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Ressort: Reise & Tourismus

Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

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Key initiatives of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme served as guiding principles to Ministers of environment at the conclusion of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and held in Nicosia, Cyprus. Delegates adopted a Ministerial Declaration, recognizing the urgent need to ensure the tourism sector “builds back better” from

the impacts of the pandemic. Central to this will be accelerating the shift towards a circular tourism economy, while at the same time reducing waste and ensuring the sector meets its climate action responsibilities.
The Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, launched by UNWTO and partners at the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) and the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative, a joint initiative from UNWTO and UNEP were both referenced as key initiatives to help guide the transformation of the sector.

The One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme co-hosted with UNEP and its Mediterranean Action Plan a side event on “Tourism and Circularity for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean”, where a new repository of tools and resources focused on the circular economy and tourism was launched, alongside two new publications from the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative around measurement and procurement produced with the financial support of the Government of France.

Addressing the Ministerial Conference, UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: “For businesses, the circular economy can bring competitive advantages. For destinations, it can build more inclusive local value chains.

And for tourists, it’s an opportunity to leave a positive footprint. I encourage Europe’s Environment Ministers to build synergies with their counterparts in Ministries of Tourism to implement the circular economy in the tourism sector.”
Also speaking to the Ministerial Conference, Mario Šiljeg State Secretary for the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Croatia, emphasized the importance of tourism to European economies and highlighted the significant benefits of “embracing innovative approaches, particularly moving away from traditional value chain relations adopting more systemic circular production and consumption patterns”.

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Redaktioneller Programmdienst:
European News Agency

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

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Also in Nicosia, the Minister of Tourism and Environment of Albania, Mirela Kumbaro Furxhi, chaired a plenary discussion on Applying Principles of CE in Tourism', with contributions from Switzerland, Sweden, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ukraine, Germany, Greece, Armenia and the European Union. The EU then delivered a statement in which they too recommended the Glasgow Declaration and Global Tourism Plastics Initiative as tools to advance intentions to make the sector more sustainable.
To conclude the Nicosia meeting, delegates signed a Ministerial Declaration in which they stated: "We will promote the transformation of the tourism sector by implementing programmes and projects oriented to applying circular models in the tourism value chain.

Moreover, we will build knowledge based on existing circular tools and initiatives, with a view to enabling further dissemination and outreach across relevant ECE member States. We encourage member States and other stakeholders in a position to do so to consider joining and committing to actions under the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative, which unites the tourism sector behind a common vision of circular economy of plastics and the Glasgow Declaration: A Commitment to a Decade of Tourism Climate Action."

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V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDStV: Dr. Carlo Marino

Redaktioneller Programmdienst:
European News Agency

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
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