

## **Motion submitted by the Management Committee**

### **Friends-of-Nature Wildhaus Declaration**

### **Tourism and Sustainability in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

#### **I. Inventory and trends**

- 1 Leisure and tourism came into being as a dimension of life in the 19th and 20th centuries. The concentration of work processes in industrial production, on the one hand, limited daily and weekly working hours and, on the other hand, led to the social right to holidays and time for recreation. Leisure time ceased to be a luxury for a few wealthy classes and became an integral part of industrial work processes. Work and leisure belong together. Friends of Nature have had a major share in enforcing the right to leisure time and especially in the organisation of leisure time. They advocate meaningful leisure-time and tourism development as an important part of societal development in the 21st century.
- 2 Expanding urbanisation, which encroaches on the natural environment, as well as rising standards of living in the industrialised countries are major driving forces behind global tourism. The trend towards travel to ever more distant and exotic worlds is sparked off by the quest for pristine beauty and communion with nature, two things rarely found in modern, industrialised societies.
- 3 The distinguishing feature of tourism is the movement to destinations away from the place of regular work or residence. This implies transport as well as the use of land on which other people live and work. Tourists engage in their leisure-time pursuits in other people's living and working environments.
- 4 Excessive traffic volumes on routes leading to tourism destinations have become a serious issue both as regards the environment and the residents of holiday destinations. This situation is compounded by the worldwide pollution of the atmosphere by greenhouse gases generated by traffic, which are a principal cause of climate change. According to estimates, tourism accounts for more than 50% of the total traffic volume and consequently of emissions. Tourism activities require land and are thus prime causes of rapid land consumption and shrinking areas of unspoiled nature at destinations. Even now, the densely settled continent of Europe shows signs of the remaining natural environments being overstrained. Hence tourism jeopardises that which it depends on – namely the intact and unspoiled areas in nature it wishes to utilise. Growing consumption of resources, such as water and energy, as well as generation of waste and contamination of water are further consequences of modern mass tourism.
- 5 The growing strains are compounded by the fact that the economic benefits generated by tourism in the regions visited and for the local population are dwindling. The lion share of income from organised tourism remains with the

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tour operators or the transport undertakings, whose headquarters are not located in the destination but in the source countries. Another share is channelled into imports of tourism-specific goods and merchandise. Moreover, the quality of working conditions in the tourism sector is deteriorating. In particular, the hopes of development countries of deriving growing foreign-exchange earnings from tourism, have been dashed by this development.

- 6 One of the reasons why tours to development countries are inexpensive is the exploitation of currency and productivity differentials. With many services (e.g. flights), it is obvious that the low price originates from the fact that external costs are not compensated (e.g. harmful impacts of traffic on the environment and on people's health). Big tour operators and hotel chains use their strong market position to bring prices in the tourism sector further down. Very often, this happens at the expense of the environment and of the people working in tourism. People from industrialised countries can purchase budget holidays because the individual tourist or the tour operators do not pay the true or fair costs in the destination countries. What we witness is the exportation of strains on the environment and on people into these countries. Moreover, the low prices spoil all hopes of improving the prevailing circumstances through tourism.
- 7 Then there are the threatened sell-offs for the benefit of tourism in the development countries. "Ecotourism" is the slogan under which entire regions are restructured for tourism with the help of foreign investors, primarily in the interests of affluent tourists. As a result, the local populations are deprived of their means of production, and are not infrequently, driven brutally from their home regions. Communal management and ownership rights developed over the centuries are abolished with the stroke of a pen for the benefit of investors. The jobs created by ecotourism cannot replace the livelihoods of entire village communities, since, as a rule, few people are needed and even fewer have the skills required for service jobs.

## II. Propositions and demands

- 8 Tourism needs intact nature, vibrant cultural life, healthy environment and products and a fair partnership between visitors and visited, which ensures respect for the requirements of the visited, upgrades their quality of life and generates economic benefits. As an economic sector, tourism is thus directly dependent on sustainability. The resulting demands as regards tourism and sustainability in the 21st century are the following:
  - 9 1. Tourism must contribute pro-actively to preserving its own mainstays – nature and culture. This goes for the tourism industry at the destinations, for the tour operators and for individual tourists.
  - 10 2. Tourism has to curb its consumption of natural resources.

- (a) No water-guzzling facilities in regions where there is not enough water for the needs of the local population.
  - (b) Lower energy consumption of tourism facilities and services (e.g. air-conditioning) and/or shift to renewable sources of energy (e.g. solar electricity).
  - (c) Prioritise the revitalising of old buildings over new construction.
  - (d) No motorised sports in nature.
  - (e) Avoid waste generation and/or collect and recycle waste
- 11 3. The strain of tourism traffic has to be reduced.
- (a) Ensure fair pricing in the transport sector by internalising external costs (impact on health and environment).
  - (b) Better planning of land use in tourism regions.
  - (c) Improve comfort, speed and connections in public transport.
  - (d) Promote soft mobility at tourism destinations, in particular with a view to meeting the needs of those using public means of transport for access travel.
- 12 4. Tourism must help eliminate poverty, inter alia, by promoting local, circular business flows, by improving the quality of life in tourism regions and by providing quality training opportunities.
- (a) For every bed unit financed in a development country, a water connection has to be financed for a local household.
  - (b) Cooperate with local providers as regards catering, accommodation and programmes.
  - (c) Fair wages and social conditions in the tourism sector instead of the currently widespread exploitation of poverty.
  - (d) Special protection for women and children to give them a chance to benefit from tourism.
  - (e) Promote training in the tourism sector.
  - (f) No enforced liberalisation of the services sector.
- 13 5. Tourism depends on partnership between visitors and visited, between North and South.
- (a) An open mind for the concerns of the local population and for the region visited.
  - (b) Contributions by tourists to local projects relating to nature, culture, health, and education.
  - (c) Cooperation with local tour operators and local NGOs.
  - (d) Code of conduct for tour operators and hotels (e.g. no child sex tourism, fair working conditions, respect for human rights).

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14 6. Tourism policies must emancipate themselves from pure marketing and strive for skilful, **sustainable destination and transport management in the interests**

**of the population and the environment.**

- (a) The Agenda 21 for tourism.
- (b) Promotion and marketing of sustainable tourism destinations.
- (c) The development of criteria and indicators for sustainable tourism as well as the systematic acquisition, supply and publication of data on the social and ecological development of tourism regions.
- (d) The promotion of quality labels for sustainable tourism destinations
- (e) Ensuring the involvement of civil society in tourism projects.
- (f) Definition of the reception capacity of destinations arrived at through democratic procedures.
- (g) Land use planning for compact destinations.
- (h) Information programmes for consumers on sustainable consumption and life styles in the context of leisure and tourism.
- (i) Sustainability criteria for public subsidies to tourism.

## 15 **Friends of Nature call upon**

- (a) the tourism industry to assume responsibility, in compliance with the above demands, for the tourism regions they market and utilise as well as for the resident population;
- (b) tourism regions to frame local tourism development with a view to prioritising the quality of life of the local population and to preserving natural and cultural assets;
- (c) individual tourists to respect the interests of the local population and of the natural environment in pursuing their leisure-time activities, and to travel in a sustainable manner;
- (d) governments to add tourism to their sustainability agenda;
- (e) international and national bodies running support programmes to be guided by this Declaration;
- (f) their members to adhere to the principles of sustainable tourism, to set good examples, and to act in line with the above demands.

Vote:                      in favour                      against                      abstention

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