

First Mediterranean Regional Cruise Dialogue (MRCD), 14 October 2015, Olbia, Italy

Final Report

Background:

- The MRCD followed the first ‘Pan-European Cruise Dialogue’ held in Brussels in March 2015.
- The MRCD implements Action 3 of the European Commission’s Coastal and Maritime Tourism Strategy (2014).
- The MRCD gathered stakeholders from ports (14), cruise lines (9) and destinations (8).
- The Commission, represented by DG MARE and DG GROW, moderated the Dialogue.
- As expert, Mr F. Di Cesare provided introductory statements to each session.
- The Commission summarised the MRCD’s outcome to the ‘MedCruise’ general assembly (The Association of Mediterranean Cruise Ports), held in Olbia on 15.10.2015.

Main outcome:

- **Stakeholders from cruise lines, ports and destinations agreed to compile a ‘Common challenges paper’ by the end of 2015. This paper will:**
 - Describe the regional challenges hindering further sustainable growth and jobs.
 - Include the challenges identified during the MRCD (see below).
 - Establish benchmarked objectives to overcome those challenges (i.a. via milestones, action plan, identification of actors and timetable)

Challenges identified by Stakeholders during MRCD:

Session 1: “How to ensure that growth can be made sustainable?”

Stakeholders convened to:

- Develop strategies for better involving relevant representatives from ‘Destinations’.
- Adopt a more coordinated approach between all stakeholders to unlock further potential for sustainable growth and jobs.
- Improve the image of cruise tourism as there seems to be a biased public perception.
- Better define the concept of ‘sustainability’.
- Step up cooperation to better adapt to new tourism trends and clients’ needs.
- Step up cooperation to diversify tourism offers.
- Exchange best practices and experiences.
- Request action from legislators at appropriate level on several subjects, i.a.:
 - Visas;
 - Port Reception Facilities;
 - Streamlining funding administration for investment opportunities;
 - Improving overall coherence amongst various sectors’ legislation;
 - Reducing the burden for stakeholders who implement legislation;
 - Reducing obligations to buy services not needed by cruise ships (e.g. tugs, pilots);
 - Including cruise tourism in the Commission’s innovation agenda;
 - Tourist taxes;
 - Harbour duties.

Session 2: “Costs and impacts”

Stakeholders convened to:

- Coordinate early stage strategic investment planning to ensure long term ROI¹ for all.
- Flag the need for adapting PRF² to the peak demands and absorption capacities.
- Work on a mentality shift to adapt stakeholders' functioning methods to meet each other's needs.
- Improve transparency on local taxes, fees and other levies to streamline business.
- Improve communication on the benefits of cruise tourism in the wider perspective.
- Step up coordination to further develop product diversity in hinterlands.

Session 3: Cooperation for joint solutions

Stakeholders convened to:

- Encourage implementation of port specific berthing policies and more transparent tariffs.
- Find a common approach on how to handle inappropriate double booking of berths.
- Compile the above mentioned ‘Common challenges paper’ by the end of 2015.

¹ Return on Investment

² Port Reception Facilities