



Santiago de Compostela Declaration

on

Tourism and Pilgrimages

The Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism of the Government of Spain, the Xunta de Galicia, the ministers of tourism and other authorities of the member countries of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), representatives of the tourism sector, civil society, religious communities, international organizations, universities and experts met in Santiago de Compostela from 17 to 20 September 2014 on the occasion of the *First UNWTO International Congress on Tourism and Pilgrimages*.

Whereas the fundamental aim of the UNWTO is “the promotion and development of tourism with a view to contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity, and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion”, as established by the Statutes of the Organization;

Taking into account that, according to the definition adopted by the United Nations in the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics (2008), tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon related to the movement of people to places away from their usual place of residence for personal or business/professional reasons, and that religion or pilgrimage may be one of those reasons;

Inspired by the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, adopted by the UNWTO General Assembly in 1999, and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2001, whose Article 1 underlines that “the understanding and promotion of the ethical values common to humanity, with an attitude of tolerance and respect for the diversity of religious, philosophical and moral beliefs, are both the foundation and the consequence of responsible tourism”;

Based on the principles of the same Code of Ethics which stresses that “tourism professionals (...) should contribute to the cultural and spiritual fulfilment of tourists and allow them, during their travels, to practise their religions”;

Acknowledging the conclusions of the international conferences of the UNWTO such as the “International Conference on Tourism, Religions and Dialogue of Cultures”, held in Cordoba, Spain, in 2007 and the *Ninh Binh Declaration on Spiritual Tourism*, adopted in Viet Nam in 2013 on the occasion of the “First UNWTO International Conference on Spiritual Tourism”;

Recalling the Santiago de Compostela Declaration adopted by the Council of Europe in 1987, which declared the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Route as the first European Cultural Route, establishing guidelines for the revitalization of the routes leading to the shrine of Santiago de Compostela as “a European space bearing a collective memory and criss-crossed by roads and paths which overcome distances, frontiers and language barriers”;

Referring to the existing cooperation in this field between UNWTO and UNESCO, the two organizations of the UN system;

Celebrating in the present year 2014 the twenty-first anniversary of the inscription by UNESCO of the Route of Santiago de Compostela in the *World Heritage List*, being the first cultural route to receive this distinction, and acknowledging the fundamental concepts set forth in the *Charter on Cultural Routes*, ratified by the General Assembly of ICOMOS in 2008;

Commending the invaluable efforts carried out by public institutions, civil society, religious organizations and other stakeholders, which have resulted in a profound socioeconomic transformation of those European territories linked with the Way of Saint James;

THOSE PRESENT:

Convinced that pilgrimages and travel for religious and spiritual reasons contribute to cultural pluralism, interreligious dialogue and respect for beliefs, as well as to the sustainable development of tourism, while at the same time constituting stages in the quest for inner peace and harmony with one's neighbour and the nature that surrounds us;

Aware that the "external" pilgrimage to a destination does not end upon reaching a certain point, since the "interior" journey of pilgrims continues beyond that until the attainment of their own spiritual goals, although both concepts should be appreciated in a way that is harmonious, complementary and even necessary;

Aware of the need to improve statistical data collection on pilgrimages and travel for religious and spiritual reasons, in order to understand their characteristics and trends;

Mindful of the pressing environmental, sociocultural and economic challenges that exist along pilgrimage routes and sacred sites resulting from the continuous increase in the number of pilgrims and other visitors;

Committed to the need to protect tangible cultural heritage and to safeguard intangible heritage and folk traditions intrinsically linked to pilgrimages;

UNANIMOUSLY CALL UPON ALL STAKEHOLDERS:

1. *To highlight* the valuable contribution of pilgrimages and sustainable tourism to intercultural dialogue, universal respect for the spiritual values of humanity and the establishment of peace and prosperity in the world;
2. *To strengthen* the cooperation among the multiple stakeholders, in order to advance with systematic research in the field of tourism and pilgrimages, and to promote public policies and guidelines, inspired by the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, as well as initiatives in the business, education, civil and religious spheres;
3. *To agree upon, develop* and *implement* plans to improve infrastructure, carrying capacity management, security, technological innovation, environmental footprint reduction, and in particular, better handling and processing of waste resulting from pilgrimages and related tourism activities;
4. *To foster* multidirectional communication among stakeholders to ensure that the needs of visitors, pilgrims and local communities are met, thus encouraging socioeconomic development and minimizing the impact on natural and cultural resources;

5. To respect the millenary ethical values and traditions of local faith and indigenous communities, which contribute to maintaining the sustainability, integrity and balance of pilgrimage routes and of cultural heritage and sacred sites; and
6. To encourage new initiatives and the creation of international networks that foster the exchange of experiences at the level of research, training of tourism professionals, promotion, marketing and the management of pilgrimage routes and sites, that engage faith groups and local communities as equal partners in developing spiritual tourism in a sustainable manner.

Adopted in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, on 19 September 2014