

REGIONE
TOSCANA



EUROMEETING 2004

European Regions:
Tourism and Sustainable Development

5 November 2004
Florence, Italy

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

Presentation

The Regional Government of Tuscany has adopted sustainability as one of the main pillars of its entire development policy and has identified Agenda 21 as one of the tools for implementing it.

There have been many opportunities to discuss problems involving the development of tourism while taking into account the rapid changes on the international scene, the new tendencies of demand, the complexities of a market where the laws of competition impose difficult choices which are not easily made over the short term.

The need for representatives of local and regional authorities, the business and industry sector, consumer organizations, labor unions to examine the issues concerning the development of tourism with respect to the principles of environmental/social sustainability and in relation to the increasingly important role of the European Regions, has emerged frequently.

In this continuing debate it is imperative that the Regions of Europe have an opportunity to confront what is happening on the international scene in general, to find out what other European areas are doing regarding these issues, as well as to openly discuss the position of the European Commission especially in light of the communication *Basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism*. All this becomes especially important considering the recent entry of the new Member States into the enlarged EU.

The Region of Tuscany has undertaken a very profitable dialogue with the representatives of the Tourism Unit of the DG Enterprise of the European Commission since the year 2000. They expressed interest in a specific event in which the European Regions would have the opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions on the recommendations contained in the Agenda 21 document on the development of tourism policies in the countries of the European Union.

Taking up on this idea the Region of Tuscany, in collaboration with the Committee of the Regions (COTER Commission), decided to organize an annual event dedicated to discussing tourism and sustainable development among all the Regions of the European Union. Three editions of the **Eurometing** conference have taken place (November 2001, 2002 and 2003). Each one consisted of a morning session with key speakers from various international organizations proposing a "political" theme with the afternoon session dedicated to good practices from several European countries.

During the 2003 edition, Mr. Pedro Ortùn, Director of Directorate D of the DG Enterprise was a presenter as was Mr. Jonathan B. Tourtellot of the National Geographic Society. Representatives of the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil and of the University of Minas Gerais were also present and signed two protocol agreements (State of Minas Gerais / Region of Tuscany and University of Minas Gerais / University of Siena) proposing cooperation in forming networks for sustainable tourism in developing countries. Over ten examples of best practices were presented from various European regions and cities.

This year's edition of **Eurometing** will be dedicated to discussing the role of sustainable tourism in cooperation projects with the developing countries of the world. Following up on last year's protocol agreements between Tuscany and Minas Gerais, the Region of Tuscany intends to promote a Memorandum of Understanding between the Committee of the Regions and the Red Mercociudades (a South American association of local authorities) and hopes that this agreement may be signed during **Eurometing 2004**.

Considering the enlargement of the EU, this year **Eurometing** shall dedicate special attention to the issues concerning sustainable tourism in these new member states. Together with the **Assembly of European Regions**, whose representatives also participated in last year's conference, we are currently in the process of defining this part of the program and we hope to have representatives of several regional and/or local authorities give us their perspectives on sustainable tourism development policies in their areas.

How to link supply and demand of sustainable tourism is another issue that **Eurometing 2004** will focus on. Together with **UNEP/DTIE** we are organizing a special event which will take place during the afternoon session of the conference.

If you are interested in making a presentation at **Eurometing 2004** please contact us at the numbers indicated below. The Region of Tuscany will cover travel fees and accommodations for presenters. All papers must be submitted for publication.

Eurometing 2004 will take place in Florence, Italy on **Friday 5 November 2004** at the Convitto della Calza - Oltrarno Meeting Center - Piazza della Calza 6 - www.calza.it.

No fee is required to attend the conference; registration on line at www.rete.toscana.it/sett/turismo will be accepted on a first come first served basis.

For hotel information contact: **Azienda per il Turismo di Firenze** Tel. 0039-055-23320 www.firenzeturismo.it

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