



UN Tourism

# SESSION 1 "CONTEXT AND DEFINITIONS"

## UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF TOURISM IN OUR SOCIETIES

Unbalanced Rollercoaster: EU Tourism tools for a Smoother Ride

PHOTO 34901242 © FREEDIVE100 | DREAMSTIME.COM

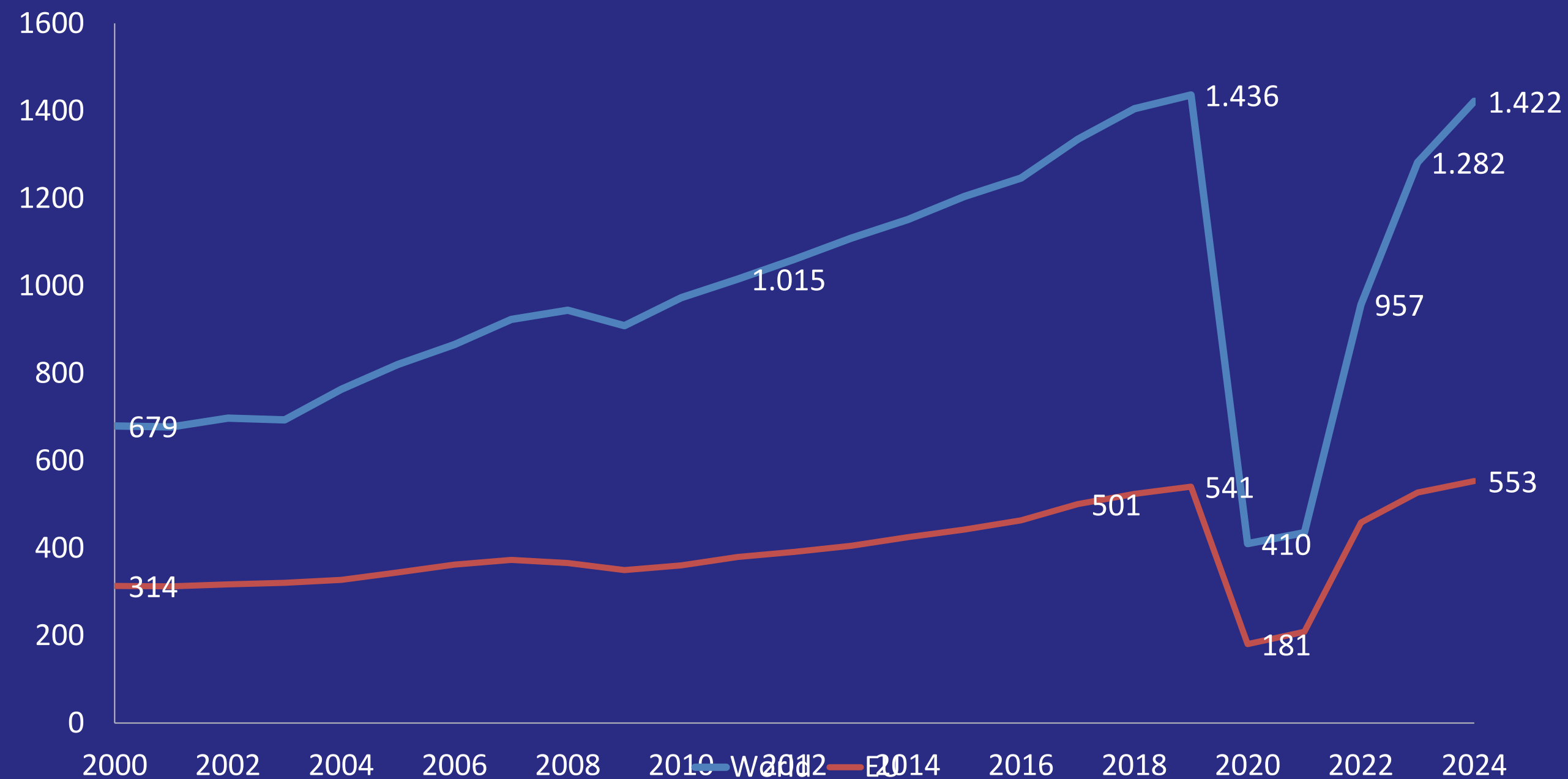


# International tourism 2000-2024



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International Tourist Arrivals  
(million, 2000-2024)



Source: UN Tourism (May 2025)

## International tourism

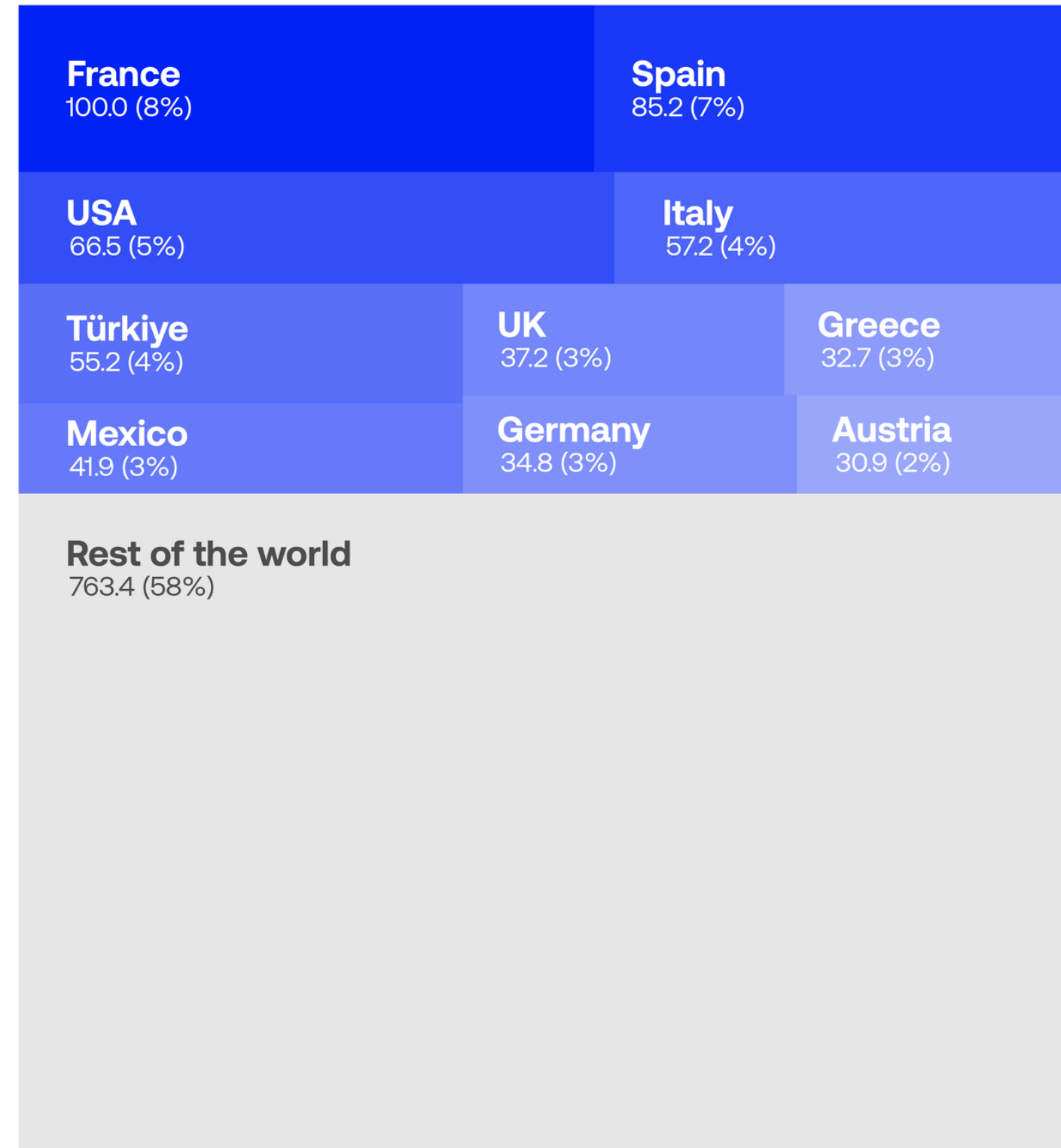
Ten most visited  
destinations concentrate  
42% of international  
tourist arrivals

## Top 10 Most Visited Countries in 2023\*

International Tourist Arrivals (in millions) and Global Share (%)



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The top 10 most  
visited countries  
in 2023 accounted  
for roughly

**42%**

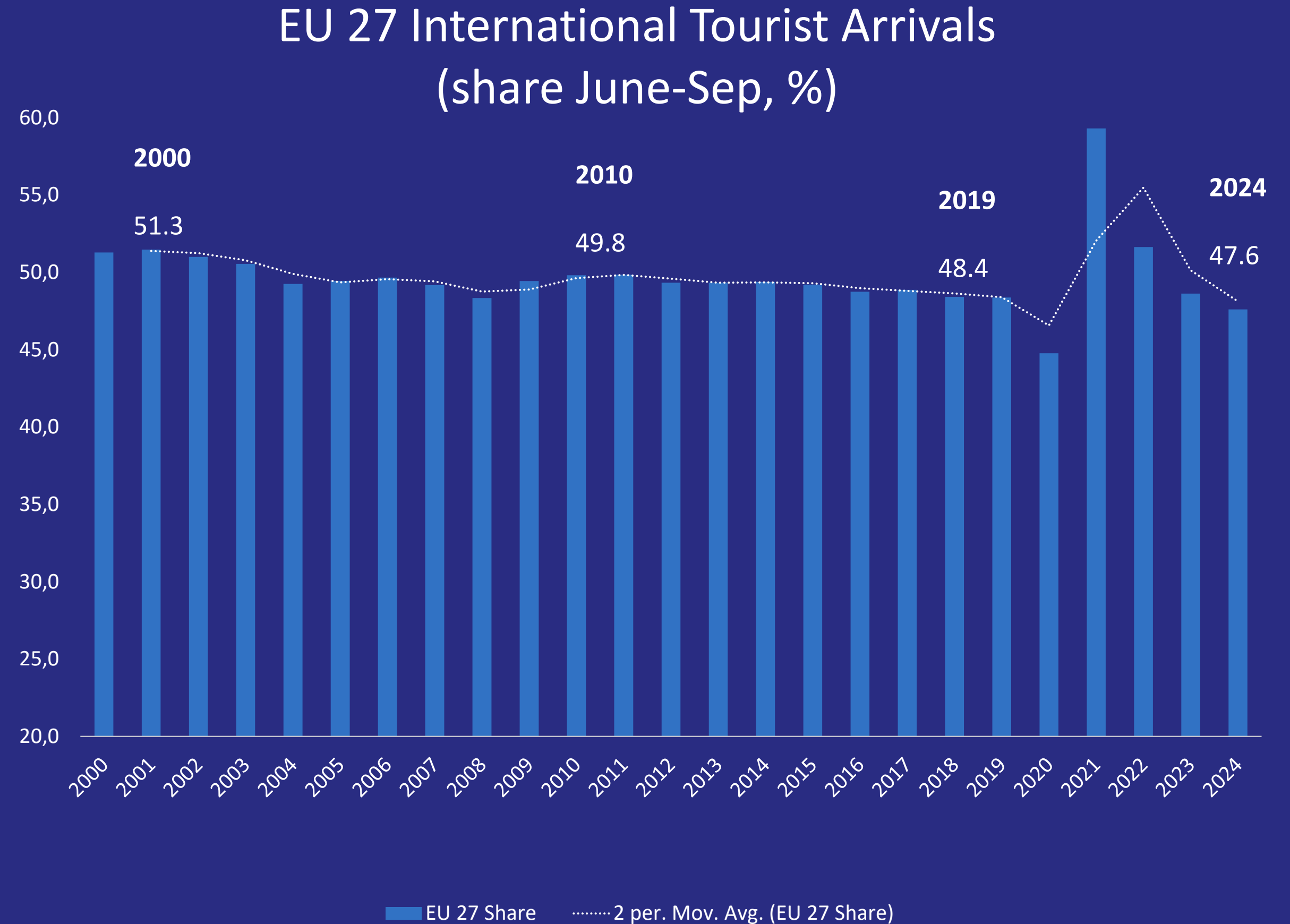
of the world  
international  
tourism arrivals  
in that year.

Source: UN Tourism (January 2025)

\*Provisional data

# International tourism

Fighting seasonality...  
a long term process



# An issue coming of age...

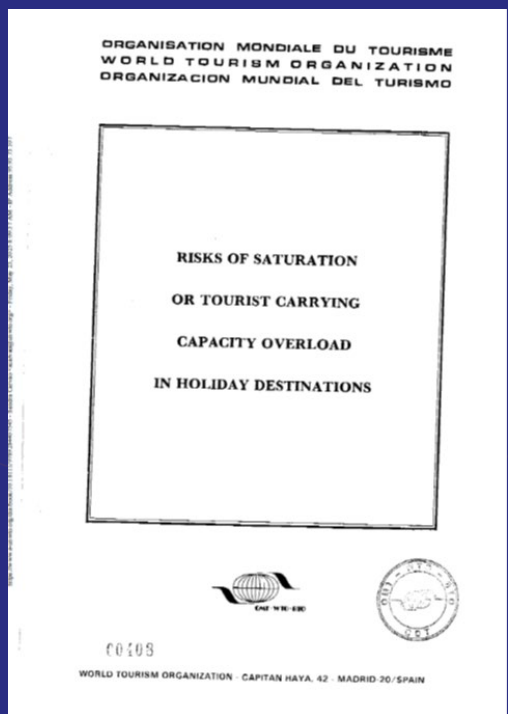
1986

Börlin M.

Activities like over-fishing, over-tourism can deplete the natural resource on which tourism depends, with resulting heavy hidden costs.

 1993

UNWTO  
Saturation  
Carrying Capacity



 2016

SKIFT

Overtourism becomes “the word” with your digital efforts.

2023

SKIFT

Is Time to Ditch the Phrase ‘Overtourism’



SKIFT



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## **"Tourism Carrying Capacity"**

**"The maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic, socio-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction".**



# Tourists ruining destinations; overtourism, anger, inequality, limits, housing...



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## Wish you weren't here! How tourists are ruining the world's greatest destinations

The Guardian



Overtourism has long been a problem - and besieged cities are fighting back. But can angry locals stop the tide of stag parties, 'anus burners', noise and graffiti?

Source:  
The Guardian, 17 August 2023

## 'Inequality and infinite growth': Canary Islands anti-tourism protests reignite amid record arrivals

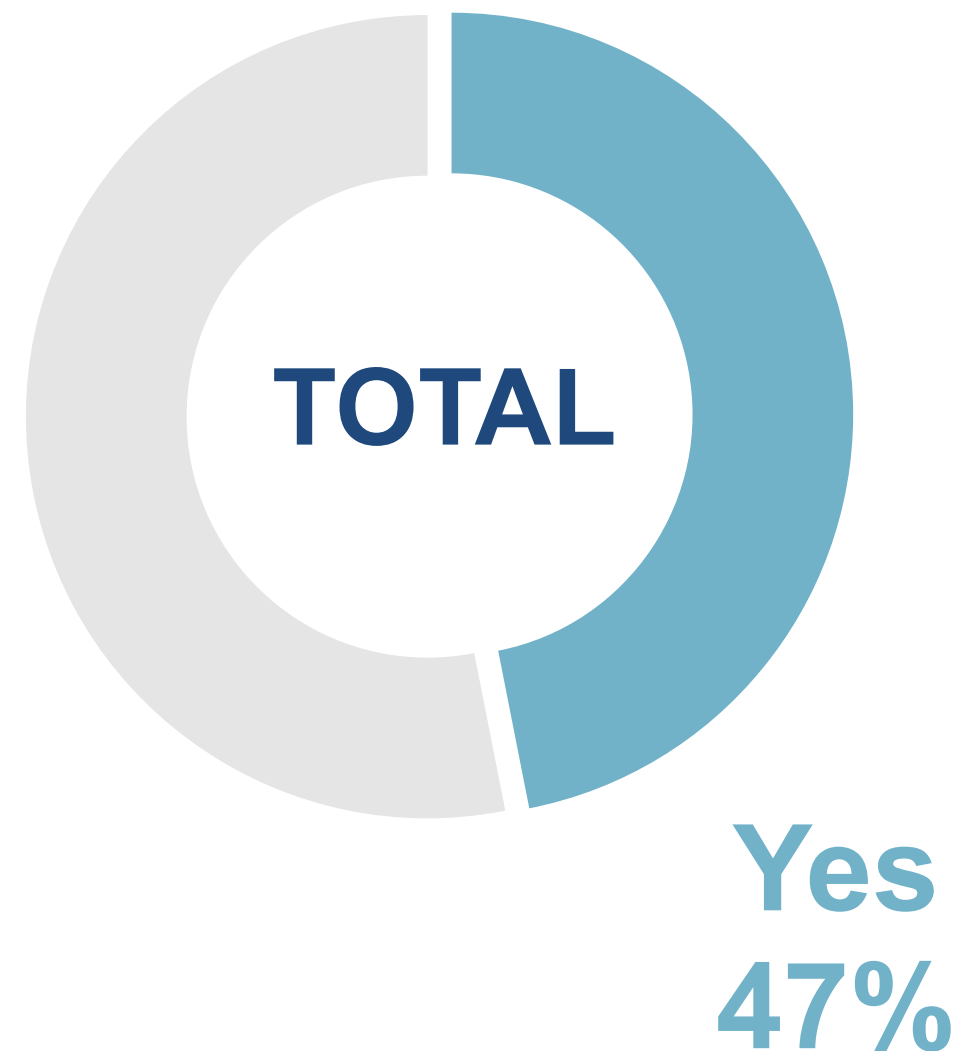


Source:  
Euronews, 16 May 2025



Q1. Do you think you live in a city with a high number of tourists?

**47% of respondents think 'they reside in cities with a high number of tourists'.**

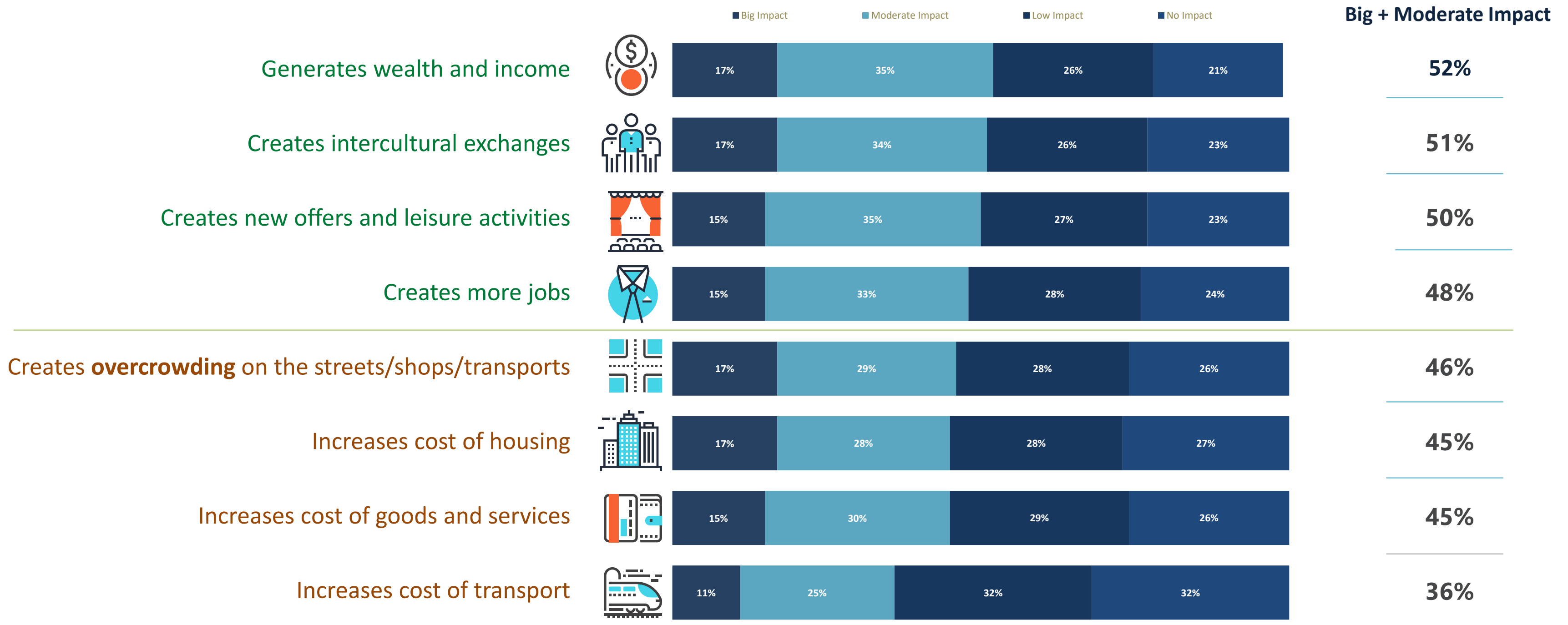


2018 - Global survey on the perception of residents towards city tourism: impact and measures



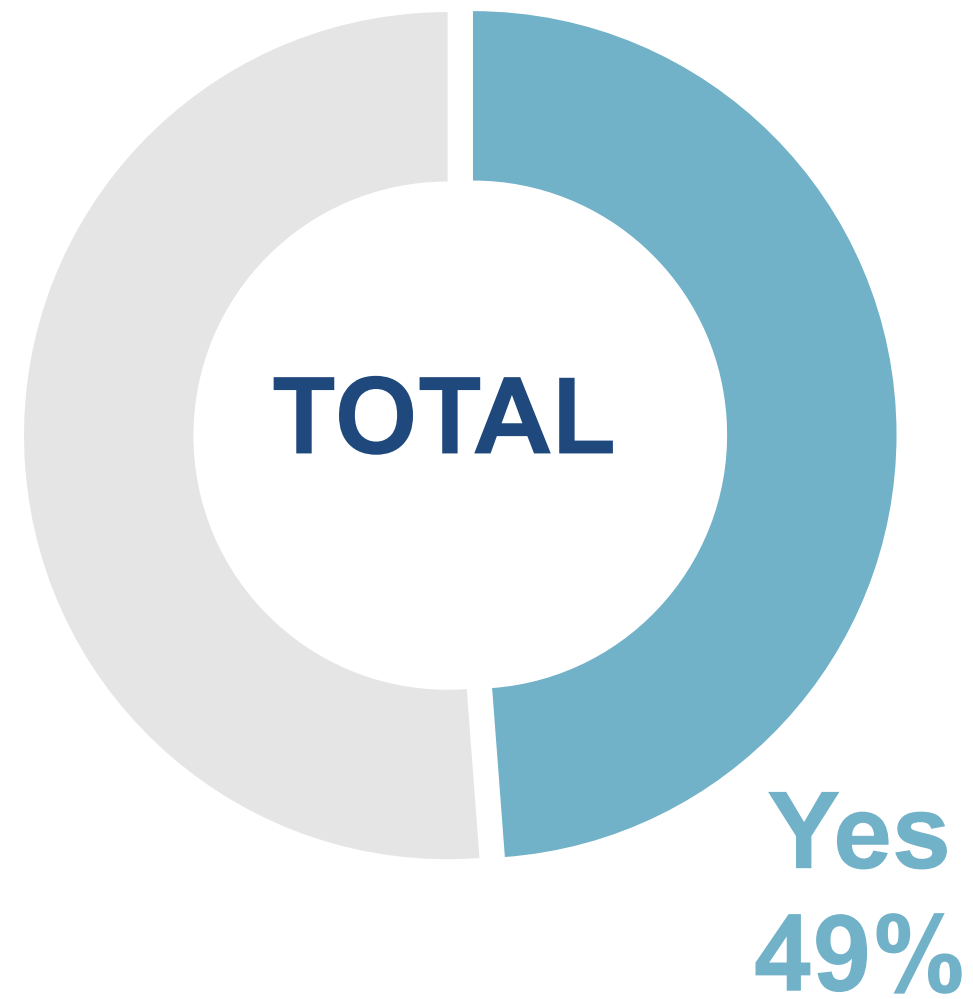
## Q2. How does tourism impact your city?

On the positive side, 52% of respondents think tourism has a big or moderate impact in generating wealth and income. On the other spectrum, 46% of respondents think it ‘creates overcrowding’.



Q3. Do you think there should be measures to manage tourism better in your city?

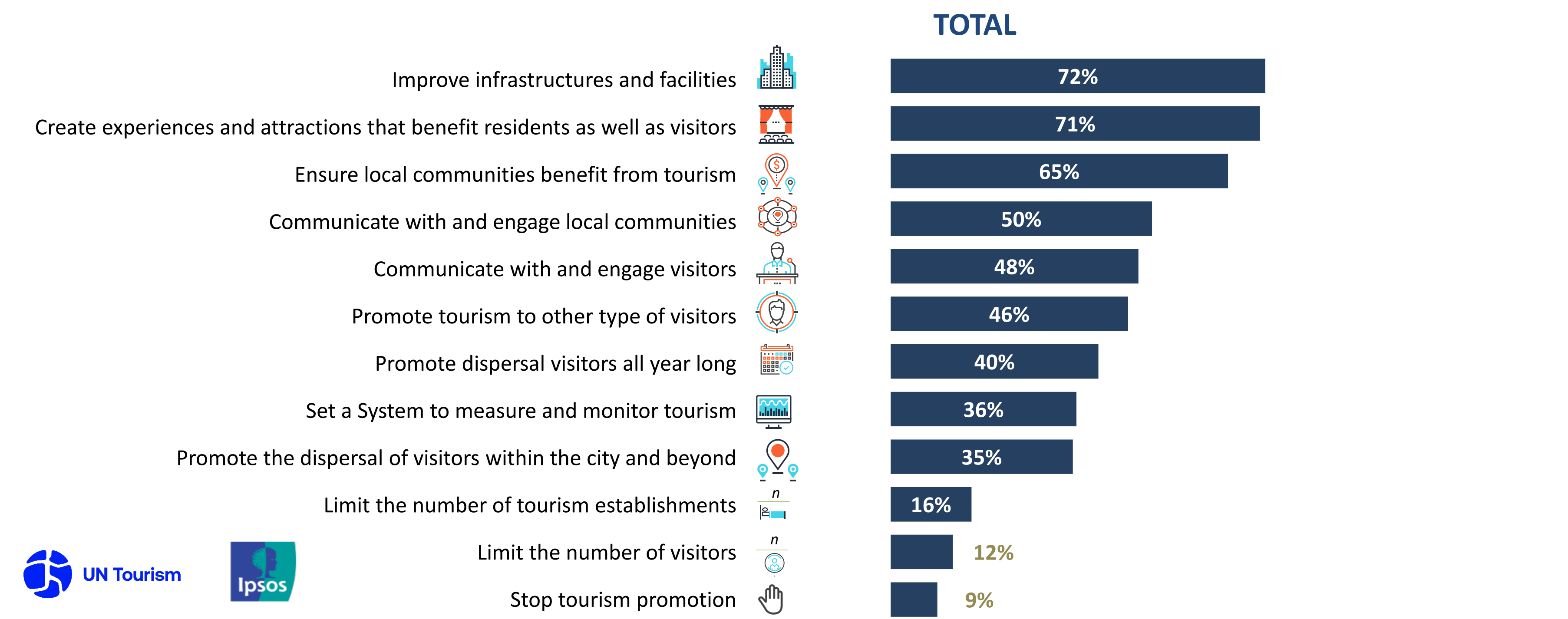
**49% of respondents feel that there should be measures to better manage city tourism.**





Q4. What measures do you think are more adequate to deal with the increase in the number of tourists to your city?

**‘Improve infrastructures and facilities’ (72%) and ‘create experiences and attractions that benefit both residents and visitors’ (71%) – key measures to address growing number of visitors.**







# Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST)

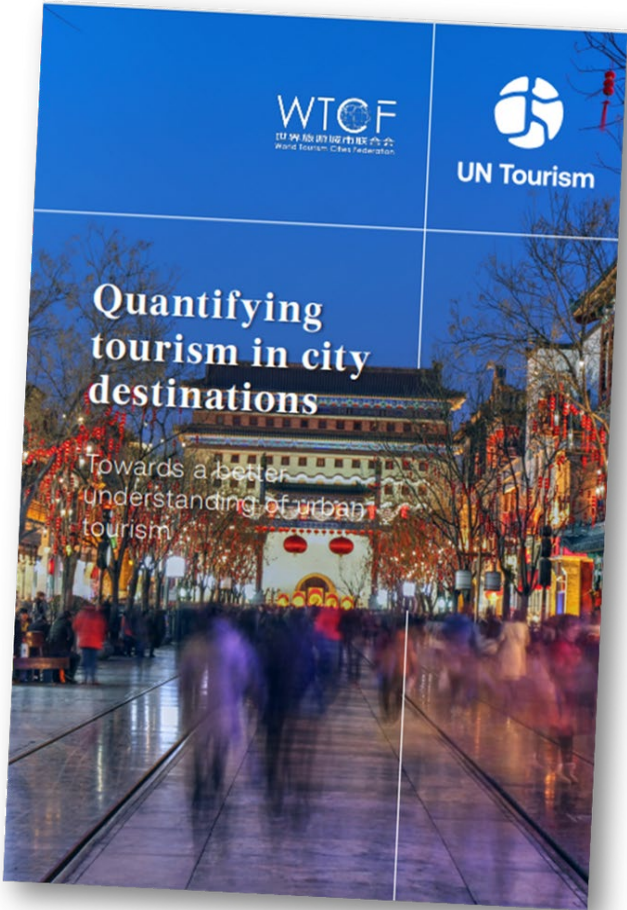
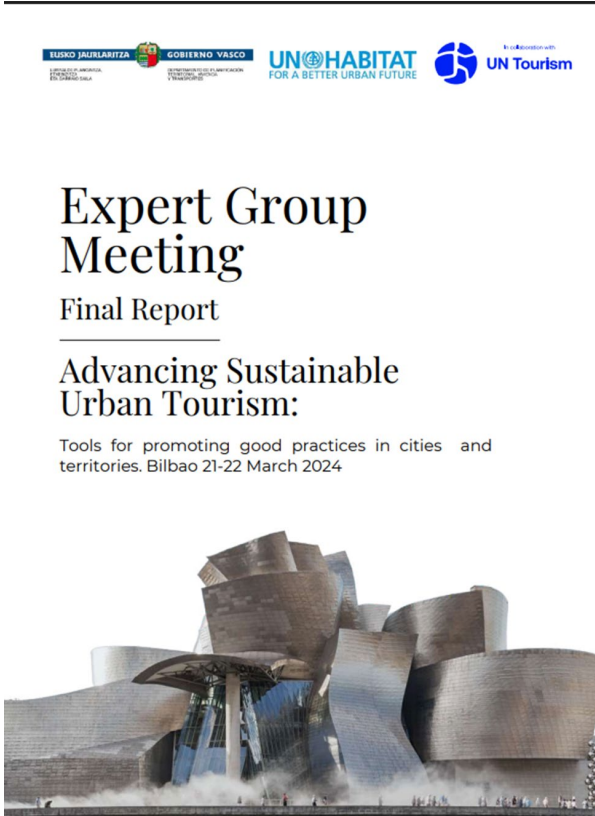
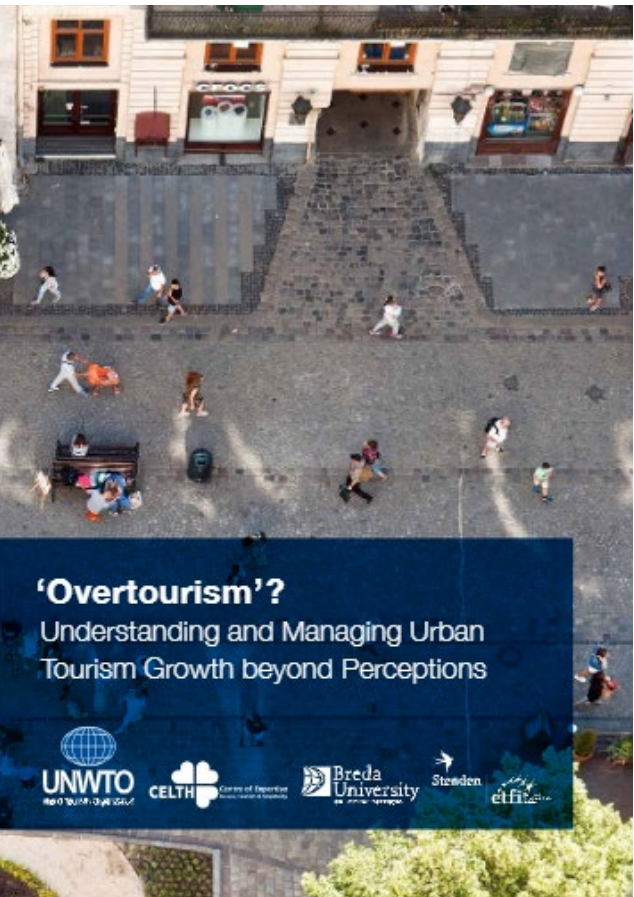


Download the latest version of the framework and publications on the MST pilots:





# UN Tourism Research on Urban Tourism





# Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth beyond Perceptions

STRATEGY 1: PROMOTE THE DISPERSAL OF VISITORS WITHIN THE CITY AND BEYOND;

STRATEGY 2: PROMOTE TIMEBASED DISPERSAL OF VISITORS;

STRATEGY 3: STIMULATE NEW VISITOR ITINERARIES AND ATTRACTIONS;

STRATEGY 4: REVIEW AND ADAPT REGULATION;

STRATEGY 5: ENHANCE VISITORS' SEGMENTATION;

STRATEGY 6: ENSURE LOCAL COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM TOURISM

STRATEGY 7: CREATE CITY EXPERIENCES THAT BENEFIT BOTH RESIDENTS AND VISITOR

STRATEGY 8: IMPROVE CITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES;

STRATEGY 9: COMMUNICATE WITH AND ENGAGE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS;

STRATEGY 10: COMMUNICATE WITH AND ENGAGE VISITORS;

STRATEGY 11: SET MONITORING AND RESPONSE MEASURES.





Changing the way in which **tourism is narrated, perceived and discussed.**

The need to focus more and more on **balancing tourism flows to make the sector sustainable**

From an individual-based to **role-based perspective.**

**Tourism and urban development** must go hand in hand

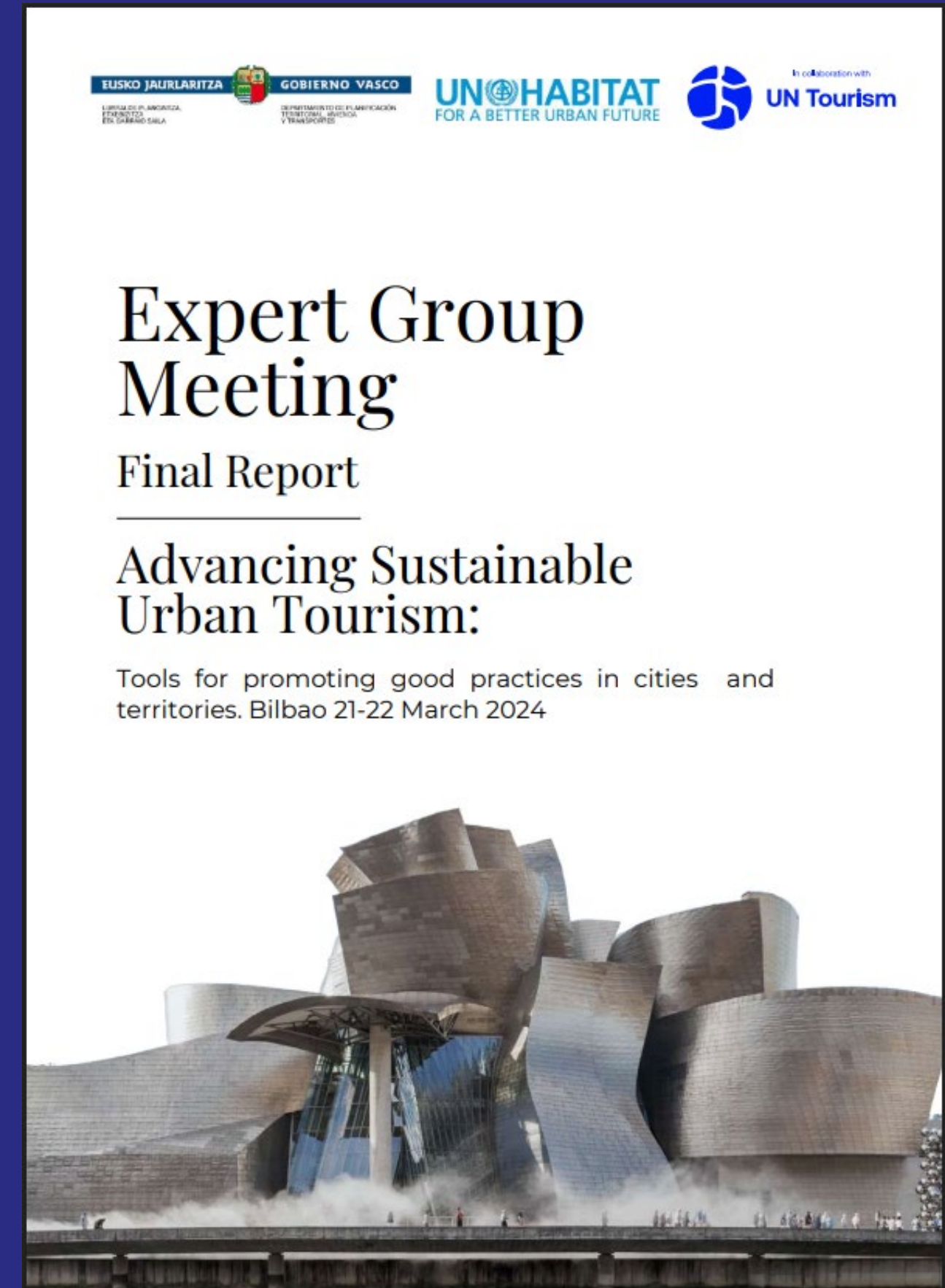
When doing the **balance between benefits and drawbacks of tourism**, in not all the cases the balance tends to the benefits side

In most cases, the **institutions** in charge of tourism planning and management **face challenges that are out of their mandates.**

From a place-based to **flow-based perspective**

Mutual understanding between those responsible for **tourism and urban and territorial planning** must be strengthened.

Cities faced important **challenges before tourism development.**







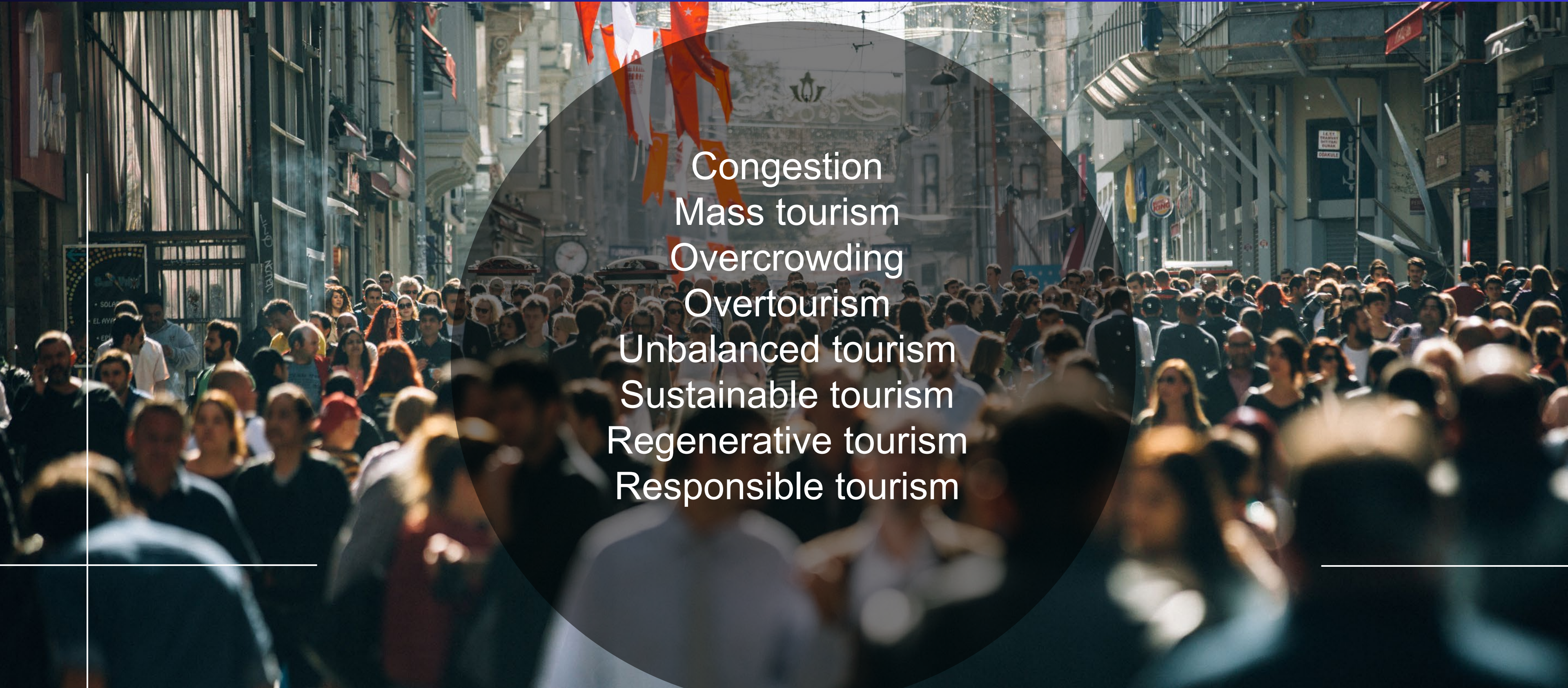
Planning and Managing  
Tourism Flows in time and space  
Socio-economic and cultural Impacts  
Use of natural and cultural resources  
Relationship with host communities:  
Measure, plan and manage  
Regulate when necessary and  
how necessary



# Final thoughts on concepts and communication: words matter



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Congestion  
Mass tourism  
Overcrowding  
Overtourism  
Unbalanced tourism  
Sustainable tourism  
Regenerative tourism  
Responsible tourism



# Final thoughts on concepts and communication: words matter



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Define “what and how”  
Plan  
Measure  
Manage  
Adjust  
Regulate  
Innovate

Smart Destinations  
New Governance Model





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# THANK YOU!

Sandra Carvão  
Chief, Market Intelligence, Policies and Competitiveness Department  
[Scarvao@unwto.org](mailto:Scarvao@unwto.org)