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Sustainable tourism practices in city destinations

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Title paper: Sustainable tourism practices in city destinations

by Dr Cristina Maxim

Key words: tourism cities; sustainable tourism; urban tourism; sustainable development; sustainable practices.

Abstract

Cities, in particular large cities, are important destinations that attract many types of visitors due to their complex characteristics and the variety of attractions they offer. However, they are also confronted with many challenges, with sustainability being a key challenge that many large cities are currently facing. At the same time, cities are expected to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, with one of the goals specifically designed for urban destinations – Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

The increase in the number of visitors to cities, particularly for popular city destinations such as Venice, London, Paris, Barcelona, New York, Bangkok, and Amsterdam, has put pressure on the limited resources available and on the local populations. We have all seen in the news how local people have protested on the streets of Barcelona, Venice, and Amsterdam, asking the local authorities to take action and limit the number of visitors. Scholars also started looking into the phenomenon of "overtourism", understood as "the excessive growth of visitors leading to overcrowding and the consequential suffering of residents, due to temporary and often seasonal tourism peaks, that lead to permanent changes in lifestyles, amenities and well-being" (Milano et al., 2019, p. 1). This reignited the debate about the benefits and negative impacts of tourism development in destinations, particularly in city destinations, and the need for a balanced approach. Sustainable development and sustainable tourism practices have thus become an even more important topic in cities nowadays, and efforts are being made by governments, local authorities, and scholars to address these challenges.

This paper reviews contemporary issues, challenges and trends in sustainable urban tourism, and presents practical approaches and solutions for the implementation of sustainable tourism development in urban destinations. It also explores the sustainable urban tourism practices and challenges in different parts of the world.

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