



# European Manifest <sup>for</sup> Sustainable Nautical **Tourism**





**EUROPEAN FEDERATION  
OF NAUTICAL TOURISM DESTINATIONS**

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## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a driver of social and economic development and contributes to progress, peace and harmony amongst the peoples of the World. The international community, through numerous initiatives such as the Manila and The Hague Tourism declarations, has given recognition to this fact. The Charter for Sustainable Tourism has also highlighted the profound dependence of Tourism on natural heritage and biodiversity, as well as its effectiveness as a tool to promote environmental awareness.

Coastal and maritime tourism has become one of the main areas of growth of Tourism. However an excessive occupation of the coastline and an over-exploitation of its natural resources are threatening the viability of the sector in many markets. Environmental degradation is compromising the prosperity of many coastal towns and villages, impacting their wealth, authenticity and cultural traditions and putting their appeal as tourist destinations at risk. It is therefore urgent to address the environmental health of our tourism spaces together with the products that they offer, making a bold statement for sustainability as a key factor in the differentiation and competitiveness of our destinations.

In this context, nautical tourism comes forward as a strategic ally of society in highlighting the value of natural and cultural resources of coastal areas. Sailing, surfing, kayaking, scuba diving or snorkeling to cite a few examples, are highly dependent on well-kept landscapes and healthy marine ecosystems. These activities contribute to a sound tourism



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and strengthen such destinations. Nautical tourism is a strategic vehicle to convey values that connect people to nature and sports and has a very positive educational impact on both visitors and local communities.

Nautical tourism does not come free of environmental impact and its ecological footprint must be managed and reduced. But it is precisely its condition as a generator of both environmental assets and liabilities which grants it a privileged position to lead the path towards sustainability, bringing together public administrations, business and civil society in a shared commitment to the sustainable development of coastal communities. It can improve the quality of tourism and contribute to preserving the integrity of the coastline while seizing the opportunities of the so-called "green economy".

It is for this reason that the European Federation of Nautical Tourism Destinations, as a public-private collaborative platform for promoting nautical destinations in Europe, calls on its associates, but also on governments and public administrations, public and private institutions connected to nautical tourism, NGOs and the business sector to endorse the objectives set forth in this Manifest.



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MANIFEST

The signatories of this Manifest wish to make a public commitment to promoting a nautical tourism that integrates the principles of sustainable development. This commitment must be instrumental to better position nautical activities as a means to preserve natural heritage and biodiversity, and to contribute to the progress and social cohesion of tourist destinations. With the endorsement of this Manifest we wish to trigger collective action in which public administrations, businesses and social agents participate in a common effort to boost the economic, environmental and social sustainability of nautical destinations and the coastline, creating better quality conditions and development opportunities for citizens.

### **Guided by:**

- The principles set forth in the Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development, as well as in other United Nations conventions and declarations regarding tourism, sustainable development, environment, biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage.
- The “Blue Growth” initiative led by the European Union to develop the marine dimension of the Europe Strategy 2020.
- The European Union Communication (2010) “Europe, n° 1 Tourist Destination in the World: A new political framework for tourism in Europe”.
- The European Strategy for Coastal and Maritime Tourism.
- The “Long-Term Strategy for Sports and the Environment” of the United Nations Program for the Environment (also known as the “Michezo Strategy”).



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### **Taking note of the spirit, directives and recommendations of:**

- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and in particular the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development.
- The Agenda 21 of the International Olympic Movement.
- The European Chart on Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas of EUROPARC.

### **We are committed to adopting specific actions to achieve the following objectives:**

#### **1 - To preserve the natural values of the territory and the functionality of coastal ecosystems.**

Nautical tourism, as an economic and social activity that takes place in the open air and in close contact with the environment, must contribute to preserve the on-going functionality of the ecosystems that support its practice in adequate conditions, as well as the wealth of the people that live in the territories that host it. Endorsing this Manifest implies a firm commitment to preserve the integrity of coastal ecosystems by observing all applicable laws and regulations, and specially those of environmental relevance.

#### **2 - To contribute to maintaining the singularities of natural protected areas and the conservation of vulnerable species, applying good environmental practices when carrying out nautical activities.**

When nautical activities are practiced in protected natural areas, or in sites where there is evidence of the presence of vulnerable species, complying with applicable norms may not be a sufficient condition for preserving natural heritage and biodiversity. Endorsing the Manifest implies a commitment to maintaining an updated knowledge of best practices in sustainable nautical tourism and applying them when possible in sites of high ecological value or in the presence of vulnerable species.



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### **3 - To reduce the consumption of natural resources, the generation of waste and emissions to the soil, water and atmosphere during nautical activities, applying measures to mitigate such impacts.**

Nautical tourism requires the use of boats, equipment and materials that support nautical activities, as well as transport and accommodation for visitors in the receptive destination and infrastructure for its practice. All these are associated with the use of energy, water and raw materials, as well as the generation of waste and discharges. Endorsing this Manifest implies a commitment to the management of the environmental impacts associated with nautical activities, contributing to their minimization and/or mitigation through the use of management systems, technologies and good practices geared to that end.

### **4 - To improve the wealth of local communities by creating development and employment opportunities, facilitating access to and professional engagement in nautical activities.**

Nautical activities must contribute to create spaces for recreation, sports and education for the enjoyment of the citizens that inhabit tourist destinations, and as a meeting point for locals and visitors. Moreover, the promotion of a nautical culture can open up new opportunities for job creation. Endorsing this Manifest implies a commitment to building knowledge and capacity amongst the citizens of nautical destinations to facilitate their access to nautical activities, promoting their professional engagement in this economic sector as means of improving its professionalism and of supporting sustainable local development.

### **5 - To use nautical activities as a vehicle to convey positive values and to promote education, healthy sporting habits and environmental awareness.**

Nautical tourism is closely linked to the practice of sports and the enjoyment of nature. For many athletes, contact with nature is a source of motivation and inspiration. On another hand, an ill-preserved environment can undermine sport practice. The increasing popularity of nautical sports opens up a window of opportunity to educate and create environmental awareness amongst millions of people, using nautical activities to convey the values that we want to promote. Endorsing this Manifest implies a commitment to promoting values of respect of nature and of solidarity, as well as the need of contributing to a sustainable development through personal action.



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**6 - To innovate in the marketing of products and services that differentiate themselves by their environmental attributes, leading citizens towards recreational activities that are more respectful of the environment and increasing their commitment to environmental conservation.**

Sustainable development requires actions with an effect over production and consumption patterns, delivering eco-efficient alternatives that contribute to alleviate pressure on ecosystems and bring value to the conservation of natural heritage and biodiversity. Endorsing this Manifest implies a commitment to innovate in the design and marketing of nautical products and services that are less harmful to the environment, creating environmental awareness amongst nautical practitioners and motivating them to adopt consumption habits that integrate environmental concerns in their purchasing decisions.

**7 - To promote the existence of a proper framework for supporting innovation in tourism, creating incentives for businesses that deliver sustainable nautical activities and introducing relevant green procurement practices in public administrations.**

Public administrations have a unique capacity to create regulatory frameworks that promote innovation in sustainable tourism, through fiscal and economic incentives or positive discrimination in the enforcement of applicable norms. Endorsing this Manifest implies a commitment to explore ways and means to create green incentives for nautical activities that motivate businesses to improve their environmental behavior beyond laws and regulations.

**8 -To make nautical tourism sites compatible with other tourist uses, scaling occupation levels of nautical activities to the carrying capacity of the territory and real tourist demand.**

Planning tourist activities is essential to ensure the compatibility and complementarities of the tourism supply, generating economies of scale and attracting market segments that can share a common tourism space. Enriching tourist destinations with products and experiences that increase their added value is key to improved scenarios of competitiveness and differentiation, as well as diversifying both supply and demand. Endorsing this Manifest implies a commitment to allow for complementarities of tourist uses in nautical destinations and to scale the occupation of nautical activities to the carrying capacity of the territory.





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**9 - To support the construction of an open and participative society, keeping a positive disposition towards dialogue with stakeholders and facilitating their engagement in decision-making processes that affect the coastline.**

The progress of society requires an active participation of civil society in decision-making processes that affect the circumstances and quality of life of citizens. Moreover, considering the scientific, academic and business perspectives in such processes contributes to enhance public debate and to adopt better-informed decisions. Endorsing this Manifest implies a commitment to public and private cooperation to advance towards a sustainable model for nautical tourism that is inclusive and contributes to a more knowledgeable and participative society.

**10 - To contribute to the progressive advance of sustainability in nautical destinations, actively participating in the debates facilitated by the European Federation of Nautical Destinations and in the working groups articulated to that end.**

Both the managers of tourist destinations and the business agents that deliver content to those territories play a crucial role in the configuration of nautical destinations. Advancing towards the implementation of specific measures that contribute to the sustainability of nautical destinations therefore requires an active engagement of all relevant stakeholders. Endorsing this Manifest implies a commitment to contribute to the debates and actions geared to the implementations of such measures, through the Working Groups that the European Federation of Nautical Destinations might establish to that end.

In order to procure wide support of this Manifest and ample dissemination of its spirit, the European Federation of Nautical Tourism Destinations will invite governments, public administrations, public and private institutions, businesses and civil society organizations to endorse its objectives through its signature.

Moreover, and to ensure compliance with the intentions set forth in this Manifest, the European Federation of Nautical Tourism Destinations will establish a Supervising Committee of the Manifest. This Committee will report on the progress realized with regard to these objectives, as well as on the challenges that may impede their realization, so as to mobilize the signatories in the search of solutions. The endorsement of this Manifest is valid for three years, after which the signing parties must renovate their commitment to its objectives.

In Brussels, 5 December 2012





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