

FIRST CONVENTION ON EUROPEAN TOURIST ISLANDS
FINAL STATEMENT
THE CANARY ISLANDS DECLARATION, 2nd of DECEMBER 2022

The first European Convention of Tourist Islands, held in the Canary Islands on the 1st and 2nd of December 2022, approves the following Final Statement:

The Pandemic, and its dramatic effects that we are still suffering, together with the War and the Energy Crisis, have caused serious damage in the world and in European societies.

These major crises are also happening alongside the growing climate change threats. These threats are not in the future: they are already here, and the catastrophe may be irreversible if urgent action is not taken.

Worsening heat waves, droughts and great fires have devastated the European continent and other parts of the world this summer.

The panel of experts of the United Nations and the successive Climate Summits predict the worst is yet to come if we continue working this way and we do not move more quickly towards the 2030 horizon.

The European Union, given the seriousness of the crisis, has become aware of living at a historic crossroads. We do not live in a *Time of Changes*, we are completely facing a *Change of Time*.

For this reason, the European Union has launched the great Recovery, Transformation and Resilience plans, providing extraordinary resources to new European Funds.

Europe aspires to lead the fight against climate change and the technological revolution on a global scale, and the European Union insists that the only paths that leads us to the future are the green transition and digital transformation. Thus, it is necessary to move towards to a more sustainable

economy composed by three dimensions: economic, social and environmental.

A key issue that we want to highlight from the past statements presented by the European Commission and the European Parliament is the damage suffered by the European economy in all sectors, especially tourism and, in a more severe way, in the countries and islands essentially dependent on this sector. That is, the *Tourist Islands*.

Furthermore, a considerable percentage of the total international tourism activity takes place in coastal territories, including islands.

This situation led the Committee on Transport and Tourism of the European Parliament to approve, by a large majority, a Resolution of vital importance for the future of European tourism.

For this reason, the Convention of European Tourist Islands decides to support and promote this Resolution in all its points. In particular, it proposes:

- To consider tourism as a transversal economic activity – a key sector of the economy of the European continent, the world's tourism leader. In order to maintain this leadership, it is essential to declare tourism as a Common Policy of the European Union.
- A new Common Tourism Policy implies the creation of a EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR TOURISM, to promote and coordinate Plans on a European level.
- To give priority to Multinational Strategic Projects within the European Funds concerning several Member States, such as the one that is going to be proposed by the Tourist Islands, which could concern half of the states of the European Union.

- To promote “Association Agreements” to finance tourism projects, in particular, to support the European Tourism Islands and Outermost Regions, which are the most affected by the crisis.

The Tourism Islands and archipelagos participating in the first European Tourist Islands Convention not only support these proposals of the European Parliament, but also COMMIT to promote and develop them while calling on the European Union for:

- A specific treatment for islands and Outermost Regions, with regard to air and maritime transport and connectivity.
- The allocation of specific funds targeting the protection of island territories and biodiversity due to their special vulnerability, as well as to accelerate the green and digital transition of the islands’ tourism model to the benefit of their communities.

In consequence, the Convention agrees on:

1. Drafting throughout 2023 a JOINT ACTION PLAN and proposals for STRATEGIC INVESTMENT, which shall complement and optimise the implementation of existing strategies, setting 2030 objectives to deliver actions in tourism on climate change, circular economy, and to create the necessary infrastructure and measurement tools, within a framework of common values: a holistic sustainable tourism management approach, which valorises the tourism islands’ heritage and identity, tackles seasonality, and seeks for communities wellbeing. This plan may include research, knowledge exchange, and multinational strategic projects to be driven on the ground with the private sector and applying for European Funds. This will place the belt of the European Islands at the lead of the Union in the urgent fight against CLIMATE CHANGE.
2. Acting jointly before the national and European authorities to promote a reinforced COMMON EUROPEAN TOURISM POLICY which

recognises and gives response to the vulnerability of the European tourism islands regardless their territorial divisions and institutional structure, and the creation of a EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR TOURISM.

3. Constituting a PERMANENT COMMISSION, including all the tourism islands and outermost regions willing to join, in order to develop these initiatives throughout 2023, being in charge of managing all the works, studies and convening in the second semester of 2023, the SECOND CONVENTION OF EUROPEAN TOURIST ISLANDS.

Canary Islands, the 2nd of December, 2022

With the endorsement of the authorities representing Islands participating in the first Convention of European Tourism Islands:

Crete

French Guyane

Azores

Corse

Gozo

Madeira

Sardinia

Balearic Islands

Canary Islands

ANNEX I

THE POSSIBLE ROLE OF A EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR TOURISM

The Permanent Commission of the European Tourism Islands will elaborate a proposal describing the the mission, function giving concrete response to the tourism islands-related challenges, for the European Agency for Tourism that the Convention of European Tourism Islands calls for, acknowledging the regulatory framework which is necessary to its creation.

The Permanent Commission of the European Tourism Islands acknowledge that Tourism competence lays on the Member States and that European Agencies are EU bodies decentralized reporting to the European Commission and based on a legal framework agreed by the Member States.