible. Furthermore, the level of engagement has been, at least partially, determined by the personal commitment of individuals. Realistically this could suggest **that the set-up of the TP recognizes different levels of engagement and prioritises the consolidation of the hard core**. This could be consistent with a greater inclusion of smaller municipalities and other actors, focusing on specific issues and aspects.

A major issue raised in MaWP is the inclusivity of TPs with respect to small and medium-sized cities and towns. Contrary to some perceptions of sustainability as being an issue mostly pertaining to large metropolitan areas, these cities and towns do experiment all kinds of sustainability issues and their integration in the partnership and represent cases of the utmost relevance, often also in terms of good practices.

There are two aspects in this issue.

First, what are the motivations that push a municipality to engage in a UAEU partnership? According to the MaWP, "selection criteria for partners should motivate and encourage small and medium sized urban authorities to get involved in the UAEU multi-level cooperation". Up to now, considering the voluntary character of participation and the absence of funding for the related activities, motivations have concerned:

- the visibility given to some "flagship" policy or project, yielding positive effects on the image of the city,

- the expectation to be influential on EU or national policy processes that are considered strategic for the city, and

- the networking with other cities that would result in increased linking and covenanting capability.

However, these motivations seem unlikely to be sufficient for small and medium-sized cities.

Second, one of the most important criteria for partners' selection has been and still is the "capacity and readiness of partner to dedicate resources". Again, this may be a barrier to municipalities with limited financial and human resources. The MaWP provides some important recommendations in this regard that seem perfectly appropriate to the "sustainable tourism" case: "To ensure more active involvement from small and medium-sized cities and towns, adjusted criteria could be applied during the call:

- The readiness of partner to participate in the technical work with own resources should not be the prevailing criterion (additional support by the European Commission and Member States should be available if needed for small and medium-sized cities and towns);

- Readiness of partner to participate with experience and expertise on one particular aspect of the topic addressed should be sufficient".

Additional recommendations could be the following:

- **to make the active participation of smaller cities an element that is valued in funding procedures under different EU or national programmes**;

- **to provide financial resources to cover current expenses for the participation to the TP activities**, such as travel costs and costs related to language barriers;

- **to support the hiring of junior staff or to finance bursaries or similar grants to involve young graduates, young professionals, post-doc researchers etc. for the time required to perform the activities** (also as an alternative to technical and expert support through consultancy contracts) with the aim of strengthening and consolidating in-house expertise and capacity[82];

- **to actively support** (through the secretariat and/or through mentor organisations) **the acquisition of funds for the realisation of projects (e.g., pilot projects) related to the TP activity** (e.g., from the EIB).

For all cities, motivation to participate could be enhanced:

- by **formalising the role of the TP in the relevant EU policy processes**, both place-based and sectoral;

- by **aligning the activity within the TP with Cohesion policy activities**, e.g., by establishing some kind of priority for actions that originate from TP activity;

- at the time of the call, by sharing **information and evidence from the experience of cities participating to previous TPs.**

With regard to institutional actors and shareholders, the engagement of the DG REGIO is, of course, crucial. **An especially active role could be played by DG GROW, considering its responsibility regarding the transition pathway for the tourism eco-system**. The active participation of relevant sectoral DGs, depending on the thematic scope, will also be extremely relevant.

Until now the **European Investment Bank** (EIB) has been "a disproportionately important player from a European perspective in the urban sector" (Field and Bakker 2020). Every year, the EIB dedicates 20-30% of its lending to urban investments and its relevance for the tourism eco-system is of the greatest relevance[83]. An active involvement in the new TP could be extremely useful in order to identify opportunities for the concrete realisation of projects originated from the TP activities.

Considering local and regional stakeholders, the growing role of **destination management organisations (DMO)** must be noticed, although there is an extreme variety in their institutional nature and patterns of operation (as mentioned in section A.3). Their specialised knowledge and often their ability to effectively represent the local eco-system and to assure governance make them privileged partners of a sustainable tourism discourse.

It could also be interesting to look at **research and higher education institutions**, whose attention towards the issues of sustainable tourism has remarkably increased throughout Europe, first as a consequence of the unprecedented growth of this industry and second in order to contribute to managing the pandemic crisis. Their involvement is also suggested by the relevance of projects financed by Horizon 2020.

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[82] This provision could be integrated into the EUI activities on capacity building.

[83] https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/funding-guide/support-european-investment-bank-eib_en

Finally, **additional participants could be identified based on issues** (e.g., transport authorities, port authorities, environment protection agencies etc.).

B.6   Type of support that will be required for the implementation

Resource constraints (namely: time and funding) have been a major challenge for the TPs. Undoubtedly this is a built-in risk considering the principle of voluntary participation. It can, nonetheless, be moderated. In the previous section some specific suggestions were made to provide a support for small and medium-sized cities.

In more general terms, the provision of assistance by a secretariat is crucial and there is the expectation that this may now be realised within the new European Urban Initiative. The profile of the secretariat could thus evolve from one of technical support to one more engaged in providing substantial contributions to the impact of the TP. Its role could relate to a wide variety of topics, including legal and procedural aspects (where one would expect local authorities to show a lower level of expertise). It could be provided in different formats: expert advice, handbooks and guidelines, training programmes. **Clarity in the secretariat's role and an early communication about the kind of support that will be provided** could be an important element influencing the decisions by prospective members to engage in the new TP.

Outreach and external communication have been a critical, often unsatisfactory feature of present TPs. This could be a matter of greater attention and **a detailed plan for dissemination could be required from the applicants for a coordination role**. **A specific task to support external communication in a more proactive and creative way could also be entrusted on the secretariat with ad hoc resources**, accompanying the dissemination of results via national associations and national contact points.

A **revised and enhanced role of the Futurium platform** could be realised, also considering the opportunity of consolidating and expanding the "Sustainable EU tourism destinations community" (established in March 2022)[84].

Additional support should be provided in order to realise **timely communication about the views and the results of the TP to the Commission and the European Parliament as well as to the national and regional authorities**, making use of available feedback opportunities (such as public consultations), but also with a more proactive attitude, e.g., by monitoring policy processes to whom TPs could provide a valuable contribution.

Finally, there is the challenge of countering the trend to "work in silos" that would be deeply contradictory with the cross-cutting nature of sustainable tourism issues. A different attitude could be visible in the relationship of the TP on "sustainable tourism" with the other new TP on "greening cities", whose subject is vital in the definition of new dimensions of the urban experience in the post-pandemic phase. The technical secretariat could **set up a mechanism of cross-partnership coordination between the new TPs**.

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[84] https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/sustainable-eu-tourism-destinations-community

B.7   Assessment on the opportunity for a Partnership/OFC

The opportunity for a TP on "sustainable tourism" must be evaluated against the background of the extraordinary historic phase that the European tourism eco-system has experienced. Coming from a long period of almost uninterrupted growth and entering what was expected to be a time of continuing development, in just a few weeks European tourism found itself – in the words of a scholar – "at ground-zero".

Urban tourism had been at the forefront of the growth trends, as the multi-faceted urban experience responded to the deepest expectations of the new "post-modern" tourist from both advanced and emerging countries. Because of its international character, urban tourism was also one of the most visible expressions of the globalization process. At the time of the pandemic, however, urban tourism became also the most visible expression of the dramatic downturn hitting the social and economic fabric of cities and of their surrounding regions[85].

"If not now, when?" The year 2022 marks the possible resurgence of urban tourism, but also of its many sustainability challenges and the renewed urgency for a deep reappraisal of the models that had characterized its past growth. It is also the year when the new UAEU priority on urban sustainable tourism is supposed to be designed and establish itself. The implications of this coincidence and the opportunities that it originates cannot be underestimated.

The emphasis on sustainability places the new partnership at the centre of that reappraisal. More than ever, in post-pandemic years, the connection between sustainability and competitiveness will be at the core of strategies for both destinations and businesses.

This is also a unique opportunity to finally define a European dimension of tourism governance. As we know, the nature of an EU role in tourism governance is far from obvious, because of the limited powers of the EU in this field and because of the intensive intra-European competition on tourism markets. The UAEU "light touch" approach (Field and Bakker 2020) and the role attributed to trans-scalar partnerships as soft-planning tools (Purkarthofer 2019; Armondi 2020) are consistent with the collaborative, co-creation and co-implementation method that has been experimented in the process of the transition pathway for tourism. Thus, it is fair to expect that the new TP may actually contribute to the design of a new generation of EU tourism policies.

At the same time, the UAEU promotes a place-based, tailored approach to the challenges of sustainable tourism. Urban tourism and the cities' touristification paths are highly diversified phenomena that rarely lend themselves to generic, vertical solutions. On the contrary, most of the issues mentioned in previous pages need context-specific rather than sectoral decisions. This is consistent with the widespread awareness that, as stated in the "G20 Rome guidelines for the future of tourism", "much practical activity in pursuing sustainable tourism can best be taken at a local destination level, such as in individual cities" (OECD 2021c, p. 17).

Therefore, based on the above-mentioned considerations as well as on the positive feedback received by all kind of potential partners, **this EAA confirms a positive evaluation on the opportunity for a partnership** on sustainable urban tourism.

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[85] Cf. the Eighth Cohesion Report (EC 2022c).

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List of tables and figures

Glossary

CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CF	Cohesion Fund
CoR	European Committee of the Regions
COSME	programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
DG CONNECT	Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology
DG EAC	Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
DG GROW	Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
DG MOVE	Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
DG RTD	Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
DGUM	Directors-General Meeting on Urban Matters
EAA	Ex-ante assessment
EC	European Commission
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECTN	European Cultural Tourism Network
EIB	European Investment Bank
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ESPON	European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion
EU	European Union
EUI	European Urban Initiative
EUKN	European Urban Knowledge Network
JRC	Joint Research Centre
MaWP	Multi-annual Working Programme
OEF	Organisation Environmental Footprint
OFC	Other forms of cooperation[86]
OMC	Open Method of Coordination

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[86] As defined by the Multiannual Working Programme for the UAEU, November 2021

PEF	Product Environmental Footprint
RIS3	Regional innovation strategies (smart specialisation strategies)
SDG	(United Nations) Sustainable Development Goal
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TP	Thematic Partnership
UAEU	Urban Agenda for the European Union
UATPG	Urban Agenda Technical Preparatory Group
UDG	Urban Development Group
UIA	Urban Innovative Action
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
URBACT	European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development

Annex 1: Tourism-related innovation priorities in RIS3

NUTS ID	Region / Country Name	Priority	Policy domain								
			Blue growth	Cultural & creative industries	Digital transform.	KETs	Nature & biodiversity	Public health	Service innovation	Social innovation	Sustainable innovation
PT18	Alentejo	Heritage, Cultural and Creative Industry and Services for Tourism		x			x		x		
PT18	Alentejo	Food & forestry				x	x				x
PT15	Algarve	Maritime acivities	x								
PT15	Algarve	Tourism and diversification into related industries	x	x			x	x	x	x	
ES61	Andalusia	Tourism innovation		x							
ITF4	Apulia	Tourism and heritage		x							
ES24	Aragon	Tourism and leisure					x	x	x		x
EL30	Attica	Culture-tourism-ICT interaction		x	x						
NO041	Aust-Agder	Experience industry		x							
AT	Austria	Service Innovations and Tourism		x					x		
ITH1	Autonomous Province of Bolzano	New technologies for mountain living and production activities					x	x			x
ITH1	Autonomous Province of Bolzano	Strengthening the local production system through ICTs			x	x					
ITH1	Autonomous Province of Bolzano	Healthy living care services and products (Life Sciences)			x	x		x			
ITH2	Autonomous Province of Trento	Technologies, products and services for healthy living		x	x			x			
PT20	Azores	Tourism			x						
ES53	Balearic Islands	Sustainable tourism	x	x	x	x	x		x		x
ES53	Balearic Islands	Wellness Tourism and Quality of Life		x	x		x		x	x	
ES53	Balearic Islands	Tourism Innovation		x	x				x	x	
ES53	Balearic Islands	Cultural Tourism		x							

NUTS ID	Region / Country Name	Priority	Policy domain								
			Blue growth	Cultural & creative industries	Digital transform.	KETs	Nature & biodiversity	Public health	Service innovation	Social innovation	Sustainable innovation
ES53	Balearic Islands	Technologies Applied to Tourism	x		x	x	x				
ES53	Balearic Islands	Services for Tourism Industry		x					x		
DE2	Bavaria	*ICT*			x			x		x	
DE3	Berlin	Healthcare			x	x		x			
DE4	Brandenburg	Healthcare			x			x			
DE4	Brandenburg	Tourism									x
FR52	Brittany	Social innovation for an open and creative society			x	x			x		
NO032	Buskerud	Tourism			x						
ITF6	Calabria	ICTs and new technologies for tourism and cultural industries			x	x		x		x	
ITF3	Campania	ICT and new technologies for architectural legacy and tourism			x	x				x		x
ES70	Canary Islands	Tourism and quality of life			x		x		x		
ES13	Cantabria	Tourism and leisure			x					x	
ES42	Castile-La Mancha	Tourism					x				
ES51	Catalonia	Cultural and Experience Based Industries			x						
DK04	Central Jutland	Tourism			x						
EL12	Central Macedonia	Alternative tourism - transport									x
FI1D5	Central Ostrobothnia	Social innovation for sustainable tourism					x	x	x		x
FR24	Centre	ICT and Services for Heritage Tourism			x						
PT16	Centre	Tourism					x				
RO12	Centre	Balneary Tourism						x			
EL24	Continental Greece	Agrifood and aquaculture	x								x
EL24	Continental Greece	'Experience' industry and tourism			x						
EL43	Crete	Technology and education especially for agro-food and culture and tourism			x						x
EL43	Crete	The agriculture-nutrition nexus									x

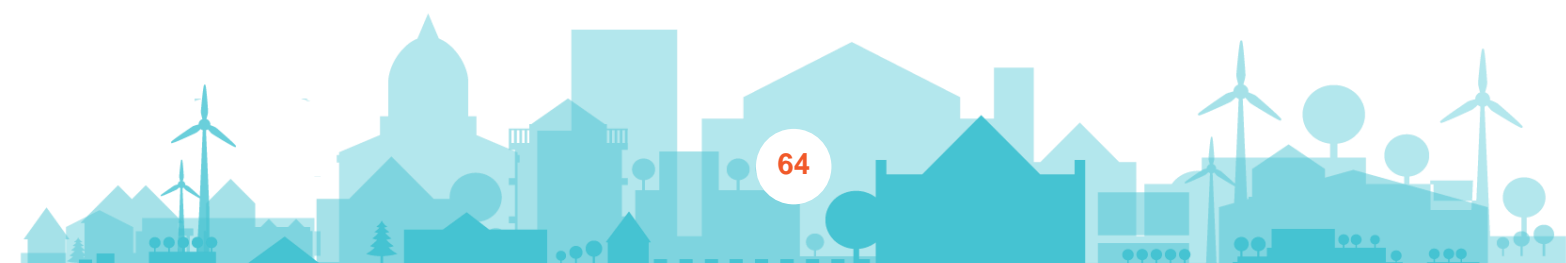| NUTS ID	Region / Country Name	Priority	Blue growth	Cultural & creative industries	Digital transform.	KETs	Nature & biodiversity	Public health	Service innovation	Social innovation	Sustainable innovation
EL43	Crete	The culture-tourism nexus		x					x		
CY	Cyprus	Tourism		x					x		x
CY	Cyprus	Energy production and use, renewables and hydrocarbons									x
CY	Cyprus	Transport, logistics and shipping	x		x						x
CY	Cyprus	Health, ICTs and biomedical applications			x			x			
DK	Denmark	Tourism		x							
EL11	East Macedonia, Thrace	Sustainable tourism					x				x
EL11	East Macedonia, Thrace	Emerging activities		x		x				x	x
ITH5	Emilia-Romagna	ICTs and new technologies for tourism, cultural and creative industries		x	x						
EL21	Epirus	The industry of experience		x							
EL21	Epirus	Agrifood-culture-nutrition nexus		x			x				x
EL21	Epirus	Tourism - "Experience seeking/packaging" / Medical and well-being tourism		x				x	x		
ES43	Extremadura	Agri-food									x
ES43	Extremadura	Tourism		x			x				
NO073	Finnmark	Experience economy		x							
NL12	Friesland (NL)	Tourism		x							
ITH4	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	ICTs and new technologies for tourism and cultural sectors and social innovation		x	x					x	
ES11	Galicia	Tourism and leisure		x							
SE214	Gotland County	Tourism		x							
EL	Greece	Informatics and telecommunication services			x						
EL	Greece	Culture, Tourism and Creative economy		x	x		x		x		

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NUTS ID	Region / Country Name	Priority	Blue growth	Cultural & creative industries	Digital transform.	KETs	Nature & biodiversity	Public health	Service innovation	Social innovation	Sustainable innovation
FR91	Guadeloupe	Information and Communications Technology		x	x						
SE231	Halland County	Tourism and creative industries		x							
NO021	Hedmark	Experience economy		x							
EL22	Ionian Islands	Targeted Tourism Activities - Experience tourism and image projection		x			x				
EL22	Ionian Islands	Blue economy	x								
EL22	Ionian Islands	Tourisme, culture and creative economy		x							
SE322	Jämtland County	Tourism, sports and leisure time		x							
FI1D4	Kainuu	Health and well-being						x	x		
SE213	Kalmar County	Tourism		x							
SE212	Kronoberg County	Tourism		x							
PL61	Kujawsko-Pomorskie	Health and health tourism						x		x	
FI1C4	Kymenlaakso	Digitalisation - Data economy, cyber security and gamification			x						x
FI1D7	Lapland	Advanced Arctic business – foundation for the growth			x	x	x		x		x
ITI4	Lazio	ICT and new technologies for tourism, cultural and creative industries		x	x					x	
ITI4	Lazio	ICT and digital technologies applications (across sectors)		x	x						
PT17	Lisbon	Tourism and hospitality		x			x				
PT17	Lisbon	Cultural and creative industries		x							
PL43	Lubuskie	Health & quality of life		x	x			x			
PT30	Madeira	Tourism							x		
PT30	Madeira	Marine resources and technologies	x								
PT30	Madeira	Quality of agricultural products					x				

NUTS ID	Region / Country Name	Priority	Policy domain								
			Blue growth	Cultural & creative industries	Digital transform.	KETs	Nature & biodiversity	Public health	Service innovation	Social innovation	Sustainable innovation
PT30	Madeira	Sustainability, Management and Maintenance of Infrastructure							x		x
MT	Malta	Tourism product development		x							
MT	Malta	ICT in health, digital gaming, financial services and tourism product development			x	x					
FR92	Martinique	ICT for tourism and health			x			x	x	x	
ME	Montenegro	Sustainable Health and Tourism						x			
ES62	Murcia	Tourism		x							
ES22	Navarre	Comprehensive Tourism									x
NO062	Nord-Trøndelag	Experience economy		x							
NO071	Nordland	Experience economy		x							
PT11	North	Symbolic Capital, Technology and Tourism		x							
EL41	North Aegean	ICT and tourism			x						
EL41	North Aegean	Tourism, culture and nature	x				x				
DK05	North Jutland	Tourism		x			x		x		
RO21	North-East	Tourism		x	x		x		x		
NO022	Oppland	Experience economy		x							
FI1C3	Päijät-Häme	Sports and Experiences		x				x			
EL25	Peloponnese	Agrifood and gastronomy									x
EL25	Peloponnese	Tourism and Culture		x							x
PL32	Podkarpackie	Quality of life					x	x		x	x
PL32	Podkarpackie	ICT - horizontal smart specialisation			x						
PL34	Podlaskie	Medical sector, life sciences and sectors related by value chain						x			
PL34	Podlaskie	Eco-innovations, environmental science and sectors related by value chain					x				x
FI1D2	Pohjois-Savo	Nature tourism and cultural tourism		x	x		x	x			

NUTS ID	Region / Country Name	Priority	Policy domain								
			Blue growth	Cultural & creative industries	Digital transform.	KETs	Nature & biodiversity	Public health	Service innovation	Social innovation	Sustainable innovation
PT	Portugal	Agro-food						x			
PT	Portugal	Health						x			
PT	Portugal	Tourism			x						
PT	Portugal	Blue growth	x								
FR82	Provence-Alpes-Côte d?Azur	Cultural industry, tourism and digital content		x	x						
DK03	Region of Southern Denmark	Tourism		x							
FR94	Réunion	Tourism		x	x		x		x	x	x
FR94	Réunion	Digital economy			x				x	x	
FR71	Rhône-Alpes	Sports, tourism and mountain infrastructure			x		x		x		
ES23	Rioja	Agri-food				x					
AT32	Salzburg	The Creative Economy and Service Innovation		x					x		
ITG2	Sardinia	ICTs and new technologies for tourism and cultural industries		x	x		x		x		
FI196	Satakunta	Blue growth	x			x	x				x
FI196	Satakunta	Experience economy (tourism, culture, events)	x	x	x				x		
UKM	Scotland	Tourism		x							
ITG1	Sicily	ICTs and new technologies for tourism and cultural industries		x	x				x		
SI	Slovenia	Sustainable Tourism and Creative Cultural and Heritage based Services		x	x		x			x	
NO052	Sogn og Fjordane	Tourism		x							
EL42	South Aegean	Agrifood and nutrition/quality-of-life						x			x
EL42	South Aegean	Tourism, culture and 'experience' industry		x							
EL42	South Aegean	Fisheries and aquaculture	x								
FI1C5	South Karelia	PPP models in health tourism.		x	x				x	x	
RO22	South-East	Tourism		x			x	x			
RO31	South-Muntenia	Tourism and cultural identity		x	x						

NUTS ID	Region / Country Name	Priority	Blue growth	Cultural & creative industries	Digital transform.	KETs	Nature & biodiversity	Public health	Service innovation	Social innovation	Sustainable innovation
RO41	South-West Oltenia	Tourism and cultural identity			x		x		x		x
PL33	Swietokrzyskie	Health and health-promoting tourism						x		x	
NO061	Sør-Trøndelag	Experience economy		x							
AT33	The Tyrol	Wellness and Tourism						x		x	
EL14	Thessaly	Agrifood and new tourism	x	x			x				
NO072	Troms	Experience economy and tourism: Traveller life		x							
ITI1	Tuscany	Innovative ICT and photonic applications			x	x					
ES52	Valencia	Tourism and quality of life		x					x		
ITC2	Valle d'Aosta	ICTs and new technologies for manufacturing, tourism and construction sectors			x	x			x		
SE232	Västra Götaland County	Marine Environment and the Maritime Sector	x								
NO042	Vest-Agder	Experience industry		x							
PL62	Warminsko-Mazurskie	Water economy	x					x			
EL13	West Macedonia	Tourism and culture industries		x			x				x
EL23	Western Greece	Eco-tourism					x				
EL23	Western Greece	Tourism and ICT			x	x					
EL23	Western Greece	Tourism-Culture		x							

Source: Eye@RIS3 database, https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/guest/map (data retrieved on April 1st, 2022 - author's elaboration)

Annex 2 List of interviews and meetings

a) list of interviews – phase 1

GENZBIGELYTE-VENTURI Ramune (**DG GROW G1**),

GRADY Anne (**DG EAC**),

NI-EARCAIN Noirin (**DG CONNECT**),

RAINOLDI Alessandro, CURTALE Riccardo, BATISTA Felipe and LAVALLE Carlo (**JRC**),

SZUCS Robert and STANECKI Rafal (**DG MOVE**),

WHITTAKER Leena, DUCIMETIERE Clara, and PROKOPOWICZ Izabela (**DG GROW G3**),

YEROYANNI Marie and DE MENNA Emanuela (**DG RTD**).

b) list of interviews – phase 2

COLITI Laura (**Urbact**),

EHRLICH Klaus (**Next Tourism Generation Alliance**),

FERNANDEZ DIEZ Miguel (**DG EMPL**),

HAGEMANN ARELLANO Laura (**DG REGIO**),

MARTINI Giorgio and GIZDULICH Sandra (**Agenzia per la Coesione Territoriale, Roma**),

REVIGLIO Pietro and HERVE Julie (**Eurocities**),

SCHULTHEISS Jan (**Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat, Berlin**),

TAVERNITI Manuela (**Comune di Firenze**).

The participation to the final meeting of the **Urbact Network "Tourism-Friendly Cities"** (Venice, 31st May 2022) and to the members' discussion on future activities on sustainable tourism is gratefully acknowledged.

c) meetings

2022-02-16	**French Presidency** (FARALDI Luc, ABDI Sabrina), **Eurocities** (REVIGLIO Pietro, BROOKS Heather), **CEMR** (GAUDRON Marine, GRIFFON Axelle), **CoR** (LOPEZ CUTILLAS Gustavo, GRUBIŠIĆ Mario), **DG REGIO** (DE BETHUNE Thomas, MAIER Andreea, LIGER Laura, LAMPRINI ETHRA Lambropolou)
2022-03-16	**UATPG**
2022-04-13	**UDG**
2022-05-18	**UATPG**