



Republic of Bulgaria
ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

OPINION

on

CURRENT STATE AND PROSPECTS

FOR CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL TOURISM IN BULGARIA

(own-initiative opinion)

Sofia, 2011

The 2011 action plan of the Economic and Social Council (ESC) envisions the elaboration of an own-initiative opinion on the topic of:

**Current State and Prospects
for Cultural and Historical Tourism in Bulgaria.**

According to the plan, the Commission for Regional Policy, Sustainable Development and the Commission for Environment and the Economic Policy were appointed to prepare the opinion.

Pursuant to the decision of both Commissions for rapporteur on this opinion was appointed Mrs. Donka Sokolova, member of Group III - representative of women's organisations.

Associate Professor Nikolina Popova and Associate Professor Daniela Koleva were involved to participate in the elaboration of the opinion as experts.

At their joint meeting, held on 13 May 2011 The Commission for Regional Policy, Sustainable Development and Environment and the Economic Policy Commission approved the draft opinion and proposed it for discussion and adoption by the Plenary Session of ESC.

At the Plenary Session held on 28 June 2011 this opinion was adopted by the Economic and Social Council.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

STG	Sustainable Tourism Group
LoCuS/ЛoKyC	Local Cultural System
MEET	Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism
CM	Cultural Monument
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
TIC	Tourist Information Centre

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of cultural and historical tourism in Bulgaria is an important factor for increasing the competitiveness of the entire sector through sustainable and balanced utilisation of the cultural and natural resource potential and increasing the effectiveness of regional tourism product.

The guidelines for the development of cultural tourism in Bulgaria are closely related to one of the three main priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy - sustainable growth - by promoting a greener and more competitive economy and a more efficient use of resources. The preservation and development of culture and historical monuments are aspects of the expected contribution of Bulgarian regions to the implementation of the future EU Cohesion Policy and relate directly to the development of cultural tourism. Therefore, the opinion reviews the *main features and the spatial distribution of **cultural and historical monuments** in terms of the new approaches to spatial organisation, coordination and territorial management of cultural and historical tourism.*

The opinion outlines the directions and trends for the development of cultural and historical tourism in Bulgaria in the context of the main strategic documents of the EU (the Europe 2020 Strategy of 17 July 2010, the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion, etc.) as well as of the national and sectoral strategic documents, targeted at the implementation of the Territorial Cohesion Policy.

The opinion contains basic findings, conclusions and recommendations for taking measures at the national level aimed at overcoming disparities in the territorial development of cultural and historical tourism and achieving better and efficient use of existing opportunities and potential. It outlines possibilities for solving problems in key areas - *infrastructure, product development of cultural and historical tourism, marketing and advertising, institutionalisation, regulation and provision of information* for sustainable and balanced territorial development of cultural and historical tourism at the national level.

II. CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL TOURISM IN BULGARIA - CHARACTERISTICS AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Current state and trends of the tourism industry

1.1. Tourism is a priority area of economic activity in Bulgaria due to its foreseeable positive impact on the development of agriculture, food industry and other light industries, construction, transport, as well as a number of services of the production-related and non-production-related spheres, etc. In recent years tourism consistently generates about 12% of Bulgaria's GDP, which is also related to the expectations that investments in the tourism sector will generate a respective increase. Taking into consideration the fact that a number of European states direct about 30% of their overall investment in tourism to the development of cultural and historical tourism, it is logical to conclude that in Bulgaria the development of cultural and historical tourism should be objectively related to the country's effective absorption of EU structural funds by providing for greater synergy (better coordination) of projects aiming to achieve increased territorial

efficiency from the development of cultural and historical tourism (Bulgaria has been allocated 6.8 billion Euros under the European cohesion policy).

1.2. In Bulgaria, tourism provides a relatively high employment of workforce - the persons employed in hotels and restaurants account for about 4.5% of the total number of employed individuals in the country (108 878 people in 2008 and 102 068 - in 2009.¹ According to expert assessment of the tourism industry (Bulgarian Association of Travel Agents, Bulgarian Tourist Chamber, Association of Bulgarian Tour Operators and Travel Agents), the persons employed in the sector of tourism are about 350,000 people. A considerable part of the persons employed in "other economic activities", according to the official statistics - culture, sports and entertainment, transportation, etc. (as specified in the Bulgarian Tourism Act "provision of additional tourist services" - Article 3, paragraph 3), also contribute for the development of tourism in the country, but they are not recorded statistically, nor reported systematically. This presents a considerable difficulty and impedes the comparative analyses for the territorial development of cultural and historical tourism.

1.3. Increasing the share of cultural and historical tourism in the world through active socialisation and adaptation of cultural heritage to the purposes of tourism provides sufficient evidence of its potential to become a factor for sustainable and balanced territorial development of tourism.

1.4. The Strategic Plan for the Development of Cultural Tourism in Bulgaria, created in 2009 under the guidance of Prof. Pietro Giovanni Guzzo, stressed that support for cultural tourism would have a powerful anti-crisis effect and could

¹ Statistical Reference Book, 2010, p. 45

usefully be combined with traditional holiday tourism, improving the quality of the national tourism product.

2. Nature of cultural and historical tourism

2.1. This opinion on the development of cultural and historical tourism in Bulgaria is based on the understanding that the nature of this type of tourism could be defined as ***"travelling the main or accompanying purpose of which is visiting sites or events whose cultural or historical value has made them part of the cultural heritage of a given community."*** An important characteristic feature, according to this definition, is the assumption that visiting sites or events related to the cultural heritage is not necessarily the main motivation for travelling. In this context, cultural tourism rarely occurs in "pure" form, it is more often combined with other traditional and specialised types of tourism. This crucial characteristic feature reveals significant opportunities for increasing the efficiency of national tourism by developing cultural and historical tourism - by integrating cultural heritage resources in regional tourist products and thus developing the national tourist brand of Bulgaria.

2.2. A crucial term in this definition is the concept of "cultural heritage" which includes *intangible and tangible movable and immovable heritage as a set of cultural values that convey historical memory, national identity and have scientific or cultural significance* (Cultural Heritage Act, Art. 2., Paragraph 1).

2.3. From the point of view of developing cultural and historical tourism, the content of the concept of cultural heritage motivates the implementation of a

complex approach - alongside traditional archaeological and historical monuments it covers architectural, artistic, ethnographic heritage, museum infrastructure and the cultural landscape as well as the lately more and more attractive religious heritage – Christian churches and temples of other religions.

3. The cultural and historical potential of Bulgaria

3.1 The peculiarities of cultural and historical resources - such as tourist attraction, diversity and number of species - determine the main territorial characteristics of cultural and historical tourism product in terms of capacity, comfort, sustainability, etc. as well as their functional profile and specialisation.

3.2. This opinion is based on the understanding that the tourist product, including that of cultural and historical tourism, comprises:

1 / **primary infrastructure / supply** / - the availability of cultural and historical sites and events that attract tourists;

2 / **secondary infrastructure / supply** / - the presence of different types of facilities for accommodation and catering;

3 / **tertiary infrastructure / supply** / - the elements of specialised tourist infrastructure that mediate the process of consumption, in interaction with cultural and historical attractions.

4. Spatial characterisation of cultural and historical resources in Bulgaria

Own studies have revealed the main characteristic features in the spatial distribution of the main types of cultural and historical resources which have the

status of cultural monuments of national importance: archaeological, architectural, religious and ethnographic museums, historical places and sites, nature reserves - of cultural value.

4.1. In Bulgaria there are over 1220 cultural monuments /CM/ of national importance. Particularly valuable are the reserves - cultural monuments. There is quite a few of them /altogether 49/, they occupy considerable geographic area and comprise: 22 architectural and historical CM; 23 historical and archaeological reserves, including the Thracian tomb of Sveshtari and the Madara Horseman /which are protected by UNESCO/; 3 architectural and archaeological reserves, including the old part of the town of Nesebar /also protected by UNESCO/ and one historical reserve /in the vicinity of Svishtov/. Bulgarian cultural and historical heritage includes a large number of architectural and ethnographic sites, two outdoor ethnographic complexes /"Etara" near Gabrovo and the Ethnographic Area Complex "Zlatograd"/, a museum network of over 200 museums, including art galleries and numerous Christian religious sites - churches and monasteries. Immovable cultural monuments of considerable national importance are concentrated in 3 areas - Veliko Tarnovo, Plovdiv and Sofia region /over 100 individual sites or 17.8% of all such monuments in Bulgaria/.

4.2. The sites are *dispersed throughout the territory of the country* and are relatively evenly distributed in Western and Central Bulgaria. There are relatively fewer in the Black Sea region. Regarding the spatial distribution of cultural and historical resources, the inside area of the country has competitive advantage.

4.3. Cultural and historical resources are mainly located in larger towns and cities with a concentration of architectural monuments and well preserved architecture from the period of the Bulgarian National Revival (Sofia, Plovdiv, Koprivshitsa, Veliko Tarnovo, Nesebar, etc.), or where , there are a large number of archaeological sites (Plovdiv, Veliki Preslav, Kaspichan, Nesebar, Kazanlak, etc.).

4.4. A relatively high degree of cohesion (overlapping and approximation) was established between the municipalities with the highest number and diversity of cultural and historical sites and the municipalities forming 13 LoCuSy (Local Cultural Systems) according to the Strategic Plan for the Development of Cultural Tourism in the Republic Bulgaria (2007-2009). Such municipalities are Sofia, Plovdiv, Veliko Tarnovo, Kazanlak, Nesebar, and Varna. These municipalities should play the role of main spatial locations the specificities of which creates a particular identity of their cultural and historical tourism product and underlie the tourist brand that should be developed to boost the competitiveness and the regional efficiency of tourism.

5. Specifics of supply and demand as factors for the development of cultural tourism

5.1. Tourism supply

The material and technological resources that make tourism possible /bed capacity/ and specialised infrastructure /tourist information centres/ have the following characteristics:

5.1.1. Bed capacity

- A high degree of territorial concentration of tourism in the Black Sea tourist area and the mountain tourist resorts for winter sports;

- There is a steady growth in the regional disparities with respect to the development of tourism;

- . Maintaining low annual productivity (approximately 30%) of the accommodation facilities - this presents a crucial problem largely related to the weaknesses of the national marketing of tourism, as well as to the still limited offering of the cultural and historical tourism product which could attract visitors to cultural and historical sites and make them stay for at least one night on location, i.e. it could turn them into tourists;

- Initial stages of territorial differentiation of tourist services connected to areas with lower concentration of tourist production in the inside of the country - municipalities with larger and smaller cities /Ruse, Stara Zagora, Veliko Tarnovo, etc./ developing primarily cultural tourism.

5.1.2. Tourist Information Centres (TICs)

- TICs are one of the most important elements of the production of cultural and historical tourism. TICs help with the realisation of a wide range of tourist services, largely related to consumption / interaction of tourists with the objects of interest - the main motive for undertaking the trip. The country has a good network with approximately even territorial distribution of TICs registered with the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism: 29 are located in Northern Bulgaria and 36 in Southern Bulgaria. The territorial distribution of TICs covers areas with significant cultural and historical resources and potential and presents an objective prerequisite for the development of quality tourism product, as well as for increasing its competitiveness.

- Besides TICs registered with MEET there are about 20 (according to ESC surveys) other TICs with various names. The main challenges are related, first, to the lack of legally regulated nomenclature list of the different types of information centres, of their functions, or their organisational structure and other important aspects of their operation, which not only leads to a significant terminological discrepancy, but also renders them ineffective in improving the quality of the tourism product.

5.2. Tourism demand

5.2.1. In recent years there has been a favourable trend for increasing the role of the Bulgarian market in the development of domestic tourism and in particular cultural and historical tourism.

5.2.2. Bulgarian tourist flow is directed to places dominated by *centres of cultural tourism* - mostly Veliko Tarnovo, Plovdiv, Ruse, etc.; but also to places which besides cultural and historical tourism offer other types of tourism as well (such as spa/wellness products) - Hisarya, Velingrad, Sandanski, Kyustendil, Sapareva Banya, etc.

5.2.3. During the period 2001-2009 there has been a 10% increase in the number of nights Bulgarian citizens spend at tourism facilities.

5.2.4. The average length of stay of Bulgarian tourists is relatively *low* - 2.4 *days*, which points mainly to weekend and holiday trips - which are mostly related to practising cultural and other specialised types of tourism.

III. BACKGROUND, ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL TOURISM IN BULGARIA

The most important prerequisites and challenges to the development of cultural and historical tourism were identified by means of ***SWOT analysis of Bulgaria as a destination for cultural and historical tourism.***

1.1. Strengths

- Geographical location and transport accessibility / openness of state borders - 35 border checkpoints;
- Relative proximity to the main emitting markets and to major tourist destinations;
- Rich cultural heritage from different historical periods;
- Great typological diversity of cultural heritage as a prerequisite for creating a quality tourism product;
- Favourable spatial distribution of cultural and historical monuments, i.e. a great number and even distribution of sites ;
- Preserved authentic local folklore ;
- Presence of a unique in Europe and the rest of the world cultural institution - "chitalishte" (a community cultural centre) which possesses the potential for participation and assuming a key role in creating cultural and historical tourism products;
- Developed museum network with spatial hierarchy and management structure;
- Rich cultural calendar complete with international and national events;

- Accommodation facilities with large capacity, good quality and typological diversity;
- A large number of universities and vocational schools with programmes in tourism, including special Master's Degree programmes in cultural tourism;
- Balanced spatial location of universities and vocational schools with programs in tourism, creating favourable conditions for meeting regional needs for tourism staff and offering courses in tourism for the local population to increase employment;
- Many tourism organisations, including organisations specialising in the field of cultural and historical tourism;
- Established tourist areas, stimulating the process of clustering, including in the field of cultural tourism;
- Elaborated Strategic Plan for the development of cultural tourism in Bulgaria
- Increased initiative on part of the private sector for the promotion of Bulgarian cultural heritage – e.g. the campaign of the Standard Daily Newspaper about the "Wonders of Bulgaria".

1.2. Weaknesses

- Lack of policy for the development of Bulgaria as a destination offering cultural and historical tourism;
- Lack of a recognisable image of Bulgaria as a destination offering cultural and historical tourism ;
- Low quality of the overall technical infrastructure - poor transport accessibility to cultural and historical sites, including those on the UNESCO

World Heritage List, serious problems with the hygiene network in tourist sites and settlements;

- Low level of development and improvement of the environment for cultural tourism - both urban and rural;
- Poorly maintained interiors, buildings and means of exhibiting the objects of interest in many museums and other cultural sites;
- Insufficient capacity of the accommodation facilities in many settlements with cultural and historical sites;
- Problems with the preservation, maintenance and presentation of cultural and historical sites;
- Insufficient effort to convert cultural and historical sites into tourist attractions - e.g. by creating specialised tourist infrastructure and up-to-date technology on site;
- Lack of a register of cultural and historical sites of tourist importance to the foreign and Bulgarian market;
- Lack of a register of cultural monuments of tourist importance which are public state property;
- Lack of presentation of the cultural and historical heritage of Bulgaria in the international internet search engines;
- Limited number of recognisable tourist products of domestic and foreign tourism markets;
- Minimal advertising of cultural and historical sites on the national and international markets using modern thematic approaches and methods;
- Lack of studies on the effectiveness of advertising methods and tools for promoting Bulgarian cultural heritage abroad, such as the external communication campaign "Bulgaria in Miniature;"

- Lack of functional and territorial integration of cultural and visitor centres and tourist information centres;
- Inadequate system of fixed information and direction signs and provision of minimal tourist information on site;
- Insufficient number of tour operators offering cultural tourism;
- Limited experience and lack of coherence in public-private partnerships and cooperation in all fields of tourism;
- Overdevelopment of areas with resources for cultural and historical tourism - Nesebar, Sozopol, etc.;
- Unsatisfactory level of tourist services in the cultural and historical sites due to poor language, sales, interpersonal and other skills;
- Frequent renewal of workforce in the sector of tourism.

1.3. Opportunities

- Increased demand for cultural and historical tourism at the global, regional and national level;
- Increased demand for tourism based on ethnic and territorial proximity, respectively, from the neighbouring Balkan countries and countries with significant Bulgarian population;
- Transport connections between Bulgaria and other European countries through a total of 6 European transport corridors /unique on the Balkans/;
- EU Strategy for the Danube Region to promote regional and cross border cooperation through programmes to protect cultural and historic heritage and support new cultural industries;

- Financing the development of tourism through a wide range of European funds;
- Entry of low cost airlines in Bulgarian air transport market.

1.4. Threats

- The increasing wave of global terrorism;
- Deterioration of the image of Bulgaria in certain tourism markets;
- The global financial crisis leading to delay and decrease in the rate of tourist visits to Bulgaria.

IV. MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ESC notes that Bulgaria has a rich, varied, but insufficiently utilised resource potential for the development of cultural and historical tourism.

2. ESC expresses its position that the sustainable development of Bulgarian tourism in general is closely linked to the development of cultural and historical tourism because the latter creates favourable conditions for:

2.1. Diversification of the national tourist product and hence for improving its quality;

2.2. Mitigating the high seasonality of the national tourist product and a move towards an all-year-round model;

2.3. Increasing the average annual exploitation of the accommodation facilities on the Black Sea coast and in mountain tourist resorts due to their proximity to major cultural and historical sites and resources;

2.4. Improving the average annual exploitation of the accommodation facilities in a number of towns with prominent cultural heritage, currently relying primarily on business visitors;

2.5. Creating employment opportunities in places with significant cultural and historical heritage, especially for young graduates of vocational schools for tourism and also for the older population, such as retired teachers whose qualifications can offer specialised services related to the interpretation of local customs and culture, mountain guiding, etc.;

2.6. Increasing regional efficiency of tourism and thus increasing the competitiveness of the cultural and historical tourism product, by applying new forms of spatial integration (tourist areas, tourist corridors, tourist circuits) in the utilisation of cultural and historical sites.

3. ESC is convinced that the indicated effects of the development of cultural and historical tourism in Bulgaria motivate the immediate urgency of the formulation of a **National Tourism Policy** and the development of a **Strategy for the Development of Cultural and Historical Tourism in Bulgaria** both of which should define the long-term objectives and priorities of the public sector, local authorities and the tourist industry in the country.

4. According to ESC the development of cultural and historical tourism in Bulgaria should urgently overcome a number of important challenges - especially in areas such as general technical and specialised tourist infrastructure, tourist valorisation of cultural and historical resources, advertising and training of

specialists. ESC firmly believes that these areas require conceptual solutions and coordination between the public and private sectors and the local authorities setting out to achieve major strategic objectives for the development of cultural tourism in the following areas:

4.1. *Creating and establishing a recognisable image of Bulgaria as a tourist destination for cultural and historical tourism.*

4.2. *Developing sustainable and competitive tourism products in the field of cultural tourism.*

5. ESC stresses the urgency of intervention at national, regional and local level in the following key areas:

- Infrastructural development ;
- Product development ;
- Advertising Bulgaria as a destination for cultural and historical tourism ;
- Institutional development ;
- Staff development .

6. According to ESC, particular attention should be paid to **infrastructural development**. The development of sustainable cultural tourism as a tool for socio-economic growth is closely linked with initiatives to improve accessibility, transport and communications at the regional and local level.

7. ESC considers necessary **in the medium and long term to take steps** addressing:

7.1. Priority construction of:

- roads II and III class, leading to cultural and historical sites with a large and tourist value for the internal and/or international tourism market;
- transport system by integrating through the Danube Corridor № 7 eight areas (Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Plevna, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Razgrad, Silistra - with a total population of 1,554,940 people, representing 20% of Bulgaria's population), whose interests converge in the Danube Strategy;
- transport system connecting the towns on the Danube river to the European transport corridors № 4 and 9 to Greece and Turkey;
- the unfinished lot of the "Hemus" motorway connecting European transport corridors № 4 and 9;
- the transport section "Trakia" - "Maritsa" linking two European corridors and playing a crucial role in connecting European territorial macro space - which is important for the development of cross-border cultural tourism between Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.
- infrastructural facilities for cultural and tourist sites of international and national importance which could improve the access to them (safety facilities, including facilities for the disabled, etc.).

7.2. Improving the current state of the transport and tourist information by:

- general and thematic information and sign structures (including signs in English for settlements, cultural and historical tourist sites, administrative sites, information boards, maps, etc.) ;
- information in English on public transport and other public places.

8. ESC expresses its conviction that the development of **the product of cultural and historical tourism** should be based on implementation of the fundamental principle underlying the Europe 2020 Strategy and calls for partnership between a wider range of stakeholders for establishing relationships of collaboration with the Cultural Monument Institute, museum administrations and their regional branches, the administration of Community Cultural Centres, Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the Directorates of the National Natural Parks housing both natural as well as cultural and historical sites, academic institutes, regional and local structures which manage and maintain key cultural and historical sites.

9. ESC believes that the coordination and joint efforts of all stakeholders are necessary in undertaking research, regulatory, investment and other activities:

9.1. Developing methods for the assessment of the tourist value / attractiveness of objects of cultural heritage for domestic and foreign tourist markets in cooperation with cultural institutions, academic institutions, tourism and local government;

9.2. Creation of registries of objects of cultural heritage and their valorisation for determining their degree of attractiveness / value for domestic and international markets, as well as cultural events;

9.3. Compiling a register of cultural monuments of tourist importance, which are public state property;

9.4. Creating and maintaining a competitive positioning map of cultural and historical sites and attractions which should be subject to regular updating;

10. ESC calls for the introduction of the criterion "*tourist value*" for cultural and historical sites and its implementation in the development schemes and plans

of municipalities in cases covered by the definition "cultural landscape" under Article 7 of the Bulgarian Spatial Planning Act which provides for 5 types of areas with specific characteristics. ESC is convinced that this is necessary as a result of the objective dependence of the organisation of tourism on spatial planning;

11. ESC believes that it is necessary to develop and implement a National Programme for the restoration, socialisation and transformation of the tourist sites of cultural and historical tourism which are public state property in accordance with the valorisation at the national, regional and local level;

12. ESC calls for the development of the concept of cultural and historical tourism products / thematic products and routes / by applying innovative approaches and in cooperation with cultural and academic institutions, tourism businesses and local government;

13. ESC emphasises the necessity of introducing up-to-date mechanisms for sale and distribution - creating online ticket offices, electronic tickets, combined tickets for different sites, etc.

14. ESC proposes to introduce tax reductions and other economic incentives for the development of cultural and historical tourism in municipalities with high cultural value and concentration of cultural and historical sites in order to attract investment, create employment, apply technological innovations and achieve optimal efficiency in the development of cultural and historical tourism;

15. ESC stresses the urgent necessity for **marketing and advertising of Bulgaria as a destination for cultural and historical tourism** to be based on the development and promotion of a national tourist brand of Bulgaria as a cultural tourist destination. With respect to this ESC recommends:

15.1. Creation and promotion of a tourism portal on "the cultural and tourist destination Bulgaria" for Bulgarians;

15.2. Including the most valuable / attractive for the foreign tourist market cultural and historical sites in the international search engines to find a direct "outlet" to the international markets for cultural tourism;

15.3. Using new information technologies for conducting external communication campaigns, by analogy with the media campaign "Wonders of Bulgaria," aimed at target markets;

15.4. Organising campaigns for promoting cultural and historical tourist attractions among ethnic Bulgarians living abroad;

15.5. Developing a concept for advertising and design of tickets for museums and other cultural and historical sites, following the example of Istanbul, Milan and other cultural cities in Europe and the world to design their tickets in such a way that they also play the role of souvenirs;

15.6. Developing an innovative concept for the production of souvenirs which are thematically tied to the cultural and historical attractions;

15.7. Developing innovative concepts for image and product print materials;

15.8. Functional integration of the visitor centres at the cultural and tourist sites with tourist information centres in terms of consolidating services, the provision of information, advertising materials, reservation and other activities;

15.9. Encouraging membership of municipalities with cultural and historical attractions in international, national and regional tourism organisations, following

the example of the town of Pernik - a member of the International Federation of Festival Cities, the city of Sofia and "Marketing of European cities," etc.;

15.10. Creating a sustainable mechanism for the coordination and implementation of a unified marketing policy for the development of cultural and historical tourism at the national, regional and local levels as well as between governmental authorities and the tourism industry.

16. ESC regards **institutional development** as an important factor for achieving competitiveness for the cultural and historical tourism product. Improving the interaction between the public sector (local authorities and tourism-related NGOs) and private sector tourism (tourist business and tourism related businesses) is key to achieving the goals of developing and offering quality and competitive products.

17. ESC believes that **it is necessary** to:

17.1. Accelerate the process of legal regulation of the opportunities for public-private partnership and use their implementation to act upon key areas related to the development of cultural and historical tourism;

17.2. Make greater use of financial engineering instruments within the Europe 2020 Strategy and to move from traditional financing based on subsidies to new ways of combining grants and loans. ESC considers that coordinating projects funded by the EU through joint development and implementation through public-private partnerships will achieve synergy and work towards overcoming the significant regional disparities in terms of implemented projects.

17.3. Developing a methodology and implementing a system for tourist monitoring of cultural and historical sites at the municipal level;

17.4. Improving the collection of entrance fees and tickets for cultural and historical sites through the introduction of new technologies for charging /for example smart-chip tickets/.

18. ESC understands the unbending task of the government to provide for the implementation **of the important Europe 2020 priority for smart growth** by building an economy based on knowledge and innovation. ESC believes that achieving such growth requires innovative approaches and implementing new forms of training and qualification of human resources by:

18.1. Creating a sustainable partnership between the schools for higher and professional education preparing employees for the tourism industry and tourist businesses, local authorities, NGOs dealing with cultural and historical tourism for the realisation of marketing surveys and analyses, student internships in the area of tour guiding, animation, tourist information services, etc. ESC believes that this will create motivation among young people to work in local tourism organisations as well as a deeper understanding and a sense of pride in local cultural heritage;

18.2. Creating regional programmes and inter-university networks for training and business incubators in areas related to development of cultural tourism, preservation of cultural heritage, promotion of new cultural industries [↓](#)

18.3. Creating a system and mechanism for monitoring the career development, mobility and career development of graduates in tourism and cultural tourism in universities and schools of tourism. ESC believes that it will objectify the process of planning for the needs of schools and tourist enterprises

for different types of specialised tourism and above all - cultural and historical tourism;

18.4. Stimulating the process of creating centres for continuing education in regions with rich cultural heritage /integrated in academic institutions or private programmes/ offering a range of qualification courses related to professions in the field of cultural tourism. In this respect, ESC highlights the need to update the list of professions in contemporary cultural and historical tourism.

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