

“Sustainable Tourism. The Business for Europe’s Mountains”

Online conference

19 October 2021, 14.00 CET

Zoom Meeting

<https://euconf-eu.zoom.us/j/99503131080?pwd=cW50U3czRFZiYzF3NHlRYnQxNG81QT09>

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Under the auspices of the citizen engagement initiative offered by **The European Week of Regions and Cities**, supported by the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the side event is presenting the following **AGENDA**:

- I. Opening and virtual tour de table. (5 min)
- II. Keynote speech: **Claudia MONTEIRO DE AGUIAR**, Member of the European Parliament: Mountain tourism during and post-pandemic
- III. Speakers
 1. **Adrian Teban**, President of the Romanian Delegation at CoR, Mayor of Cugir, Romania: “Sustainable infrastructure for tourism in the Transylvanian Alps” (15 min.)
 2. **Marco Onida**, Expert within the Directorate General for Environment, European Commission, ex-Secretary General of the Alpine Convention: “Sustainability of mountain tourism in a post-pandemic European context” (15 min.)
 3. **Ingrid Hayek**, vice-president of EUMA: “The role of mountaineers and of EUMA in enhancing European cohesion.” EUMA is reuniting almost all national alpine clubs in Europe and represents 3 Million paying members. (10 min.)
 4. **Andreas Aschaber**, Secretary General of EUMA (European Union of Mountaineering Associations): "Mountain huts, trails and rock-climbing areas in the light of sustainability" (15 min.)
 5. **Wladyslaw Ortyl** – CoR Member, president of region of Podkarpatya, Poland: “Development of sustainable tourism in the context of a Carpathian macrostrategy” (15 min.)
 6. **Marius Ursaciuc**, CoR Member and mayor of Gura Humorului, Romania: “Tourism in Eastern Carpathians: between natural and spiritual” (15 min.)
- IV. Session of questions and answers (45 min.)



Moderator: **Raul Cazan**, president of **2Celsius** and coordinator of the Romanian Delegation at CoR

Description

Following the European Parliament's Resolution from 25 March 2021 on the "EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism" and in the context of the COVID19 pandemic, this event is enhancing the consultative role of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and brings to a grassroots level outstanding European debates related to resilience, sustainability, and territorial cohesion in mountain areas.

Travel and tourism greatly depend on a healthy and clean environment, rich biodiversity as well as on flourishing local society and culture. As the tourism interest for 'nature & outdoors' is growing and the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the demand of proximity-based tourism and less crowded destinations in nature and open air, nature-based tourism can make an important contribution to the recovery of tourism, reads Commission's working document, "Scenarios towards co-creation of transition pathway for tourism for a more resilient, innovative and sustainable ecosystem."

It is important to ensure that tourism does not put under pressure the biodiversity and the natural areas upon it depends. In particular, when tourism concerns nature and protected areas, like the EU Natura 2000 network, tourism industry should work in close cooperation with the nature management authorities to develop sustainable tourism products and accommodations that have no impacts on the natural assets of the area.

The worst affected communities by the COVID-19 pandemic are those highly dependent on tourism and unable to compensate the loss of foreign, EU and non-EU, travelers with domestic demand.

Due to banning of long-distance travel during the pandemic, it was noted an increased domestic demand in mountain areas and small towns in regions with mountain tourism. Hence, both small mountain towns as well as nature in mountain areas have deeply felt the disturbances in the tourism sector.

This conference, hopefully a first in a longer series, is aiming at understanding the common challenges and opportunities at grassroots level of tourism business in mountain areas. The event is bringing up the tourism development facet of EC's Recovery and Resilience Facility and its eventual impact at local level of small mountain towns (with small hospitality businesses, pastoral communities, mountain farmers and other local and regional stakeholders) on one hand, and the consumers (mountaineers), on the other.