

## ORIENTATION PAPER SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PARTNERSHIP



*\*\*\* As the EU Urban Agenda has no legal basis and as participation is voluntary, the actions presented in this Orientation Paper are not compulsory. They are recommendations. \*\**

*\*\* This document reflects the discussion on the partnership's future thematic focus at the time of its meetings in December 2022, February, March and April 2023. Its structure is based on existing orientation papers from previous partnerships. \*\**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION and SUMMARY

This document describes the **objectives** and **working method** of the partnership, including **meetings** in order to prepare, adopt and implement the **Action Plan**.

The working method was agreed and programmed with all interested Partners during the third partnership meeting, which took place on **15 March 2023** in **Turin (Italy)**, in the context of the 5th edition of the Cities Forum.

In order to develop the Orientation Paper, a questionnaire was prepared and distributed to all the Partners, prior to the meeting, with the purpose of identifying the topics (from the EAA themes) that are of key interest for the Partnership, to ensure a tailor-made Action Plan. Since one of the questions in the topic selection questionnaire was related to the expertise of each Partner, this knowledge allowed us to better organize working groups based on both interest and expertise, focused on the 3 EAA themes (environment, development and unbalanced growth). The survey was open from February 21<sup>st</sup> until March 1<sup>st</sup> and collected answers from 21 participants in eleven different countries.

The selected topics, are:

## ENVIRONMENT

Topic 1 - Planning and design of sustainable tourism

Topic 2 - Certifications

## DEVELOPMENT

Topic 3 - Smart cities, smart destinations, digital services

Topic 4 - Culture and creativity

Topic 5 - Post-pandemic changes in tourism markets; diversification of tourism products; seasonality

Topic 6 - Accessibility – Tourism for all

## UNBALANCED GROWTH

Topic 8 - Redistribution of flows

During the meeting in Turin, the Partners worked in thematic working groups, focusing on finding the answers to 3 main questions: What are the Key issues and challenges identified for each topic? (the 3 UAEU pillars), How to tackle each issue identified? (the approach), What specific (key) objectives arise from the WG session?

The collected information was used to set the specific objectives of the Partnership, to find the approach to tackle the most challenging issues and to further identify possible actions to be included in the Action Plan.

**The general objective** of the ST Partnership is raising awareness of, and increasing knowledge about, all connected aspects of sustainable tourism among stakeholders, citizens and politicians, to achieve the full potential of various branches of economy influencing sustainable tourism for a balanced economic development and recovery, social inclusion and social innovation.

**The specific objectives** of the Partnership, as summarized under the 3 pillars of the UAEU are, as follows:

***Better regulation***

Support for a new framework on short-term rentals to be developed under the SMEs strategy; new eco-certifications under the European Green Deal; common regulations and standardization of sustainable cross-border transportation means; digital interoperability and data collection for a tourism governance and for a smart-city model.

### ***Better funding***

There is a clear need to enhance the guide to funding.

Digitalisation and innovation are key concepts for cities to respond to the new challenges emerged by the pandemic (as the so called „slow tourism”), the green transition and the growing need of digital skills for SMEs: for these reasons, a clear focus on supporting new entrepreneurship and technological start-ups in the tourism ecosystem is highly expected. Finally, new financing tools dedicated to urban mobility for tourism are recommended, as mobility has a major impact on sustainability (i.e. congestion of flows).

### ***Better knowledge***

Smarter use of data: how to capitalise the efforts by public bodies and private actors to produce data, investigating their integration in the management of destinations ?

Best practices in the field of tourism congestion strategies: the state-of-the-art management of cities and areas affected by overtourism is constantly evolving through different experimentations; moreover, the post-COVID scenario shows a return of the overtourism problems, but also new opportunities for the cities.

Collaborative governance models of tourism destinations: networking, exchanges and promotion focused on similar attractors and themes, itineraries, common challenges.

This document was edited by the Partnership Coordinators with the contribution of all Partners. This document will be presented at the **Directors General on Urban Matters** in **May 2023** in the context of the **Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union**.

## 2 GLOSSARY

Abbreviation	Meaning
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CF	Cohesion Fund
CoR	European Committee of the Regions
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 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
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
EUI PS	European Urban Initiative Permanent Secretariat
EUKN	European Urban Knowledge Network
JRC	Joint Research Centre
MaWP	Multi-annual Working Programme
OEF	Organisation Environmental Footprint
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
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
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
URBACT	European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development

## 3 PARTNERSHIP COMPOSITION

### 3.1 Partnership members

NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	CITIES (URBAN AUTHORITIES)	EUROPEAN/ NATIONAL CITY UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Ministry of Economics and Communication of Estonia (EE)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Municipality of Genoa, (IT) Coordinator</li> <li>❖ Municipality of Galati, (RO) Coordinator</li> <li>❖ City of Porvoo (FI)</li> <li>❖ City of Venice (IT)</li> <li>❖ City of Šibenik (HR)</li> <li>❖ City of Zadar (HR)</li> <li>❖ Municipality of Heraklion (EL)</li> <li>❖ Municipality of Larissa (EL)</li> <li>❖ Narva City Government, Department for City Development and Economy (EE)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Eurocities (BE)</li> <li>❖ ICLEI European Secretariat (DE)</li> </ul>
EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS	REGIONS	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ European Commission Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO)</li> <li>❖ European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, social affairs and inclusion (DG EMPL)</li> <li>❖ European Commission Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW)</li> <li>❖ European Commission Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA)</li> <li>❖ European Commission Secretariat-General</li> <li>❖ European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MARE)</li> <li>❖ European Commission DG Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC)</li> <li>❖ European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Andalusia Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (ES)</li> <li>❖ Comunidade Intermunicipal da Região de Coimbra - CIMRC (PT)</li> <li>❖ Rhine-Neckar Region Association (DE)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Association for the Promotion of Tourism in Oradea and the Region (Visit Oradea)-APTOR (RO)</li> <li>❖ Diputació de Barcelona (Barcelona Provincial Council) (ES)</li> <li>❖ Fundació Visit València (ES)</li> <li>❖ Ljubljana Tourism (SI)</li> <li>❖ Mirabilia Network (IT)</li> <li>❖ visit.brussels (BE)</li> </ul>

## 4 OBJECTIVES OF THE PARTNERSHIP

### 4.1 Presentation of the issue(s)

The main aim of the Urban Agenda for the European Union is to identify and tackle urban challenges by bringing together Member States, cities, the European Commission and other stakeholders, into a framework for dialogue, finding solutions on policy initiatives that affect urban areas (Pact of Amsterdam, 2016). The Urban Agenda proposes to use a new multi-level, multi-stakeholder working method to better achieve the objectives of the Union and national policy by involving urban authorities in design and implementation phases of policy making.

In 2022 the Directors-General on Urban Matters (DGUM) approved the composition of two new Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU) Partnerships: Sustainable Tourism (ST) and Greening Cities (GC). The ST Partnership has 29 partners, including the Municipality of Genoa (Italy) and Municipality of Galati (Romania) as co-coordinators.

The ST Partnership focuses on the specific issues related to tourism in cities as a crucial component of sustainable development of socio-cultural and urban economies. The Partnership also aims to use a method of collaborative, “co-creation” process. It will contribute to the implementation of the EU Transition Pathway –for Tourism.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, it will coordinate with other ongoing relevant partnerships in order to ensure synergies and avoid overlapping actions.

A Partnership<sup>3</sup> is only successfully functioning once true partnership and trusted relationships are formed. This is why the following elements are deemed important:

**Agreement on vision and objectives** among all Partners.

**High level of commitment** of all members and **ownership** of the Partnership’s work from different players. Strong coordination is obviously important, but coordination also needs to be inclusive and engaging and willing to focus on developing a cohesive approach.

**Clear allocation of roles.** Coordinators should steer the work of the Partnership, while ensuring collaborative work and cooperation among all Members. Dedication and leadership skills of the Coordinators are key to manage the Partnership in an inclusive manner.

**Balance top down and bottom-up coordination.** Having Coordinators providing strategic guidance and direction, while encouraging Action Leaders and other Members to take ownership of the Actions.

**Open dialogue** and a **continuous feedback loop** between Partners, to ensure transparent and constructive exchanges.

**Efficient use of the available resources.** The well-functioning of the Partnership is ensured by an efficient use of the support and resources, made available by the Commission (i.e., support of the European Urban Initiative Permanent Secretariat EUI PS, travel budget and expertise days) as well as by the Partners themselves.

**Clear and sound workplans.** Organise programme management per phase (initiation, implementation, scaling and communication) and carefully designed and well-planned and realistic timelines for the Partnership’s work and activities.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.urbanagenda.urban-initiative.eu/news/approval-two-new-urban-agenda-eu-partnerships>  
<https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/urban-agenda/culturecultural-heritage?language=en>

<sup>3</sup> Discussion paper 1: How to successfully run a Partnership, *Day 1 of the Coordinators’ – Action Leaders’ meeting 2021*.



**A compact set of reinforcing Actions.** Successful Partnerships manage to focus their resources on a concise number of Actions, which are complementary and reinforcing each other.

Sustainable tourism is per se a complex concept. Complexity derives from the coexistence and interaction of different dimensions of sustainability, as well as the complexity of the tourism ecosystem (value chain), 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”.<sup>4</sup>

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 intercultural 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”<sup>5</sup>

The theme of the Partnership is aligned with the strategic priorities of the EU emerging in the time of the post-pandemic recovery. In the framework of the updated EU Industrial Strategy<sup>6</sup>, which highlighted the need to further accelerate the green and digital transitions and increase the resilience of the EU industrial ecosystems, a collaborative process has been launched in June 2021 by European Commission to develop a transition pathway for tourism ecosystem together with stakeholders and Member States<sup>7</sup>. Tourism has been the first ecosystem to be addressed, due to its complexity, its importance in the European economy, as well as serious disruption caused by the pandemic. Local authorities have an important role to play in the implementation of the agreed actions.

In December 2022, the EU Member States adopted Council Conclusions on the European Agenda for Tourism 2030, with a multi-annual working plan and a clear commitment to implement shared goals and concrete actions<sup>8</sup>.

While developing actions under this ST Partnership, Commission initiatives to promote sustainable tourism in cities, such as European Capitals of Smart Tourism should be also considered, in particular the best practices gathered by the capitals<sup>9</sup>.

Urban tourism is contributing to several European Green Deal strategies and climate targets. Concerning the contribution of tourism to local socio-economic development, a competitive and holistic sustainability approach has been integral to the EU tourism policy for years. In fact, significant support for the urban tourism industry comes from EU funding programmes, policy guidelines and legislation, for example from the New European Urban Mobility Framework, the programme Creative Europe 2021-2027, the Short-term Rental Regulation<sup>10</sup> (also a new

<sup>4</sup> Ex-ante assessment of the “Sustainable Tourism” thematic area under the Urban Agenda for the EU. Final Report, Nicola Bellini, 2022

<sup>5</sup> UNEP and UNWTO, 2005, p.11-12

<sup>6</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-industrial-strategy\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-industrial-strategy_en)

<sup>7</sup> See 1.

<sup>8</sup> [New European agenda for tourism - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> [An EU initiative to reward innovative and smart tourism in European Cities! \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> [REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL](#) on data collection and sharing relating to short term accommodation rental services and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1724.

Regulation on short term rental sector, proposed in November 2022). EU Skills Partnership for the Tourism Ecosystem<sup>11</sup> as part of the wider EU Pact for Skills is an important framework in upskilling and reskilling tourism work force. Tourism-related issues are supported by various programmes within the urban policies at EU level, such as the Urban Innovative Actions initiative and is among the topics of the new European Urban Initiative<sup>12</sup>. A complete guide on EU support for tourism ecosystem helps stakeholders identify and access EU funding<sup>13</sup>. The European Commission also published CulturEU<sup>14</sup> funding guide<sup>15</sup>

Tourism has long been identified as one of the *pillars* of an urban policy, as underlined by the findings of the *Culture and Cultural Heritage* Thematic Partnership's Action Plans where tourism is tackled specifically in Action 1 on "Regulating short-term rental platform in cities" and in Action 7 on "Data collection and smart use applied to the management of tourist flows". Thus, analyzing the issues and developing the best approach for each selected topic to reach the best action in terms of sustainable urban tourism requires a place-based approach. From this technique derives the crucial knowledge of specificities that are context dependent. To be able to improve tourism and to make it really sustainable, local actors are compelled to tailor the interventions to the characteristics and needs of each place.

At the same time sustainable urban tourism is related with issues that are originated in a much wider spatial dimension and involve actors operating at a regional, national, European, and sometimes at a truly global scale (e.g., in the case of platforms and of major hotel chains and airlines).<sup>16</sup> Thus, the multi-level governance approach appears to be not only compatible with, but necessary to tackle the multiple issues of sustainable urban tourism.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that if we are looking at sustainable tourism on a global scale, it is easy to see a common European strategy. Starting from these shared thoughts, we can develop a further analysis that will foster the implementation of accurate actions in the field of sustainable tourism.

The ST Partnership will focus on different themes related to sustainability in tourism such as its ECONOMIC, SOCIAL and ENVIRONMENTAL impacts:

- i. the ENVIRONMENTAL impact of the tourism industry in cities: climate change, circular economy, redistribution of flows etc;
- ii. the contribution of tourism to urban ECONOMIC development: post pandemic recovery, mobility, short term rentals, digitalisation of tourist services, jobs and skills, etc;
- iii. contribution of tourism to SOCIAL development accessibility, social inclusion, relations between residents and tourists in the city centers, etc.

Multi-level governance is essential to tackle all these aspects regarding sustainable urban tourism; Local Authorities, destination management organizations, Regions, Member States, the European Commission, businesses and tourists can stimulate and influence tourism. The ST Partnership will also constantly take into account the results of previous TPs on Digital Transition, Housing, Urban Mobility And Culture And Cultural Heritage.

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<sup>11</sup> [The EU Pact for Skills – Skills Partnership for the Tourism Ecosystem](#).

<sup>12</sup> Background document for applicants, Thematic Partnership Sustainable Tourism , UAEU

<sup>13</sup> [Guide on EU funding for tourism \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/funding/cultureu-funding-guide/>

<sup>16</sup> Ex-ante assessment of the "Sustainable Tourism" thematic area under the Urban Agenda for the EU. Final Report, Nicola Bellini, 2022

The EAA proposes 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.

#### 4.2 Sustainable tourism - Environment sub-theme

Concerning the environmental impact of the tourism industry, gaps and recommendations emerged regarding several issues. The work on this theme will be also based on the “Transition pathway for Tourism” adopted by the Commission in 2020 to help EU industry lead the green and digital transformations.

- sustainable mobility, considering in particular high carbon-footprint of 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 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);
- circularity of tourism services, including reducing waste and food waste in the hospitality industry, water efficiency and sustainable use (TTP, (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).

#### 4.3 Sustainable tourism - Development sub-theme

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

- the need to ensure the well-being 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 creating data sharing practices and agreement models that comply with the necessary privacy rules and respect the legitimate commercial interests of each partner;
- the regulatory needs emerging from the pandemic experience;
- the need for action regarding skills in tourism (topic 22), with a special focus on digital skills (topic 16) and on the up- and re-skilling on sustainability;

- the need to raise awareness about the importance of accessibility and improve the visibility of accessible tourism services (topic 25).

A critical issue concerns **short-term rentals in cities**. The TP on Cultural and Cultural Heritage worked on this topic (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 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)<sup>17</sup>.

#### 4.4 Sustainable tourism - Unbalanced growth sub-theme

Although widely used, over tourism is a relatively new term in the public and academic debate, introduced by the travel website Skift in 2016<sup>18</sup>. It describes to the negative consequences of unbalanced and unmanaged tourism. In recent years, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) also referred to it as “*the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts hereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors’ experiences in a negative way*”. 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.

Building on UAEU Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage Action n.07 ‘Data collection and smart use applied to the management of tourist flows’, actions under the Unbalanced Growth WG will tackle issues such as: developing methods and tools to balance touristic flows between major touristic hubs and less visited sites and cities (operating also at a wider metropolitan area or province level), taking advantage of technological and smart solutions to solve tourism congestion.

The potential threats of “excessive tourism pressure” are also considered by the ICOMOS Recommendations on “European Quality Principles for EU funded Interventions with potential impact upon Cultural Heritage” (ICOMOS 2020<sup>19</sup>). Another area of interest concerns cruise tourism because of its fast growth and peculiar impact on coastal cities (SWD (2021)164, p. 13)<sup>20</sup>.

#### 4.5 Scope of the Partnership

The overall goals for the Urban Agenda Partnerships, as given in the Pact of Amsterdam 2016, are the following:

##### 1. Better Regulation:

###### *Definition of Better Regulation*<sup>21</sup>

*The Urban Agenda for the EU focuses on a more effective and coherent implementation of existing EU policies, legislation and instruments. Drawing on the general principles of better regulation, EU legislation should be designed so that it achieves the objectives at minimum cost without imposing unnecessary legislative burdens. In this sense, the Urban Agenda for the EU will contribute to the Better Regulation Agenda.*

*The Urban Agenda for the EU will not initiate new regulation, but will be regarded as an informal contribution to the design of future and revision of existing EU regulation, in order for it to better reflect urban needs, practices*

<sup>17</sup> Ex-ante assessment of the “Sustainable Tourism” thematic area under the Urban Agenda for the EU. Final Report, Nicola Bellini, 2022

<sup>18</sup> Ali, R. (2016), ‘Exploring the Coming Perils of Overtourism’, Skift, 23-08-2016 (online), available at: [www.skift.com](http://www.skift.com) (07-07-2018).

<sup>19</sup> <https://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/2436/>

<sup>20</sup> Ex-ante assessment of the “Sustainable Tourism” thematic area under the Urban Agenda for the EU. Final Report, Nicola Bellini, 2022

<sup>21</sup> Pact of Amsterdam, Article 5.1

*and responsibilities. It recognises the need to avoid potential bottlenecks and minimise administrative burdens for urban authorities.*

## 2. Better funding:

### *Definition of Better Funding<sup>22</sup>*

The Urban Agenda for the EU will contribute to identifying, supporting, integrating and improving traditional, innovative and user-friendly sources of funding for urban areas at the relevant institutional level, including from the Cohesion policy funds (in accordance with the legal and institutional structures already in place) in view of achieving effective implementation of interventions in urban areas. The Urban Agenda for the EU will not create new or increased EU funding aimed at higher allocations for urban authorities. However, it will draw from and convey lessons learned on how to improve funding opportunities for urban authorities across all EU policies and instruments, including cohesion policy.

## 3. Better knowledge:

### *Definition of Better Knowledge<sup>23</sup>*

*The Urban Agenda for the EU will contribute to enhancing the knowledge base on urban issues and exchange of best practices and knowledge. Reliable data is important for portraying the diversity of the structures and tasks of urban authorities, for evidence-based urban policymaking, as well as for providing tailor-made solutions to major challenges.*

*Knowledge on how urban areas evolve is fragmented, and successful experiences can be better exploited. Initiatives taken in this context will be in accordance with the relevant EU legislation on data protection, the reuse of public sector information and the promotion of big, linked and open data.*

Ex Ante Assessment (EAA) of the “Sustainable Tourism” thematic area under the Urban Agenda for the EU was conducted in early 2022, as a process introduced by the “Ljubljana Agreement” of November 2021.

The EAA was launched in January 2022 as an exploratory process, to deploy a pragmatic, effective and result-oriented approach aiming at increasing the impact of future UAEU deliverables<sup>24</sup>. The EAA has the purpose to optimise focus, timing and activities of the multi-level cooperation, as well as safeguard suitable level of partners’ thematic and procedural expertise.

As per the Pact of Amsterdam 2016, each Urban Agenda Partnership is tasked to prepare an action plan which contains actions (and possibly recommendations) that aim at addressing issues in the specific thematic area and that are meant to be implemented after. The actions target one (or more) specific pillar(s) of the UAEU on Better Regulation, Better Knowledge and/or Better Funding and are addressed at the local level, national level and/or EU level. As for the type of actions, these may include the development of (new) data and indicators, guidance documents and handbooks, roadmaps/strategies, the design of a new governance structure, impact assessments, policy recommendations, toolkits etc.

<sup>22</sup> Pact of Amsterdam, Article 5.2

<sup>23</sup> (Pact of Amsterdam, Article 5.3)

<sup>24</sup> <https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/urban-agenda/news/urban-agenda-eu-ex-ante-assessment>

Sustainable urban tourism requires attention to variables that are specific to urban settings, not with standing the obvious overlap with more general sustainability issues that pertain also to other kind of territories.

As mentioned before, each of the subthemes related to sustainable urban tourism proposed by the EAA include issues relevant to approach the subject that are listed below.

Table 1 - Proposed articulation of the “sustainable urban tourism” theme<sup>25</sup>

Sub-themes	Issues
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	The reduction of environmental footprint
<i>The environmental impact of the tourism industry in cities</i>	Climate change
	Land use
	Circular economy; circular, zero-pollution and climate-neutral practices and services
	Good practices; certifications
	Planning and design of sustainable tourism
<b>DEVELOPMENT</b>	Vulnerability and resilience
<i>The contribution of tourism to urban socio-cultural and economic development</i>	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 as driver of ‘sense of place’
	Alternative hospitality; short-term rentals
	Smart cities, smart destinations, digital services
	Labour, green sustainable labour, up-and re-skilling, entrepreneurship
	Digitalisation of tourist services - data
	Accessibility – Tourism for all
	Social inclusion
	Social innovation
<b>UNBALANCED GROWTH</b>	Redistribution of flows
<i>The congestion of tourism flows in cities (overtourism)</i>	The limits to growth
	The impact of cruise ports
	The policy toolbox; good practices

<sup>25</sup> Ex-ante assessment of the “Sustainable Tourism” thematic area under the Urban Agenda for the EU. Final Report, p. 17

## 4.6 Topics selected

The STP will focus on the specific issues related to tourism in cities as a crucial component of sustainable development in urban economies. It will be based on a working definition of sustainable tourism (following the recital 27 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund). The Partnership also aims to use a method of collaborative process, followed by a “co-implementation” phase, as described in the Transition Pathway for Tourism.

In order to find the answer to the question “What is the particular goal of the Sustainable Tourism Partnership to work on in the upcoming years?”, and starting from the topics under the three sub-themes identified and listed in the EAA, each partner, thanks to a questionnaire created by the coordinators.

After the presentation of questionnaire results (Annex n.4), the partnership worked on the final selection of the topics to work on.

The topics selected are:

- Environment sub-theme, 2 topics: *Planning and design of sustainable tourism*, *“Certifications”*.
- Development sub-theme, 4 topics: *“Smart cities, smart destinations, digital services”*, *“Culture and Creativity”*, *“Post-pandemic changes in tourism markets; diversification of tourism products, seasonality”*, *“Accessibility – Tourism for all”*
- Unbalanced Growth sub-theme, 1 topic: *“Redistribution of flows”*

During the “in person” meeting in Turin on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023, the ST Partnership worked analysing from multiple points of view, the topics following a structure that helped them to identify the key issues and challenges for each topic, to brainstorm methods of tackling those issues to determine the best approach and, in the end, to highlight the specific (key) objectives.

## ENVIROMENT

- ❖ Topic 1 - Planning and design of sustainable tourism

### Key Issues

- Lack of data at local level for a better planning and management; many times data is only available at national or regional level or is not analysed. Data without proper analysis can lead to wrong conclusions and decisions;
- Auditing, monitoring and benchmarking performances is an important part of planning and designing: to implement this activity, a system of indicators for sustainable tourism at destination level (ETIS –European Tourism Indicators System) is a good tool and could be used;
- Governance and stakeholder engagement are key elements for an efficient planning and design of sustainable tourism; generally, tourism actors want to be more sustainable and environmentally friendly, but lack knowledge, coordination and resources.



- A crucial issue is also how to realize the transition from Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) to Destination Marketing and Management Organisations (DMMOs)
- The activities of training and capacity building of all relevant stakeholders has an important role in planning and design
- Lack of innovative knowledge Increased circular, zero-pollution, climate neutral practices among providers and users of services
- Interdependence of environment and people, between locals and travellers.

#### Challenges:

- Establishment of mechanisms for collecting data GDPR compliant
- Use of data for management purposes
- Current importance of the big data management
- Methods of analysing and comparing data
- Raise awareness of stakeholders
- Increase private-public partnerships (PPP)
- Raise awareness among key actors of tourism as a transversal issue and a transversal department within local authorities; increase collaboration with related departments such as urban planning, transport, culture.
- Increase capacity building and funding allocations
- Increase the cooperation with innovation and technological stakeholders and providers

#### Objectives:

- To align the objectives with the three main topics covered by the TPW under the GREEN TRANSITION framework: Topic 6: Sustainable mobility; Topic 7: Circularity of tourism services, and Topic 8: Green transition of tourism companies and SMEs.
- Identify how the Urban Agenda Partnership is contributing to the specific topics of the European Tourism Transition Pathway (TTP)
- Identify key stakeholders and engage those stakeholders which are using CCLD and co-creation tools.

#### ❖ Topic 2 - Certifications

#### Key Issues:

##### Certifications<sup>26</sup>

- Lack of baseline studies about certifications
- Lack of repository about certifications schemes (see note above)
- Use of certifications just for green washing practices
- Considering the JRC ongoing project of establishing an inventory and mapping of existing eco-labels for tourism accommodation establishments. What could be the next step? The creation of a similar repository for restaurants, Travel agents, or pathway? How to bring the knowledge of the inventory to travel companies and travellers?

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<sup>26</sup> The EAA indicates that: "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."

- Certifications for sustainable tourism destinations

#### Challenges:

- Baseline of certifications and harmonization
- Share information about certification process and practices
- Learn from good practices and shared initiatives
- A systemic view of the tourism ecosystem functioning in cities, mapping and engaging all actors naturally impacted by tourism

#### Objectives:

- To build a matrix with the selected priorities and with better governance, funding & knowledge according to the competences of urban authorities (local, regional authorities and functional areas)
- Operational tasks for defining the most suitable issues to become actions
- take advantage of already existing collections and databases

## DEVELOPMENT

- ❖ Topic 3 - Smart cities, smart destinations, digital services

#### Key Issues

- GDPR and digital communication
- Need to balance availability and conservation of cultural heritage sites
- Accessibility for all needs to be guaranteed

#### Challenges:

- Legislation on personal data management, how to make it secure, to protect it (cyber security)
- Digital tours/visits, using the added value of metaverse apps to sell the touristic product
- To take the NECSTOUR<sup>27</sup> approach “Better places to live, Better places to visit” to inspire a sound development of tourism policies

#### Objectives:

- To gather data for tourism management by creating exceptions to access personal data to enable tourist forecast
- To understand to which extent we can have a dedicated framework related to tourism

- ❖ Topic 4 - Culture and creativity

#### Key Issues

As stated in the EAA, in Culture and Cultural Heritage TP, 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.

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<sup>27</sup> NECSTouR is the Network of European Regions for Sustainable and Competitive Tourism. Based in Brussels, it develops Interregional Projects to improve Tourism Governance in Europe (<https://necstour.eu>)

At the same time Culture and Creativity are both a foundation of tourism, and a driver of local development; almost half of tourism in Europe is motivated by Culture and Cultural Heritage. Following the recommendation of the EAA to provide a follow up of the work of CCH TP, our partnership will approach this topic in strict connection with the work done and the actions implemented by the CCH TP.

Furthermore, the work of CCH TP and the actions presented and implemented will be constantly considered while approaching most of the topics selected from the EAA.

- ❖ Topic 5 - Post-pandemic changes in tourism markets; diversification of tourism products; seasonality

#### Key Issues:

- The pandemic and its consequences, obliged to review all the aspects related to tourism market and products from a Human-centred approach that includes the co-creation and co-development of services, products and policies
- The diversification of products must be based also to the local community empowerment, on new forms of collaborative inter-organisational relationships and structures among public, private and other sectors (e.g., volunteers, associations)
- After the pandemic, the so called “City breaks” and proximity destinations/choices became an important part of the tourism offer
- While designing and creating diverse products and content for different audiences, (families, students, elderly, etc) it is important to use various media and channels of communication, considering the different groups and the different levels of digital awareness/knowledge, and how travellers “research and choose” destinations post-pandemic
- Regarding seasonality, one of the highlighted aspects is the need to create new experiences, built-up on events spread throughout the year, including local stakeholders/partners/businesses/creators, and promote local production and traditional craft that can provide sustainability to the local economy.
- As mentioned in the EAA, Short-term rentals in cities has been dealt in detail in the Culture and CH partnership; its output on this matter must be considered as a starting point to work on regarding the diversification of tourism and seasonality.

#### Challenges:

- To produce a real and innovative diversification of tourism products it is important to “think outside the box” while deciding what can be a new tourism product, who to involve, how to deliver them to potential tourists
- Create all-year events to tackle seasonality
- How to create a network of cooperation at local level as the quadruple helix aimed to a common vision of tourism
- Involvement of content creators directly being aware of local production and traditional creators (including material and immaterial heritage)
- Need to build trust especially between local government and citizens/residents
- Involve unexpected stakeholders in the discussion and co-creation of a diversification of products (shadow stakeholders, age groups that are not heard and that are in the fringes of discussion)

#### Objectives:

- Local authorities to become the facilitators and the link among stakeholders, tourism industry, local communities.
- Involvement of decision-makers and political leaders in the process for long-term planning of the diversification of tourism products to stress the importance of a sustainable tourism

#### ❖ Topic 6 - Accessibility – Tourism for all

##### Key Issues

- Clarifying the meaning of the term “accessibility” that can be diverse, whether it refers to infrastructure (e.g., buildings, transportation, mobility, public spaces, work/recreation spaces, etc), circumstances (e.g., temporary, permanent, physical, mental, social, economic, etc).
- It’s important to take into account the relevant EU and international legal framework (European Accessibility Act and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, of which the EU and all MS are state parties), which aims to improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services, by removing barriers created by divergent rules in Member States. Inside the Act, the list of services and products include computers and operating systems, ATMS, ticketing and check-in machines, smartphones, TV equipment, access to audio-visual media services, services related to passenger transport, banking, e-books and e-commerce, as well as particular attention to the build environment.
- A public consultation (with deadline on the 5<sup>th</sup> May) has been created on a **proposal for a European Disability Card** in view of facilitating the mutual recognition of disability status across the Member States.
- Accessibility is also connected with the flow of information not only relevant to visitors but also newcomers/residents (e.g., bus schedules, working hours, activities, etc), and content (e.g., depending on interests, ages, solitary/family/groups audience, digital competence, etc).
- With the term “tourism for all” it is highlighted the fact that we need to take into consideration that locals can also be “tourists” in their city
- Adaptation of infrastructure (hard and soft) and digital tools and knowledge (how to access it online or on site)

## UNBALANCED GROWTH

#### ❖ Topic 7 - Redistribution of flows

##### Key Issues:

- Redefinition of the relationship between tourists and residents
- Social and territorial cohesion related to redistribution of flows, seasonality, and contribution to sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) of the territory, mainly for and small and medium sized cities.
- Lack of professionalism of people working in tourism – need of specialized training, access to information and exchange with other professionals and destinations

- Strategic and effective involvement of relevant stakeholders – better coordination and cooperation among different actors and levels of government in the field of tourism (tourism governance)
- Decrease concentration of tourist flows: widening the impact of tourist flows in main cities into other nearby municipalities or territories (discover more than a city, discover the region)
- Data management about tourist flows – how to get forecasts; developing digital skills to manage this data

#### Challenges:

- Create a one-stop-shop for good practices (centralized and streamlined) on the basis of existing sources
- Accessible funding opportunities, with special focus on small and medium sized cities and destinations. A special focus should also be on developing functional regions, to strengthen their role as coordinators/facilitators between bigger and smaller cities, urban and rural municipalities.
- Participatory / bottom-up approach in stakeholder involvement - running surveys with relevant stakeholders (companies, hospitality, NGOs, citizens/residents). Strengthen alliances among the different actors involved promoting common projects (maybe in the frame of the Action Plan is possible to identify or to push some pilot projects forward)
- The regenerative perspective for tourism development applied to redistribution of flows
- Establish a destination Status Quo / Baseline Methodology to determine the saturation state of a particular destination. This is essential to define what number of tourists is acceptable for a community
- Connection with the 'smart destination and digital services' strand of work - as data monitoring and management will be a key factor for controlling tourist flows.

#### Objectives:

- Collect more data on tourism (at NUTS3/4 level), capitalization on existing data to come up with a strategy that can be streamlined across the partnership for the sustainable development community, while taking into consideration the cross-border comparability of data.
- Define a local tourism ecosystem
- Better knowledge – identify existing sources and make them available to all the professionals at local level or small destinations. Based on this identification, mapping de gaps to be filled in
- Better funding – think on new calls addressed to small and medium sized cities, to functional regions or destinations with less resources (economic and human) to apply than big destinations; design and promote training for applying to these funds
- Design specific tools or support to small and medium sized municipalities making them more competitive in relation of sustainability and digitalisation. For example, develop an early warning tool for destinations to prevent over tourism;

## 4.7 General objective of the Partnership

The aim of the TP ST is to enable municipalities, Member States, EU institutions and interest groups, NGOs and partners from the industry to work together on an equal footing to find solutions that improve the management of the historic built environment of European cities, promote culture, and preserve the quality of urban landscapes and heritage.

In line with the work of the Commission on better regulation, the Partnership will lay out an Action Plan aimed at a more effective and coherent implementation of the existing EU strategies in and for cities. Additional focuses include making it easier to access EU funding, promoting combined financing from EU funds (better funding), improving the knowledge base on urban issues and improving the exchange of best practices (better knowledge).

General objective of the ST Partnership is raising awareness of, and increasing knowledge about, all connected aspects of sustainable tourism among stakeholders, citizens and politicians, to achieve the full potential of various branches of economy influencing sustainable tourism for a balanced economic development and recovery, social inclusion and social innovation.

## 4.8 Specific objectives of the Partnership

The Partnership aims at involving urban authorities and all relevant stakeholders in achieving better regulation, better funding and better knowledge. This is based on the following considerations, as stated in Pact of Amsterdam:

- EU legislation is to a large extent implemented in urban areas and has direct and indirect implications for urban authorities, with the latest EU level nature legislation including specific and legally binding targets for cities. EU legislation sometimes has conflicting impacts and its implementation at local level can be difficult. Therefore, EU regulation should anticipate and prevent these difficulties;
- Urban authorities are among the key beneficiaries of EU funding. Access to existing funding is however sometimes administratively burdensome. The Urban Agenda for the EU aims to improve accessibility and coordination of existing funding possibilities and to contribute to their simplification;
- Knowledge on how urban areas evolve is fragmented and successful experience can be better valorised, diffused and exploited. The Urban Agenda for the EU therefore intends to enhance a better urban policy knowledge base and the exchange of good practice.

Sustainable urban tourism is positioned at the crossroad of at least three major policy areas within the European Union, as in the EEA

- The whole set of strategies that are designed to guide the green and digital transitions;
- The policies designed for cities and urban development;
- The tourism policy

The complexity and multi-dimensionality of sustainable tourism is a clear evidence: 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 such a complex framework and a large number of topics that would be addressed, these are the potential specific objectives of the Partnership:

### **Specific objectives better regulation**

Support for a new framework on short-term rentals to be developed under the SMEs strategy; new eco-certifications under the European Green Deal; common regulations and standardization of sustainable cross-border transportation means ; digital interoperability and data collection for a tourism governance and for a smart-city model.

### **Specific objectives better funding**

There is a clear need to enhance the guide to funding. Digitalisation and innovation are key concepts for cities to respond to the new challenges emerged by the pandemic (as the so called „slow tourism”), the green transition and the growing need of digital skills for SMEs: for these reasons, a clear focus on supporting new entrepreneurship and technological start-ups in the tourism ecosystem is highly expected. Finally, new financing tools dedicated to urban mobility for tourism are recommended, as mobility has a major impact on sustainability (i.e. congestion of flows).

### **Specific objectives better knowledge**

Smarter use of data: how to capitalise the efforts by public bodies and private actors to produce data, investigating their integration in the management of destinations ? Best practices in the field of tourism congestion strategies: the state-of-the-art management of cities and areas affected by overtourism is constantly evolving through different experimentations; moreover, the post-COVID scenario shows a return of the overtourism problems, but also new opportunities for the cities. Collaborative governance models of tourism destinations: networking, exchanges and promotion focused on similar attractors and themes, itineraries, common challenges.

## **4.9 Cross-cutting issues**

The following cross-cutting issues have been considered:

- Good urban governance;
- Urban-rural, urban-urban and cross-border cooperation;
- Sound and strategic urban planning;
- Integrated approach;
- Innovative approaches, , including social innovation approaches;
- Impact on cultural and societal change, including behavioural change;
- Challenges and opportunities of small- and medium-sized cities;
- Urban regeneration;
- Adaptation to demographic change;
- Availability and quality of public services of general interest;
- International dimension (Habitat III and the Sustainable Development Goals).

## 5 FUNCTIONING

### 5.1 Working arrangements

According to the Pact of Amsterdam's provisions and the Urban Agenda for the EU's Working Programme, the ultimate Partnership's goal is producing and implementing the Action Plan, essential to achieve the three objectives of better regulation, better funding and better knowledge, in line with the Sustainable Tourism Partnership's theme.

Starting from the three main themes indicated by the EEA - Environment, Development, Unbalanced Growth - partners showed interest in intervening in 8 topics, two for Environment and Unbalanced Growth and four for Development. Narrowing and clustering the topics, based on partners' preferences, capabilities and previous expertise matched together, was necessary to optimize the efforts considering limited resources and to ease the upcoming tasks.

Identifying core challenges and objectives is the following step. Highlighting potential EU/national/local bottlenecks together with mapping existing solutions, EU frameworks and initiatives is helpful in defining a realistic and feasible basis to the Action Plan's preliminary version.

### 5.2 Working method

The working method will be organized primarily through physical and online meetings, virtual file storage email exchanges. Survey and questionnaires will be used as additional tools provided for collecting information on topics to tackle, expertise and skills to count on especially in the first phases of networking and team building. Knowing each other and establish mutual bonds between partners is the first essential action, this is why attendance to physical plenary meetings is, again, strongly recommended especially at the beginning. Furthermore, STP coordinators will meet to better organize the work of the Partnership and meetings with the coordinators of the Greening Cities Partnership will be organized to make sure that there are no overlaps among the work done by the two partnerships. EUI PS will follow closely the progress of all partnerships of the Urban Agenda for the EU and indicates where further interconnections with other partnerships exist.

The new 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, as described in the European Commission's 2022 document on the Transition Pathway for Tourism.

A multi-level governance approach appears to be necessary to tackle the multiple issues of sustainable urban tourism and this is confirmed by bottom-up instances of collaboration among a variety of actors.



In order to optimise, the work it's extremely convenient agreeing on only one way of voting (one vote modality used for both plenary meeting and single working groups), assuring representative as well as avoiding obstacles. The TP will use qualified majority vote, with possibly unanimous for the most sensitive and delicate matters. If a partner could not attend a meeting (both online or offline) he/she will have 10 days, after receiving the minutes, to express his/her opinion.

### 5.3 Role of the Partners

A constant and active participation is highly required to all the partners, who have concrete responsibilities and play a key role for the success of the initiative.

Every member is an essential piece in the puzzle, with crucial resources and know-how to share and offer.

Following the Pact of Amsterdam partners should:

- Contribute to the implementation of different actions of the Action Plan;
- Participate in the technical work of the Partnership with own resources;
- Contribute to the Partnership through their own individual expertise but also the wider knowledge of the organisation they represent;
- Assist in the debate about the Partnership within their territory.

Taking part to as many meetings (online and offline) as possible is one of the most priority commitments. Even if the STP is organised in thematic working groups, several topics are inherently cross-cutting and can be tackled by more partners together, as well as a partner can deal with more than one topic, suggesting inputs or previous knowledge.

Each working group is asked to report back to the Partnership all the most relevant progress and improvements upon the field, sharing the minutes of each meetings.

### 5.4 Role of the Coordinators

The role of the Coordinators consists of managing, supervising and directing all the Partnerships's activities, in order to develop, implement and finalize the Action Plan.

Following the Pact of Amsterdam the main tasks of coordinators are:

- Organising the Partnership meetings: preparing the agenda, sending the invitations, providing the meeting rooms (in their Ministry, City Hall, etc.), inviting (external) speakers where appropriate, drafting the minutes, etc.;
- pointing out eventual issues and lacks of expertise or knowledge within the Partnership;
- advising possible solutions or suggesting ways of intervention;
- encouraging contacts with external networks
- in collaboration with the European Urban Initiative Permanent Secretariat EUI PS, keeping a high degree of interaction and communication among partners;

- Participating and contributing to other working groups/ networks
- Organising the work between Partnership meetings (e.g. written consultation, asking for contributions, preparing documents, etc.);
- Coordinating the drafting of the Action Plan;
- Monitoring and reporting on progress (through inter alia the website (see chapter III, paragraph 2 of the Working Programme);
- Coordinating the work (e.g. ensuring that the contributions are prepared on time and at a good quality, mediating if there are different positions with a view to arriving at an acceptable position, etc.);
- Coordinating the communication on actions and results (visibility);
- setting up a mechanism of cross-partnership coordination with other thematic partnerships.

Coordinators are also entrusted with representing all the STP, in particular with the EU third partners and observers and during international forums, conferences or any institutional events. On these occasions, the Coordinators could be asked for reporting backs the Partnership's work progress and promoting additional engagement and stakeholders commitments.

### 5.5 Role of the European Urban Initiative Permanent Secretariat - EUI PS

The main purpose of the European Urban Initiative Permanent Secretariat - EUI PS is to provide support to the Partnership. It is in charge of several tasks and its role could relate to a wide variety of aspects, including methodological, technical and procedural ones. Detailed information about these and their implementation will be offered gradually during the year. These are:

- EUI PS will support the implementation of the UAEU
- EUI PS will offer information, guidance and assistance to the UA EU Partnership Coordinators
- Managing and monitoring all the STP's work, always assisting and advising the Coordinators, especially in the organisation of working groups' meetings and conferences, both in presence and online;
- Supplying general UAEU templates/ layouts
- Regularly updating the structure of the SharePoint platform including documents;
- cooperation with the Coordinators on the STP's mailing list and all important communications;
- Giving access to the SharePoint platforms to the STP's members and partners or observers;
- Sending timely reminders nearby meetings/conferences/deadlines;
- Assuring a direct dialogue among the partners, above all facilitating contacts with third parts;
- Making available additional support, such as files, analysing surveys, reviews and any kind of useful data already stocked and available;
- Establishing contacts with new stakeholders and reinforcing relations with other thematic partnerships;
- Reimburse travel cost issue - The European Urban Initiative Permanent Secretariat EUI PS might provide reimbursement of travel costs, but only in specific cases.

## 5.6 Internal communication

An high level of communication and interaction among partners is assured by the EUI PS and the Coordinators, that will provide updated information in the SharePoint platform, as well as with e-mails, video calls and whatsapp group.

All the relevant documents are stored in the SharePoint folders, which are available/accessible to all the STP's members - from contacts sheet to any other kind of notices.

## 5.7 Working Groups - Themes and Participants:

To optimise the effectiveness of the partnership work and taking into account the high number of partners, the coordinators proposed to set up working groups on specific topics related to sustainable tourism: within the working groups, the comprehensive concept of sustainable tourism will be analyzed around three major themes (Environment; Development; Unbalanced Growth) and a number of issues that are relevant in the current policy scenario, according to the Ex Ante Assessment.

The topics were selected by the Partnership in this initial phase, through an on-line survey and following discussions during the meetings, covering the broad field of sustainable tourism issues for urban policies.

Consequently, during the first in person-meeting in Turin (on 15th March 2023), the results of the survey were discussed and validated by the members and the working groups were created, as in the list here below:

**ENVIRONMENT** - The environmental impact of the tourism industry in cities

One working group, but two different sub-themes:

- Planning and design of sustainable tourism including increased circular, zero-pollution, climate neutral practices among providers and users of services;
- Certifications

**DEVELOPMENT** - The contribution of tourism to urban socio-cultural and economic development

Two working groups:

WG 1:

- Smart cities, smart destinations, digital tourist services;
- Culture and Creativity

WG 2:

- Post-pandemic changes in tourism markets; diversification of tourism products; seasonality
- Accessibility - Tourism for all

**UNBALANCED GROWTH** - The congestion of tourism flows in cities

- Redistribution of flows.

Good practices collection and policy toolbox will be dealt with in a horizontal way, contributing with concrete examples and solutions to the “Better Knowledge” pillar of the UAEU.

The coordination of the working groups will be decided inside the group, with a self-regulation method, and assigned to one of the partners.

The responsibilities of the working group leaders include:

- Organising, preparing and chairing working group meetings (mostly on-line meetings);
- Defining and allocating the work among working group members;
- Reporting on progress towards coordinators;
- Delivering work results according to STP timetable;
- Delivering information via website, articles, etc. ;
- Communicating and exchanging with other UA partnerships.

### **Goals of the Working Groups**

The STP will be inspired by a cooperative and constructive approach in all the phases of the partnership work: for this reason, the working groups will be the real driving force of the STP, where most of the actions for the future Action Plan will be discussed, elaborated and submitted to the rest of the partnership, creating a virtuous cycle of mutual communication and exchanges between the groups and the plenary level.

Draft actions proposed by each working group will be prioritised and selected by the whole Partnership, following a general template to reach an agreement on which actions are most relevant and urgent.

This will ensure that the issues of better regulation, better funding and better knowledge are being tackled consistently throughout the Partnership; each working group will also identify potential bottlenecks and/or transversal issues to be discussed at plenary level or with other WGs, in joint activities.

It will help to focus on additional cross-sectoral issues that need to be further developed such as:

- Good urban governance;
- Urban-rural, urban-urban and cross-border cooperation;
- Sound and strategic urban planning;
- Integrated approach;
- Innovative approaches;
- Impact on societal change, including behavioural change;
- Challenges and opportunities of small- and medium-sized cities;
- Urban regeneration;
- Adaptation to demographic change;
- Availability and quality of public services of general interest;
- International dimension (Habitat III and the Sustainable Development Goals).

Each thematic working group will further specify the sub-theme and research questions, identify the need for specific work and support (by either the Commission, the European Urban Initiative Permanent Secretariat EUI PS or other means), and identify possible activities to be undertaken.

The working groups will report back to the Partnership on their proposals and main outcomes during plenary meetings. The work of each working group will be finalised through a report, which will be included in the Partnership's Action Plan.

Collaboration and exchanges with external key actors and cities will be highly recommended: in particular, during phase 4 of the Work Plan, cities and networks (not STP members) will be invited to Partnership meetings, with the aim to observe and contribute during dedicated peer-review sessions.

#### Current composition of the WGs

ENVIRONMENT	DEVELOPMENT - WG 1	DEVELOPMENT - WG 2	UNBALANCED GROWTH
Diputacio de Barcelona, ES	Mirabilia Network, IT	DG GROW, EU	Andalusia Ministry of Tourism, ES
Municipality of Larissa, EL	JRC, EU	Municipality of Larissa, EL	EUROCITIES, BE
Ministry of Economics, EE	Rhine-Neckar Region Association, DE	Genoa, IT	City of Venice, IT
Andalusia Ministry of Tourism, ES	CIMRC, PT	Rhine-Neckar Region Association, DE	Diputacio de Barcelona, ES
Municipality of Heraklion, EL	City of Porvoo, FI	DG REGIO, EU	Ljubljana Tourism, SI
Visit València	Municipality of Galati, RO	City of Zadar, HR	Visit València
ICLEI Europe	DG EAC, EU	Narva Department for Development and Economy, EE	City of Zadar, HR
DG GROW, EU	Municipality of Genoa, IT		City of Sibenik, HR
	ICLEI Europe, ES		
	City of Venice, IT		
<b>Work Group Leader</b>			
Diputacio de Barcelona, ES Municipality of Heraklion, EL	Rhine-Neckar Region Association, DE		EUROCITIES, BE

## 6 WORK PLAN

Following EEA's recommendations, the delivery of the actions' results should be synchronized with the deadlines of the EU regulatory and policy processes. Most likely, this would guarantee the perfect timing for successful implementation. The most relevant steps are explained in the following overall table of STP phases; they will be punctually developed in the Action Plan. Once concluded and approved, the latter will include all the specific objectives with a more precise timeline. The main deliverables will be outlined in the Action Plan, along with a more extensive and detailed description, following the general EEA framework and DGs guidelines on fundamental features and characteristic of the actions that will be implemented - necessity, visible impact, innovation and "no recycling", feasibility.

In any case, a first provisional prospect of actions and milestones, could be possibly made available once the Orientation Paper will be produced, namely at the end of the Phase 1 - The Orientation Phase. After the initial survey on topics to work on and the consequent brainstorming on themes and challenges/problems required to be deal with, the partners would be capable of outlining and elaborating all the Partnership's objectives together with the final selection of topics.

This will lead the group toward the Phase 2 - The Stocktaking Phase, in which, thanks to analytical studies and investigative and research works, all the potential bottlenecks will be identified, external experts will be invited to support the work of the partnership and possibly there will be connections with EU initiatives and events.

Narrowing the objectives and foreseeing more precise deliverables will be the main goals of the Phase 3 - Selection of Actions and drafting the Action Plan.

It will be followed by the Phase 4 - Collection of feedback, that will consist on internal peer reviews among the partners of STP and peer review with the collaboration of external key actors and experts in order to receive comments, opinions and suggestions eventually to be included in the Action Plan.

### TIMING PROPOSAL

- Presentation of the draft of Orientation Paper, April 2023
- Final version of the Orientation Paper – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023 Stockholm DGUM meeting
- First draft Action Plan, December2023-January 2024
- Final Action Plan, March 2024

Phase 0 Setting up the Partnership	Phase 1 Orientation phase	Phase 2: Stocktaking phase	Phase 3 Drafting the Action Plan	Phase 4 Collection of feedbacks	Phase 5 Implementation of the Action
<p>Kick off Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022</p> <p>Presentation of partners and coordinators</p> <p>Presentation of STP (aim, activity)</p> <p>Tools for the activity</p> <p>Online meeting, with presentation of a first Working plan</p>	<p>1° Physical meeting Turin 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023</p> <p>Presentation of OP index and work method</p> <p>After survey feedbacks, first proposal of selected topics</p> <p>Creation of working groups</p> <p>Identify expertise</p> <p>Exchange with other UA partnerships</p>	<p><b>In depth research &amp;</b> Online meetings for analytical work on selected topics</p> <p>Involvement of external experts</p> <p>Connections with other initiatives and events</p> <p>Working groups: first elaboration of possible actions</p>	<p>Identify bottlenecks in the selected topics</p> <p>Coordination work with Greening cities Partnership</p> <p>Invitation to external key actors to get knowledge and share successful experience</p> <p>Define the building blocks of the Action Plan</p> <p>Identify the Actions in relation to the priorities and the topics</p>	<p>2° Physical meeting</p> <p>Internal partners peer review</p> <p>Peer review with experts and external key actors</p> <p>Agreement of STP on the final version of the Action Plan</p>	<p>Implementation of the actions</p> <p>Experts' sessions on implementation solutions, funding and knowledge</p>
<p><b>Output</b></p> <p>First Definition of partners' common topics</p>	<p><b>Output</b></p> <p>STP survey on EEA topics</p> <p>Working groups</p>	<p><b>Output</b></p> <p>First identification of possible actions</p>	<p><b>Output</b></p> <p>Draft Action Plan</p>	<p><b>Output</b></p> <p>Final Action Plan</p>	<p><b>Output</b></p> <p>Road map for the implementation of the Action Plan</p>

	Orientation Paper				
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## 6.1 Meetings

Depending on how the work, there will be up to 6 partnership meetings (in a physical or hybrid form) with all partners while working on the draft of the Action Plan (first year of the partnership):

- First partnership meeting: 15th December 2022 – online
- Second partnership meeting: 15th March 2023, Turin (IT) – Cities Forum
- Third partnership meeting: 12th April 2023 - online
- Fourth partnership meeting: 3th May 2023 – online
- Fifth partnership meeting: October 2023

Whenever possible, partnership meetings will be linked to relevant European conferences, workshops, thematic events.

Additionally, partners are invited to organize working-groups meetings (in a physical or hybrid form) that can support development and implementation of the Action Plan.



## ANNEX 1 - CONTACT DETAILS OF PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS

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<b>GALATI E-MAIL CONTACTS</b>	<p><a href="mailto:Costea.o@primariagalati.ro">Costea.o@primariagalati.ro</a>  <a href="mailto:irina.isac@primariagalati.ro">irina.isac@primariagalati.ro</a>  <a href="mailto:Carmen.bejan@primariagalati.ro">Carmen.bejan@primariagalati.ro</a>  <a href="mailto:maria.buhociu@primariagalati.ro">maria.buhociu@primariagalati.ro</a>  <a href="mailto:cristi.capetis@primariagalati.ro">cristi.capetis@primariagalati.ro</a>  <a href="mailto:manole.nicoleta@primariagalati.ro">manole.nicoleta@primariagalati.ro</a>  <a href="mailto:vlad.gogoncea@primariagalati.ro">vlad.gogoncea@primariagalati.ro</a></p>
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[Laura.LIGER@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Laura.LIGER@ec.europa.eu) "HERNANDEZ LITTLEWOOD Miguel" <[Miguel.HERNANDEZ-LITTLEWOOD@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Miguel.HERNANDEZ-LITTLEWOOD@ec.europa.eu)>; (European Commission Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy – DG REGIO)

# ANNEX 2 - Questionnaire on topic selection

## Sustainable Tourism Partnership of the UA EU - selection of TOPICS

*The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine what are the topics of interest to the Partnership, so we can focus on those in the development of the Orientation Paper. The first 3 questions will deal with the 3 Themes from the Ex-Ante Assessment.*

1. Name of the Partner filling in the questionnaire

- Municipality of Genoa, IT
- Municipality of Galati, RO
- Andalusia Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, ES
- Association for the Promotion of Tourism in Oradea and the Region (Visit Oradea)-APTOR, RO
- City of Porvoo, FI
- City of Šibenik, HR
- City of Venice, IT
- City of Zadar, HR
- Comunidade Intermunicipal da Região de Coimbra - CIMRC, PT
- Diputació de Barcelona (Barcelona Provincial Council), ES
- Eurocities, BE
- FUNDACIÓ VISIT VALÈNCIA, ES
- ICLEI European Secretariat, ES

- Ljubljana Tourism, SI
- Ministry of Economics and Communication of Estonia, EE
- Mirabilia Network, IT
- Municipality of Heraklion, EL
- Municipality of Larissa, EL
- Narva City Government, Department for City Development and Economy, EE
- Rhine-Neckar Region Association, DE
- visit.brussels, BE
- European Commission Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO), EU
- European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, social affairs and inclusion (DG EMPL), EU
- European Commission Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), EU
- European Commission Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA), EU
- European Commission Secretariat-General, EU
- European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MARE), EU
- European Commission DG Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC), EU
- European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC), EU

## 2. Which topic (of the EAA themes - ENVIRONMENT) are you interested in?

- The reduction of environmental footprint
- Climate change
- Land use
- Circular economy
- Good practices; certifications
- Planning and design of sustainable tourism

6. Do you have any recommended resources or tools that could be of interest to tackle the topics you have selected (eg: title of documents/strategies, case studies, links, etc)?

Yes

No

List resources and tools

3. Which topic (of the EAA themes - DEVELOPMENT) are you interested in?

- 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

**4. Which topic (of the EAA themes - UNBALANCED GROWTH) are you interested in?**

- Redistribution of flows
- The limits to growth
- The impact of cruise ports
- The policy toolbox; good practices
- Product innovation for urban travellers

**5. For what topic(s) from your previous selection do you have (some) expertise and competences?  
Please rank your choices in the comment section, from most to least expertise in the field.**

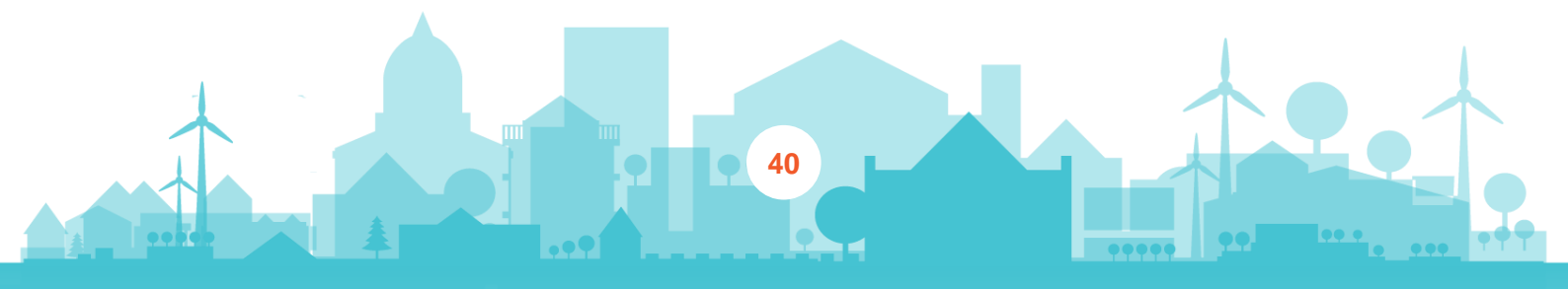
- The reduction of environmental footprint
  - Climate change
  - Land use
  - Circular economy
  - Good practices; certifications
  - Planning and design of sustainable tourism
  - Vulnerability and resilience
  - Post-pandemic changes in tourism markets; diversification of tourism products; seasonality
  - 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
  - Redistribution of flows
-

- The limits to growth
- The impact of cruise ports
- The policy toolbox; good practices
- Product innovation for urban travellers

Please rank your choices (from most to least expertise)

**7. What topic(s) from your initial selection you cannot approach alone (your Organization doesn't have expertise in this area)?**

- The reduction of environmental footprint
- Climate change
- Land use
- Circular economy
- Good practices; certifications
- Planning and design of sustainable tourism
- 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





- Redistribution of flows
- The limits to growth
- The impact of cruise ports
- The policy toolbox; good practices
- Product innovation for urban travellers

DONE



## ANNEX 3 - Table with filled-in questionnaires

Partner	The reduction of environmental footprint	Climate change	Land use	Circular economy	Good practices; certifications	Planning and design of sustainable tourism
Association for the Promotion of Tourism in Oradea and the Region				1	1	1
Narva City Government, Department for City Development and Economy, EE					1	1
Mirabilia Network IT				1	1	1
Ministry of Economics EE	1				1	1
Visit Brussels BE	1	1		1	1	
Andalusia Ministry of Tourism, ES	1	1				1

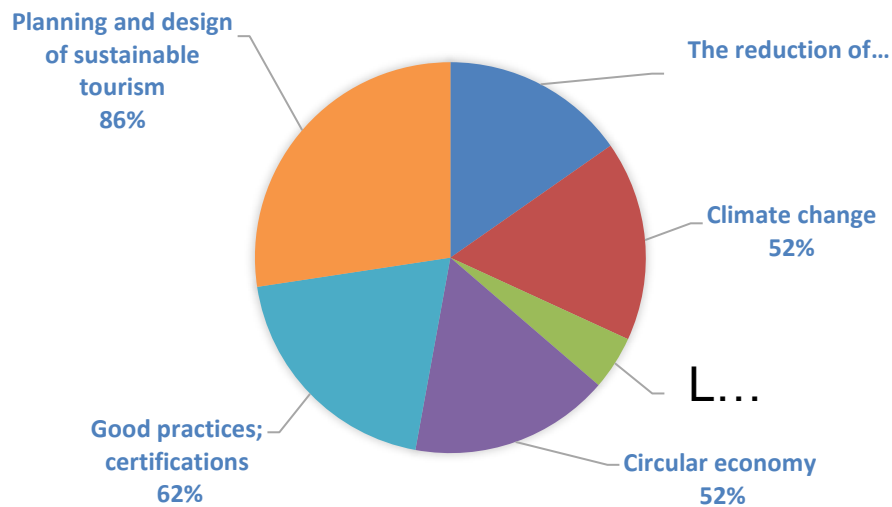


<b>Ljubljana Tourism SL</b>				1		1
<b>Diputacio de Barcelona, ES</b>	1	1		1	1	1
<b>City of Sibenik, HR</b>		1	1			
<b>ICLEI, ES</b>		1		1		1
<b>City of Poorvo, FI</b>					1	1
<b>Genoa, IT</b>						1
<b>DG GROW EU</b>	1	1		1	1	1
<b>EUROCITIES, BE</b>	1			1	1	1
<b>Municipality of Larissa, EL</b>		1				1
<b>EAC, EU</b>						
<b>City of Zadar, HR</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Rhine, Neckar Region Association, DE</b>	1	1			1	1
<b>Municipality of Galati</b>	1		1	1		1
<b>FUNDACIÓ VISIT VALÈNCIA, ES</b>	1	1		1	1	1
<b>CIMRC, PT</b>		1			1	1
NO of votes	10	11	3	11	13	18
%	48	52	14	52	62	86

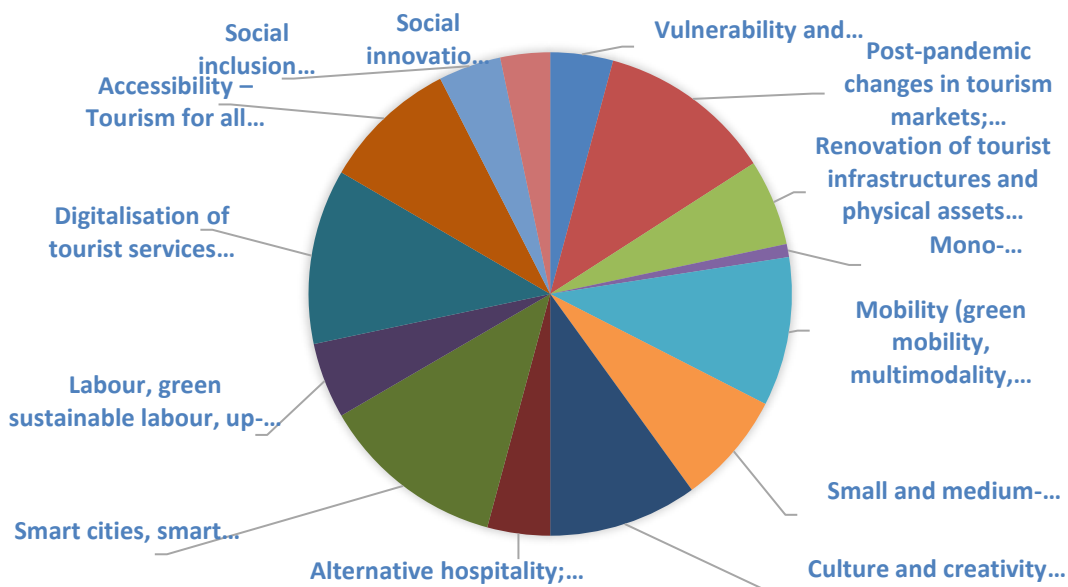


## ANNEX 4 - Selection of topics analysis

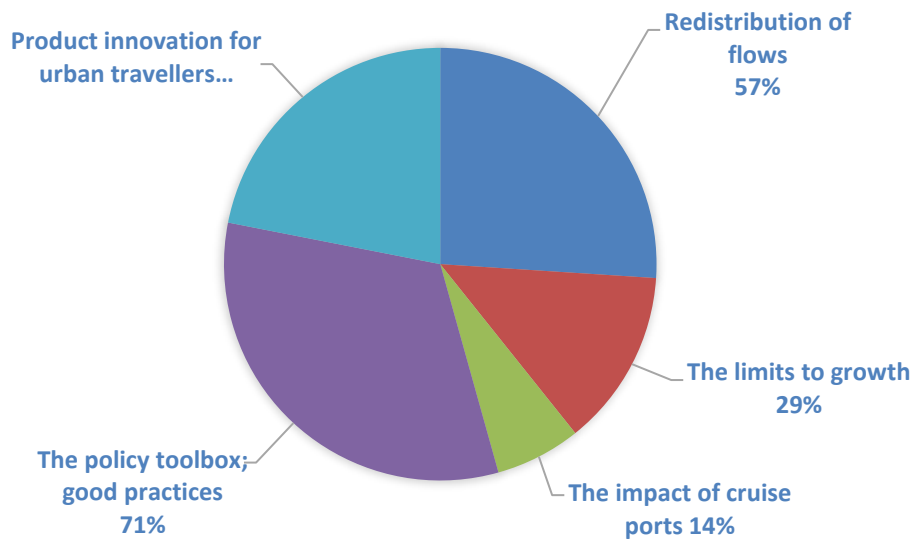
### ENVIRONMENT - topics



### DEVELOPMENT - topics



## UNBALANCED GROWTH - topics



## Topics over 50%

We have listed here only the topics that had over 50% votes from the survey respondents

### Environment

- Planning and design of sustainable tourism 86%
- Good practices; certifications 62%
- Circular economy 52% (previous UAEU partnership)
- Climate change 52% (previous UAEU partnership)

### Development

- Smart cities, smart destinations, digital services 71%
- Post-pandemic changes in tourism markets; diversification of tourism products; seasonality 67%
- Digitalisation of tourist services 67%
- Culture and creativity 57%
- Mobility (green mobility, multimodality, intermodality, shared mobility) 57% (previous UAEU partnership)
- Accessibility – Tourism for all 52%

### Unbalanced Growth

- The policy toolbox; good practices 71%
- Redistribution of flows 57%

## Selected topics

### Environment

- Planning and design of sustainable tourism
- Good practices; certifications (cross-cutting issue)

### Development

- Smart cities, smart destinations, digital tourist services
- Post-pandemic changes in tourism markets; diversification of tourism products; seasonality
- Culture and creativity
- Accessibility – Tourism for all

### Unbalanced Growth

- The policy toolbox; good practices (cross-cutting issue)
- Redistribution of flows