

Sustainable Cultural Tourism Strategies to Address the Impacts of Unbalanced Tourism

Focus on UNESCO designated sites

Transition pathway for EU Tourism - T4T

Unbalanced Rollercoaster: EU Tourism tools for a Smoother Ride
Workshop

Brussels, 27 May 2025



UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels
and Representation to the EU

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Understanding Unbalanced Tourism

- Tourism supports culture, jobs, and exchange.
- But when unmanaged, it can change the character of places, displace local life, and overwhelms infrastructures.
- Challenge: Keep tourism vibrant while protecting identity and quality of life.

Key challenges

- High visitor numbers in the same places and times.
- Social media trends & digital promotion tools adding to the problem.
- Limited planning and coordination.
- Pressures on housing, shops, and services.



Impacts on Heritage and Communities

- Fragile cultural and natural sites under stress.
- Fewer services and space for residents.
- Loss of traditional retail and local businesses.
- Reduced authenticity and local character.

Impacts & Consequences

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Derechos de autor Elijah G

CNN travelDestinationsFood & DrinkNewsStayVideo

Barcelona anti-tourism protesters fire water pistols at visitors

By Jack Guy, CNN
3 minute read · Updated 8:47 AM EDT, Tue July 9, 2025



Dos mujeres durante una manifestación contra el turismo masificado, a 6 de julio de 2024, en Barcelona, Catalunya

Lorena Sopna

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Les souvenirs de vacances exotiques, un danger pour la biodiversité

Plantes exotiques, morceau de corail ou encore sac en peau de crocodile... Ramener ce genre de souvenirs dans ses bagages peut coûter cher aux touristes, mais aussi à la biodiversité.

Article réservé aux abonnés



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ESPAS VERDS

'SOS' simbòlic de Recuperem el Park Güell per demanar menys turisme al parc

Veïns i activistes també van tallar aquest dissabte al matí la carretera del Carmel en un dels accessos més concorreguts al recinte



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Derechos de autor Europe Press via AP

Por [Rebecca Ann Hughes](#)
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Tools and Strategies for Management

- Timed entry, booking systems, & daily visitor limits
(e.g., Alhambra – Granada/Spain, Machu Picchu/Peru)
- Community-based tourism that centers local participation & benefits
- Creative storytelling and interpretation to promote respectful travel
- VMAST – A tool for smarter Management
- Monitor and Report Tourism Impacts More Rigorously
- Provide Capacity-Building and Technical Support
- Working Together Across Europe through partnerships
(e.g., European Alliance on Balanced Urban Tourism)



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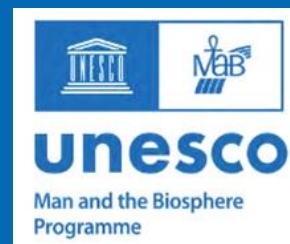
A Shared Commitment

UNESCO promotes tourism that protects culture and benefits local people.

By working together and using the right tools, we can make tourism better—for visitors and communities alike.

Balanced tourism is not less tourism.

It's more meaningful, responsible, and respectful.



Thank you!

Brussels, 27 May 2025

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