

Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on 'Interregional rural tourism projects in the context of Agenda 21'

(2001/C 144/20)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS,

having regard to the decision taken by its Bureau on 13 June 2000 in accordance with Article 265(5) of the Treaty establishing the European Community to draw up an opinion on Interregional rural tourism projects in the context of Agenda 21 and to instruct Commission 2 (Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries) to prepare its work on the subject;

having regard to Agenda 21, as adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro on 14 June 1992;

having regard to the contribution of Commission 5 (Social Policy, Public Health, Consumer Protection, Research and Tourism) (rapporteur: Mr Lafay, Mayor of Sancergues, F/PPE);

having regard to the draft opinion adopted by Commission 2 on 25 October 2000 (CdR 254/2000 rev. 2 — rapporteur: Mr Bocklet, Bavarian Minister for Federal and European Affairs, D/PPE),

adopted the following opinion at its 36th plenary session held on 13 and 14 December 2000 (meeting of 14 December).

The Committee of the Regions

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| <p>1. notes the importance of rural tourism for the regions;</p> <p>2. points out that rural tourism helps to safeguard and create jobs in rural areas, and is a key factor in social and cultural development;</p> <p>3. affirms that rural tourism is a powerful factor in the rural economy that needs to be promoted and supported;</p> <p>4. points out that additional administrative hurdles make professional action more difficult;</p> <p>5. recognises that while regional particularities inevitably play an important role for visitors/consumers, interregional projects can also enhance what tourism has to offer;</p> <p>6. agrees that political and administrative boundaries in the regions have to be overcome in the interests of jointly developing rural tourism;</p> <p>7. welcomes interregional cooperation between rural tourism organisations and associations;</p> | <p>8. supports the call for a sustainable tourism economy in line with Agenda 21, rural tourism especially;</p> <p>9. urges that sustainability be more firmly entrenched in the tourism sector;</p> <p>10. points out that sustainability in the tourism sector protects the existing mainstays of tourism (landscape, culture, customs);</p> <p>11. regards interregional projects as an important contribution to the strengthening of rural tourism as an economic factor;</p> <p>12. calls for technical and multilingual training for personnel involved in tourism;</p> <p>13. considers it necessary that those working in rural tourism be trained on an interregional basis and that consumers be able to see the quality of what is on offer;</p> <p>14. attaches importance to the increased use of electronic media in rural tourism;</p> <p>15. considers that it would be efficient for the regions to provide financial support for interregional training;</p> <p>16. encourages the regions' efforts to develop joint marketing strategies;</p> <p>17. supports the call for more interregional networks to market rural tourism targeted at specific groups;</p> |
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18. considers that health stays on farms can give a boost to rural tourism and should focus on the physical and mental well-being of the guest;
19. sees rural customs as an effective element in increasing the attractiveness of rural tourism;
20. points out that the inclusion of history and historical monuments offers an excellent opportunity for enhancing rural tourism;
21. considers it advisable that integrated tourism plans be drawn up by external experts (e.g. colleges of further education, universities, marketing experts);
22. is of the view that, in the interests of sustainability, more networks should be created linking rural tourism with all regional economic players;
23. calls for environmental and social factors to be taken into account in rural tourism projects along with economic factors, and for an adequate network of personal services — especially healthcare services — to be provided;
24. considers that regions should provide advisory and financial support for interregional rural tourism projects;
25. would like special attention to be paid to the territorial aspect in any discussions of territorial aspects;
26. would like to see an intensive exchange of experience between existing interregional projects;
27. affirms that where necessary a 'tourism product' should be marketed on an interregional basis, especially where the product is targeted at particular groups.

Brussels, 14 December 2000.

*The President
of the Committee of the Regions*
Jos CHABERT
