



Special Session Proposal

Special Session Title

“Sustainable Regional Tourism Strategies in Pandemic Contexts”

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Abstract

Humanity has always been confronted by pandemics. Some of them were recorded in our collective history due to the demographic, economic, and socio-cultural impacts which they caused, and others have been remembered whenever it is necessary to carry out a retrospective analysis of our pandemic past and make the collective memory present.

In 2020, the tourism industry has been one of the most affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, preventing individuals from traveling and getting out of their ordinary daily life. How can we learn from the COVID-19 crisis to put in place more sustainable regional and local tourism strategies? What can be done to overcome this pandemic and contribute to the sustainability of destinations? Why is a sustainable solution so hard to achieve in the tourism industry? What can be the role of circular economy in this process? What role can less massified tourism segments take in the establishment of a new tourist path? Can pandemics put an end to massified tourism models? Can we face the emergence of new trends where domestic tourism will play a larger role in tourist development strategies? What is the role of different stakeholders (e.g., politicians, residents, tourists) in regional and local tourism strategies aiming to prevent and overcome pandemic scenarios?

This special session aims to provide a forum to discuss the sustainability of the tourism industry in pandemic scenarios (present and future ones) and beyond them, learning from the present health crisis and from past ones. Conceptual approaches and empirical ones - namely,

case studies from different countries and regions around the world - will be accepted. Less successful and successful cases will both be welcome.

Pandemic periods are becoming more and more common in the present century and perhaps will continue to be so in the near future. Nevertheless, tourism has been revealing to be an extremely dynamic and adaptive phenomenon. Keeping this in mind, we believe that there is a need to look for new approaches to regional and local tourism development. No doubt, we should work on making the tourism industry more sustainable.

There has been a lot of literature published in the last eight months on the COVID-19 pandemic concerning its impacts in tourism activity. The present special session will usefully supplement the literature that has been produced on the issue.

Potential topics to approach:

- Conceptual approaches to more sustainable forms of tourism in pandemic scenarios;
- The relationship between climate change, pandemic scenarios, and sustainable destinations;
- The role of creative tourism and other non-massified segments in pandemic times;
- Rethinking tourism in the ongoing pandemic and post-COVID-19 period - the role of cities and of less urbanized territories;
- Environmental, economic, and social impacts of pandemics on tourism destinations;
- The role of different stakeholders (e.g., politicians, residents, tourists) in regional and local tourism strategies to prevent and overcome pandemic scenarios;
- Tourists' perceptions of the risk of pandemics;
- Case studies at local, regional, and international scales.