

WORLD SPORTS TOURISM CONGRESS 2021

REPORT - WORLD SPORTS TOURISM CONGRESS 2021

INAUGURATION

In charge of:

- *Zurab Pololikashvili*. Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization
- *Roger Torrent i Ramió*. Conseller d'Empresa i Treball de la Generalitat de Catalunya / Minister of Business and Labour

Highlights:

Roger Torrent i Ramió.

"Tourism and sport are two concepts that are very present in our country and have contributed to the development of Catalonia. This Congress is a great proposal for the future and a fundamental element for Catalonia to achieve the 4Ds: De-seasonalisation, Decentralisation, De-standardisation and Distribution".

"Major sporting events of global importance, as well as sporting clubs and institutions, have made their successes an opportunity to present ourselves to the world. The Generalitat de Catalunya has always been committed to tourism".

"We are at a time when this sector has to face challenges, such as how to link the sports tourism sector with the values we want for our society".

Zurab Pololikashvili.

"The World Sports Tourism Congress has to be a space for the exchange of ideas and debate in relation to sports tourism, something that from the UNWTO we think that has great importance."

"Sporting events are essential for the recovery of tourism, especially after the pandemic. The tourism sector is ready again."

"I'm aware of the sporting tradition of Catalonia and the passion of its people, that's why the UNWTO was convinced from the very beginning to participate in this Congress".

Conclusions:

Sports tourism is a very strong and booming sector, but as will be seen in the different sessions of this Congress, there are many aspects to take into account in order to promote even more this sector.

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SESSION 1: CHALLENGES IN SPORTS TOURISM FOR THE “NEW NORMAL” AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Participants:

Moderator

- *Damià Serrano*. ACT Director of Experience Marketing and Research

Speakers

- *Kilian Jornet*. Professional athlete.
- *Lisa Delpy Neirotti*. George Washington University's professor.
- *Sara Bellshaw*. Managing Director at Slow Adventure.
- *Timothy O'Donoghue*. Founder & Executive Director Riverwind Foundation

Descriptive:

The aim of this first session is to identify challenges, opportunities and obstacles for sports tourism. Due to COVID-19, the tourism sector has had to adapt and reinvent itself. However, this crisis is also a unique opportunity to rethink the strategies and offers around sport tourism in order to foster its socially, environmentally and economically sustainable approach.

Highlights:

Kilian Jornet.

"As an athlete I have seen with my own eyes the impacts of human beings on nature. Tourism, and especially sports tourism, can play a major role in this. As a community of sportsmen and sportswomen, we have to come together to see what we can do about this".

"We have a brilliant opportunity to think about the future of sports tourism and to find cross-cutting and horizontal agreements that make tourism and sport a role model for other sectors."

"Individual awareness of sustainability is important. As individuals we have to put pressure on governments and companies to make the right changes. We have to combine individual actions with activism".

"Athletes should not only have a sports certificate, but also show that they have a certification that they have worked and are committed to the conservation of the area where they are going to play sport. Athletes need to be educated in this regard."

Lisa Delpy Neirotti.

"Increasingly, sports centres are making the people they host more aware of reducing their impact on the event."

"All sports centres should talk about sustainability, especially if they host them, to set an

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example. Sports events can fit into regenerative tourism with the collaboration of local people and volunteers."

Sara Bellshaw.

"At Slow Adventure we are committed to outdoor activities that slow down the pace in order to capture everything and really connect with the place, its culture and its people"

"Regenerative tourism is not just about replacing sustainable tourism, it's not just about making something sustainable but also about regenerating what is already damaged. Thinking of a place not just as a destination but with the connection to its whole ecosystem."

Timothy O'Donoghue.

"We are working to integrate strategies to restrict environmentally sensitive spaces and also to reconnect tourism with local communities: personal interactions are very important for both residents and visitors, so it is important to create an ambassador programme."

"Accommodations should include a token fee in daily rates that would be dedicated to fund initiatives that preserve the quality of life of residents and visitors as well as regeneration and preservation projects."

Conclusions:

Sports tourism can contribute making tourists more aware and encourage individual commitment to sustainability.

It is important to connect with the place and all that it encompasses, to stop seeing it as a place to pass through, and to think about the environmental impact that tourism can have. Long-term experiences should be sold as something that contributes to personal growth and conservation of the place.

SESSION 2: SPORTS TOURISM FROM THE DEMAND SIDE, MARKET VOLUME AND POTENTIAL

Participants:

Moderator

- *Fabián Quesada.* Managing Director Spanish Sports Association (ADESP) and Attitude Praxis

Speakers

- *Jennifer Stoll.* Director of Research and Education at Sports Events and Tourism Association (Sports ETA)
- *Lavonne Wittmann.* Director of Global Membership at SKAL International
- *Leslie Vella.* Malta Tourist Board.
- *Profesor Dr. Terry Stevens.* Founder Stevens & Associates.

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Descriptive:

The second session deals it's about trends in sport and physical activity. The aim of this session is to assess the current situation of sport tourism at local, regional and international level and how it has evolved in recent years to adapt to new challenges, ranging from elite professional sport to recreational and amateur sport. An assessment of how sport tourism is now, its potential and how it has evolved.

Highlights:

Jennifer Stoll.

"After the pandemic, sports tourism has developed a role as a catalyst for the tourism ecosystem. Sport has been the gateway for more tourists to come in."

"Sports tourism is being integrated as a key visitor attraction as there has been a resurgence. That's why sports tourism has to be seen as an investment, not an expense."

Lavonne Wittmann.

"Sports tourism is a part of a whole, it is the lurking giant in the tourism market. This giant has woken up and these footsteps are being heard all over the planet. This part is leading the whole right now."

"Sports tourism can be likened to a totally successful business plan, as it has grown exponentially and most importantly, steadily. It is a natural growth industry that everyone wants to be a part of."

"The pandemic has introduced a new type of traveller, such as the solo traveller, multi-generational family travel or travellers looking for immersive experiences. This brings more opportunities and participation in sports tourism. We need to look at what these new "travellers" are looking for - authentic, diverse, real and sustainable experiences. We have to give them the answers they want to introduce them to the new market and support them."

Leslie Vella.

"Sports tourism complements the mix of emotions that are given to visit a destination".

"We want to continue to grow this tourism as we can attract major events as well as participate in them."

Dr. Terry Stevens.

"Covid has changed the rules of the game and that has created new demands on sports tourism. Let's think of the future of sports tourism like Immanuel Kant, by parachuting in."

"It is important to think about the places where sports are created. It goes beyond the stadiums, it goes directly to our communities and their special places. That's why it's important to look after the tourists of the future and the destinations they will visit."

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"There have been 10 paradigm shifts affecting sports tourism: hybridity, diffusion, 'outliers', co-creation, co-dependence, transformation, flexibility, re-purposing, talent and value."

Conclusions:

Sports tourism is booming and has many market opportunities which, moreover, have increased after the pandemic. This paradigm shift has opened new doors that must be exploited, above all through reinvention and awareness of what the public demands.

SESSION 3: INNOVATION IN DEVELOPING SPORTS TOURISM: STADIUMS, OLYMPIC GAMES AND MASS PARTICIPATION AT SPORTING EVENTS

Participants:

Moderator

- *Profesor Dr. Terry Stevens*. Founder Stevens & Associates.

Speakers

- *Josep Escoda*. Head of International Relations and Innovation Development at CAR Sant Cugat, General Secretary of ASPC, CIPC Olympic Solidarity Mentor, IOC Academic Advisor
- *Juanjo Rovira*. Director MIC Sports and MIC Football.
- *Peter McKeena*. Stadium and Commercial Director, Croke Park

Descriptive:

The impact of COVID-19 on the organisation of sporting events has been detrimental to mass attendance at sporting venues. This session analyses the viability and legacy after mass events, taking into account the new sustainability objectives that must be assumed also by sport event venues and a very relevant point to take into account: innovation.

Highlights:

Josep Escoda.

"During the pandemic, sport has been protected, but it has been a big challenge to adapt to the pandemic, as we have had to reinvent ourselves, and all high performance centres are ready to reinvent themselves.

Juanjo Rovira.

"The world of sports tourism is not separate from the innovation of society, the progress of society and the world is continuous and sports tourism has to follow this rhythm, if possible anticipating it".

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"In sporting events we have to look for that word, which is always sought after but never achieved, which is excellence".

Peter McKeena.

"At Croke Park we have responded creatively to confinement, particularly in terms of tourism. One of the ideas has been to use the stadium to visualise the Dublin skyline as a tourist attraction. Our stadium is not just about sport and that reassures the community that we are responding to them in many ways.

"Innovation is not hierarchy, you have to create a culture that allows ideas to be generated by all members of the organisation.."

Conclusions:

Innovation is a key point in this new paradigm within sports tourism. Reinventing oneself is key, and as the speakers commented, in order to be able to carry out this work of innovation, collaboration is essential. There is no hierarchy when it comes to new ideas.

SESSION 4.1: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN SPORTS TOURISM (WOMEN, LGTB, ADAPTED SPORT)

Participants:

Moderator

- *Patrick Torrent.* Executive Director of the Catalan Tourist Board.

Speakers

- *Maite Laporta.* Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Futbol Club Barcelona
- *Harry Connolly.* CEO of Visit West Belfast (Sports Tourism for Peace).
- *Sylvana Mestre.* CEO/Founder Play and Train Company
- *Karl Ainscough Gates.* Chairman of International Gay Rugby Association (IGR)

Descriptive:

This session deals with the increasingly relevant issues of gender, religion, cultural diversity and accessibility that affect sport and tourism. Based on this, the different practical experiences of sport as a tool for social integration are analysed.

Highlights:

Maite Laporta.

"It is not only on the right days that we have to fight for diversity, but also every day we have to support it through different actions and activities. It is our duty.

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"Our added value is that people feel proud to be part of Futbol Club Barcelona, that's why we have to transmit these values that everyone will follow."

"The market will always compensate our objectives if they are linked to these good causes to which we must all be committed."

Harry Connolly.

"Belfast is known as a place of social progress. Progress starts with embracing the diversity of our community, and that creates a great confidence that attracts the interest of actors, writers, politicians and a growing number of tourists from all continents."

"Tourism attracts peace and peace attracts tourism, and it is fully demonstrated that sports tourism can play a role as a catalyst for peace and reconciliation."

Sylvana Mestre.

"We want to break down barriers. Our success is defined by our ability to step forward in the face of obstacles by providing original and simple solutions that take everyone into account."

"We develop programmes to promote the employment and social inclusion of people with disabilities, working for greater access to health, education and employment services."

Karl Ainscough Gates.

"Almost 8-10% of any population belongs to the LGBT+ community. That's why we must create a cohesive unit that everyone enjoys. That will make us more inclined to produce success."

Conclusions:

In sport and tourism, everyone should have a place. Tourism unites different communities and cultures, and its relationship with sport, also a practice that unites many people with the same hobby, can be key to the acceptance and promotion of diversity.

Prosperity in sports tourism is therefore not only economic, but also closely related to diversity, quantity, and the satisfaction of its participants and attendees. The goal of universal accessibility not only makes us fairer, but also more competitive.

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SESSION 4.2: THE NEEDS OF SPORTS VISITORS: THE ATHLETES AND COACHES PERSPECTIVE

Participants:

Moderator

- *Pere Vilà Collmalivern*. Director of the Sports Federation Union of Catalonia (UFEC)

Speakers

- *Miki Delàs*. Captain Barça hockey and Captain of the Spanish Senior Men hockey team
- *Ernest Aguilar*. Head of Social Events, Innovation and New Markets at Club Natació Sabadell
- *Trystan Bevan*. High Performance Coordinator at Cardiff Rugby
- *Paraskevi Patoulidou*. President of Thessaloniki Tourism Organization and gold medalist at the Olympic Games of Barcelona.

Descriptive:

Without athletes, teams and spectators there would be no sports tourism. The fourth session of the day sets out the prerequisites for the successful organisation of an event, starting with the needs of the protagonists: the athletes. What are the practical needs and the ideal conditions they require?

Highlights:

Miki Delàs.

"What we want is to feel at home. For us that means having good food, comfort, good facilities, a good area for physiotherapy, relaxing moments to recharge energy and green areas. This makes life easier for us and helps us to shine and win."

"What we want is to focus on our goals and for that we need meeting rooms with technology to make tactical studies of our opponents."

Ernest Aguilar.

"When athletes make the decision about where to train they think about: how to get there and whether there are good connections, safety, sports facilities (both in terms of quality and service), accommodation close to the facilities and tourist attractions and leisure".

"In sports facilities it is important not only the quality but also to offer comfort and proximity to the athletes with personalised attention and follow-up. It is also essential to find alternative solutions to all the problems that may arise or demands that we cannot meet".

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Trystan Bevan.

"Travelling is an important part of sport. When travelling there is a clear imbalance because it is very difficult to keep everyone happy. But there are 3 key aspects: training time, relaxation time and the quality of the food. Teams tend to go back to where they are familiar, and that is achieved with these three aspects."

"There are three key people in sports organisations: the coach, the administrator and the club owner. You also need to focus on their wellbeing as they are the decision makers and they need to have a satisfying experience."

Paraskevi Patoulidou.

"Understanding visitor satisfaction is a key component of ensuring their return. That's why sports venues have to be fully familiar with the needs of athletes."

"Every city has to work hard to attract events, teams and athletes."

Conclusions:

In order to meet the needs of the athletes, and thus ensure that they return to this destination again in the future, it is essential to combine the social and sporting spheres. The most important thing is that they have all the elements to be able to practice quality training (good facilities, medical services...) but that at the same time they feel at home, that is to say, good accommodation, good food and time to relax.

The plus to this is to offer them a completely personalised attention, to be attentive to their needs and demands and to know how to solve any problems they may have. If the athletes are satisfied, the success of a sporting event is already one step closer.

SESSION 5: SUCCESSFUL GOVERNANCE OF DESTINATION AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE SPORTS TOURISM STRATEGIES

Participants:

Moderator

- *Professor Dr. Terry Stevens.* Founder Stevens & Associates.

Speakers

- *Lars H Olsen.* Senior advisor at Destination Vadehavskysten
- *Manuela Di Centa.* Councillor at Italian Tourism Ministry
- *Geert Bruynseels.* Event expert Sport Event Flanders.
- *Misa Novak.* ALOHAS, Sustainable Solutions in Tourism
- *Ms.Sonto Mayise.* Chief Convention Bureau Officer - Tourism Kwazulu-Natal.

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Descriptive:

The fifth session deals with local, regional and national governance strategies in sport tourism in the context of the new normality and how institutions have to act. In order to become a sports tourism destination in the medium and long term, it is necessary to involve all sectors of society (public authorities, private sector, sports clubs or associations, etc.).

Highlights:

Lars H. Olsen.

"Balance with nature is indispensable for sports tourism. Cultural, social and environmental sustainability. To obtain the combined effect of these elements we have to develop and coordinate the necessary private and public actors".

"Pro-activity on the part of organisations dealing with sports tourism destinations is indispensable."

Manuela Di Centa.

"There are three types of tourists: sport tourists, those active tourists who travel for sport; tourism connected with the participation of sportsmen and sportswomen in competitions; and finally spectators. In all three cases, public and private entities are involved as partners. These synergies are indispensable for the success of the event and to be able to be coordinated with all the different organisations".

"It is of vital importance to create a department for tourism and sport in order to support the countries and to develop this field by working on its international diffusion".

Geert Bruynseels.

"Organisations (both public and private) in charge of organising sport events must make their city a 'flourishing destination'. In other words, added value has to be created for the city, the event, the local businesses and the inhabitants, and this is achieved through the organisations uniting in this common purpose".

Misa Novak.

"We cannot talk about sports tourism without talking about high-level sports infrastructures".

"You have to choose the ideal events in the ideal places. It is essential that they fit together.

"The new tourism strategy we are preparing is based on improving our infrastructures with sustainability models. Our value proposition is nature, the outdoors and a very diverse selection of sports."

Sonto Mayise.

"In the South African context, sporting events are really important. As our former president said: Sport has the power to change the world."

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"When we celebrate sporting events what we get is the creation of a legacy. That's why it is vitally important that the government contributes to creating infrastructure as well as community involvement and engagement. If they are part of the process they will take ownership of the event and the infrastructure will remain for their benefit."

"Good coordination of the management of these events ends up being a return in the future for the country, its image and its people."

Conclusions:

In order to achieve success in sporting events there are many factors that are of vital importance. First of all, the commitment of the institutions and good management is essential for the creation of sports infrastructures that are a good incentive for sporting events.

In addition, to add value to good infrastructures, collaboration with the community of the destination is necessary. Synergies must be created and a balance must be found between what is good for citizens and what is good for tourism.

Destinations are also shaped by the citizens, and the community can be what makes a city attractive. If proactivity is achieved on both sides (institutions and citizens) we will be much closer to succeeding as a sports tourism destination.

SESSION 6: THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF SPORTS TOURISM: SPORTS TECHNOLOGIES AND E-SPORTS

Participants:

Moderator

- *Livia Toth*. Ventures Director, Plug and Play Tech Centre

Speakers

- *Nalain Naidoo*. International Academy of Sport Science and Technology (AISTS), Head of Business Development
- *Martí Niubó*. Director of Strategic Planning and Innovation at the Institut Barcelona Esports (Ajuntament de Barcelona).
- *Pere Vilà Collmalivern*. Director of the Sports Federation Union of Catalonia Fundació (UFEC)

Descriptive:

The sixth session is about the impact of new technologies on sport and the tourism industry. Through the various presentations, the most innovative new trends and initiatives will be presented and new technological solutions will be analysed to create a unique experience for consumers and sports participants.

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Highlights:

Nalain Naidoo.

"One of the big tech ideas has to do with the rise of dedicated running apps, such as 'Running The Citys', where you can upload running routes in different cities.

"District technologies use augmented reality and gamification with a focus on delivering a high user experience. The apps allow you to monetise the results by attracting more people."

"In e-sports we find people really engaged and involved. This type of sport is very different from the traditional one as there are different players: gamers, influencers, fans... They are very unique events but at the same time they attract a lot of public".

Martí Niubó.

"Innovation and technology in sport is key. The city of Barcelona is promoting a project related to this: Barcelona Sports Hub, an initiative with the aim of exchanging talent and resources from the digital world, improving competitiveness and contributing to the promotion of the city as an international benchmark".

"We have to ensure that the entire sports system of a city is accompanied by hubs like ours to boost them and that they become a 'test laboratory' to develop their tech side."

Pere Vilà Collmalivern.

"Sport + TV is born with the aim of digitalising the world of sport with artificial intelligence. In addition to achieving an international projection, the aim is to democratise sport (that all sports have the same treatment) and the creation of an autonomous financing system".

"In the system we find three evolutionary phrases: the construction of buildings and sports facilities in 92, the extension to the maximum of sport practice. In 2020, the third phase, digitalisation, began. It was born out of the need to project sport, both professional and amateur, globally through technology."

Conclusions:

Technology can be applied to sport and tourism in many ways, all with the aim of improving the experience of the athlete (tourist and spectator). In addition, it can also help to prepare the organisation and participation in a very satisfactory way.

The important thing in this sense is the change of mentality, digitalisation is already a necessity. We are going to experience much more than what we are living, technology has no limits and something that we now see as impossible in a few years we will see it as an everyday occurrence. Technology must help sporting culture by creating a digital ecosystem that provides benefits and solutions.

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SESSION 7: OUTSIDE SPORTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL FRAMEWORK OF SPORTS TOURISM

Participants:

Moderator

- *Harry John*. Founder Pure Solution

Speakers

- *Céline Fortin*. Regional Manager, Europe and Oceania of the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA)
- *Kattia Juarez Dubón*. Director of International Sustainability Commission at the International Motorcycling Federation
- *Nathalie Saint-Marcel*. Deputy Director of Cluster Montagne
- *Lluís Breiffuss*. Head of Events and Activities FGC Tourism - FGC

Descriptive:

The seventh session of the Congress analyses how natural spaces and urban environments can be used to organise new types of sporting events and sport tourism projects, ensuring that the effects and impact of climate change are minimised when planning them.

Highlights:

Céline Fortin.

"Sport and tourism should focus on sustainable practices, especially in major events. These practices need not remove their essence but enhance their role as environmental actors".

Kattia Juarez.

"Any kind of sport is key to the sustainable development of our planet as it can contribute to most of today's sustainable goals as well as to the 2030 Agenda.

"Not only do we have to minimise the impact on the environment, but we also have to eliminate and enhance the positive impacts.

Nathalie Saint-Marcel.

"We have not realised that it is very difficult to get the authorities to commit to environmental challenges. That is why from other areas, such as sport and tourism, we have to engage with the problem."

"One of the main challenges, even in sustainability, is how to get all stakeholders involved and committed to sustainable tourism."

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Lluís Breiffuss.

"If we talk about sustainability, it is essential to talk about the word education. This is what will allow environmental awareness to be passed on from generation to generation".

Conclusions:

The sports tourism sector should try to minimise environmental impact and create new economic opportunities and social improvements. The integration of major events in the sustainable development strategies of destinations, in tourism consumption habits, in the regeneration of our territories when developing a more conscious sports tourism and the opportunities that sport generates in the mitigation of climate change have been reflected upon.

SESSION 8.1: NEW RESEARCH INTO SPORTS TOURISM AND GENERAL OVERVIEW

Participants:

Moderator

- *Dra. Kamilla Swart-Arries.* Assoc. Prof, Masters of Sport and Entertainment Management, Hamad Bin Khalifa University.

Speakers

- *Alessia Mariotti.* Director of Second Cycle in the Culture of Wellbeing: Sport, Health and Tourism
- *Marko Peric.* Professor and Doctor at the University of Rijeka Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management

Descriptive:

This session presents recent studies, research and results on sport tourism at local, regional and international level. It also shares studies on the social, environmental and economic impact and returns of sport tourism.

Highlights:

Alessia Mariotti.

"We have realised that the key challenges arising from sports tourism in the context of innovation for sustainable development are the resilience of the sector and the growing market."

"In Rimini we have established a sports tourism observatory that measures different dimensions of the impacts of sport events at economic, social and environmental level. From 2022 it will also start measuring the connection between sport and systematic destination management, experience, economy and health."

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Marko Peric.

"The most common base topic in sport tourism research is sport events. From this there is also research on sustainability, climate change, impacts and legacy, outdoor recreation and community sport, among others, impacts and legacy, outdoor recreation and community sport, among others."

Top 5 Best Practices:

1. *Tokyo University* (About sports tourism and its relation to SDG13 "Climate Action".)
2. *Mohamed Ilaiwi - Universidad de Valencia* (About the Education City Stadium de Qatar)
3. *Michael Mahony - FC Sports Experiences* (About experiential events and their attractiveness)
4. *Michael Auger - University of French Polynesia* (About the sustainable carrying capacity of sites for a resilient and inclusive sports tourism paradigm in the post-covid-19 era)
5. *Hamad Bin Khalifa University* (About the Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum)

Conclusions:

Research in the field of sports tourism has proved to be very rich, as in this session up to 11 research projects were presented from universities in countries such as Japan, USA, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Croatia, Brazil, Qatar and French Polynesia.

The main areas of interest of most of the research presented were the sustainability of sport events, technology and new governance systems.

SESSION 8.2: MARKETING SPORTS TOURISM

Participants:

Moderator

- *Maurici Carbó*. Director Sports & Tourism Consulting, Scientific Committee Carbó

Speakers

- *Marco Mazzi*. Vice President, International Sports Travel Agencies Association
- *Luís Valente*. Partnerships and Information Management Museu Futebol Clube do Porto
- *Steven Leeke*. CEO The Vale Resort (Wales)
- *Cristina Tallardà*. Director of Sport No Limit.

Descriptive:

The last session of the Congress deals with trends in the distribution of sports tourism, events and their market. It identifies how this sector is marketed and the most important marketing keys.

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Highlights:

Marco Mazzi.

"The sports tourism business has a number of players: the destination, the event organising committee, the sponsors, the athletes and the tour operators. Networking between these actors is essential".

Luís Valente.

"Sports museums are important for a city as they attract many visitors, whether they are fans or not, and they have the opportunity to get to know our heritage as well as to give value to our town and our sport".

"In the field of marketing, brand activation and advertising, the use of online channels, the creation of strategic partnerships and special campaigns, creating a cultural route with the museum and participating in tourist events are essential."

Steven Leeke.

"We have to sell a good experience to the athletes and teams that come to our city. At The Vale Resort we make sure we offer a no-excuses environment - everything has to be perfect and that's what we have to convey, that's why marketing is so important".

Cristina Tallardà.

"In the business value chain of the sector, as an income agency, we try to give a personal touch, in collaboration with the different suppliers involved, to the sports tourism event.

"We have to adapt to the client by identifying what their needs are in order to detect what pack we can sell them that is in harmony with what they do, and we have to analyse and design.

Conclusions:

Marketing in sports tourism is a complex and varied model due to the diversity of distribution channels, types of companies and according to their orientation towards the end customer and intermediation. As this session has shown, it is expected that the role of technology and digitalisation will mark the change in the marketing and distribution strategies of the sports tourism sector in the coming years.

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CLOSING

In charge of:

- *Narcís Ferrer i Ferrer*. Catalan Tourism Board (ACT) Director.
- *Jaume Dulsat*. Mayor of Lloret de Mar.
- *Ino Vilcu*. Director of the Affiliates Department of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).
- *Anna Caula*. Secretària general del Departament d'Esport de la Generalitat de Catalunya. / Secretary General of the Sports Department.

Highlights:

Nacís Ferrer i Ferrer.

"The Congress has identified innovation as the most important competitiveness factor for our sports destinations and experiences.

"Sustainability has been the transversal axis throughout the Congress and it is a major challenge to be taken into account in this sector".

Jaume Dulsat.

"For Lloret de Mar, sports tourism is one of the keys to our success and development as a town, which is why we offer high-quality resources, services and facilities to elite and professional sportspeople, as well as to amateur tourists and sports lovers.

Ino Vilcu.

"The aim of this Congress was to analyse the opportunities and challenges for the future in order to strengthen sports tourism, and we at the World Tourism Organisation are convinced that this has been achieved".

"From the World Tourism Organization we are blindly committed to sports tourism and we are committed to continuing to organise this type of congresses and conferences that can be so useful".

"The SDGs must be a fundamental pillar in all areas of our society and we must not lose focus on them."

Anna Caula.

"Tourism is a great tool to open up our territory to the world, and sport must also be at the centre of creating this ecosystem.

"We must put the focus on sport as it moves millions of people at different levels, both

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nationally and internationally."

FINAL CONCLUSIONS:

Sports tourism is a very strong and booming sector, but looking at the content of the Congress we have seen that sports tourism has many aspects and that its success is also associated with different aspects to be taken into account if it is to be further developed. Precisely for this reason, the World Sports Tourism Congress was held for this very purpose, to identify the weaknesses as well as the opportunities for the sports tourism sector.

In the different sessions it has been possible to reach different conclusions detecting two aspects as essential for the progress of the sports tourism sector: innovation and sustainability. In all the sessions we have been able to verify that these two terms have been widely used, innovation as the most important factor of competitiveness to improve destinations and sporting experiences; and sustainability as a challenge to be integrated into the strategies of sustainable development of destinations, tourism consumption habits, and other opportunities that generate the mitigation of climate change.

In addition, public demand for sports tourism has also been detected, focusing on aspects such as the need for good management by public institutions to promote the sector, inclusion and diversity, and the role of the communities of the different destinations.

It has been proven, especially in this period in which it has been observed that sports tourism has participated in the post-pandemic revival of world tourism, that the potential of this sector can benefit many actors. All the opportunities discussed in the various sessions of the Congress must be seized in order to boost the sector even further.

CONCLUSIONS DECALOGUE - Agència Catalana de Turisme

1. Importance of sports tourism in the reactivation of world tourism after the pandemic

Sports tourism has demonstrate a great capacity to adapt to this new normality. In addition, the importance of outdoor spaces and the need for people to take care of their physical and emotional health was demonstrated during the Congress.

2. The importance of generating greater synergy between tourism and sport

Engagement between institutions and good management has been identified as indispensable for successful governance. This includes governments, entities (both public and private) and institutions of different ranks.

3. Relevance of inclusion and diversity values in these two sectors

Diversity and inclusion as the axis of development. The values that sport represents are also projected in the practice of tourism for everyone. The goal of universal accessibility not only makes us fairer but also more competitive.

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4. The role of local communities

One of the keys to the success of sport tourism in the future is the need to bring the tourist closer to the local community. Destinations are made up of citizens, so everything that is done for sports tourism ends up being a return for the future of the country and its inhabitants.

5. A more conscious sport tourism

During the Congress it was reflected that sports tourism can contribute to the fact that tourists can become more aware through individual commitment. Motivating change in the travel culture and achieving a conscious and regenerative tourism is a great challenge.

6. Sports tourism demand trends

In some sessions of the Congress, the importance of the amateur sports tourist was emphasised. The new demands call for tourism proposals adapted to their experience as sports tourists. New targets have been identified, such as: the solo traveller, family trips, multigenerational travellers and travellers looking for immersive experiences.

7. Innovation

The Congress identified innovation as the most important competitive factor for our sports destinations and experiences. It was possible to present proposals in the field of technology that amplify the experience of the athlete and their companions, contributions on artificial intelligence and new entities that accelerate change, such as innovation hubs.

8. Sustainability

Sustainability as a challenge. This has been the cross-cutting theme throughout the Congress. The integration of major events in the sustainable development strategies of destinations, in tourism consumption habits, in the regeneration of our territories when developing a more conscious sports tourism and the opportunities that sport generates in the mitigation of climate change have been reflected upon.

9. Trends in sports tourism marketing

Marketing in sports tourism is a complex and varied model due to the diversity of distribution channels, types of companies and according to the orientation of the end customer or intermediation. The role of technology and digitalisation will mark the change in marketing and distribution strategies in the coming years

10. Research

Research in the field of sports tourism has shown that it is very rich. Eleven research projects were presented at the Congress from universities in countries as diverse as Japan, USA, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Croatia, Brazil and Polynesia. The main areas of interest were the sustainability of sport events, technology and new systems of governance.