



**HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF TOURISM**

GREEK ANNUAL TOURISM REPORTING FOR 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

Council Decision 86/664/EEC of 22 December 1986¹ establishing a consultation and cooperation procedure in the field of tourism foresees that “each Member State shall send the Commission, once a year, a report on the most significant measures it has taken and, as far as possible, on measures it is considering taking in the provision of services for tourists which could have consequences for travellers from the other Member States”.

With the publication of the “Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism”, the Commission announced that “in order to strengthen the collaboration with and among Member States, their current annual reporting through the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) will be used to facilitate the exchange and the dissemination of information about how their policies and actions safeguard the sustainability of tourism”.

This Communication was welcomed by the Competitiveness Council conclusions (22nd-23rd November 2007) and by the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 14th December 2007.

The main aims for the reporting process are:

- to be able to monitor the level of implementation of the “Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism” by Member States;
- to facilitate the exchange of experiences among member States with regard to how they tackle issues which are important for the competitiveness and sustainability of European tourism.

MS reports referring to year n shall be sent to the European Commission by the end of February of year $n+1$.

If the reports are sent in English, the deadline is shifted to the end of April.

2. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

This section should provide an overview of the main organisational structure to illustrate how tourism is organised and managed, to identify linkages and to identify the engagement of other organisations/stakeholders.

The information required will only need to be prepared fully in year 1 as it will subsequently only be necessary to provide details of any changes.

¹ Official Journal L 384, 31/12/1986 P. 0052 – 0053.

2.1 Please identify the National Bodies responsible for tourism (Ministry and also any separate/related National Tourism Organisation), including key areas of responsibility, and their relationship to other national bodies. (maximum of 1.000 characters)

Greek tourism is administratively divided between central, regional and local tourism authorities, which are structured as follows:

The Greek Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Gov. Gazette 213/A/2009) and in particular the **General Secretariat of Tourism** (Gov. Gazette A/35/1-3-2010) is the competent authority to specifically deal with tourism issues. In broad terms, the Secretariat is responsible for the overall Greek tourism policy as well as for the regulation, planning and programming of the tourism development of the country within the framework of the government policy. Tourism is an intersectoral sector falling under the competence of various other ministries and the General Secretariat of Tourism has several executing agencies under its jurisdiction.

The **Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO)** is a Public Entity (PE) supervised by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Since 1950, the GNTO constitutes the ruling state agency for the tourism promotion of the country and the licensing of its tourism enterprises. According to the Law 3270/04 (Government Gazette 187/A/11.10.2004), GNTO consists of the Head Office located in Athens and the Regional Departments of Tourism (as of 01.01.2005, in Attica, Crete, Western Macedonia, Eastern Macedonia – Thraki, Western Greece, Epirus, Ionian Islands, Central Macedonia, Southern Aegean, Peloponnisos, Sterea Ellada, Thessalia, Northern Aegean). GNTO also maintains several Info Kiosks (in Argostoli, Ancient Olympia, Arta, Gytheio, Evia, Zakynthos, Igoumenitsa, Herakleion, Thessaloniki, Santorini, Kavala, Kalamata, Corfu, Korinthos, Larissa, Lefkada, Rethymno, Samos, Chania, Chios). Recent L. 3878/2010 regulates GNTO's organisation.

It is important to highlight at this point that: by virtue of article 30, L. 3498/2006, the Directorate of Tourism Policy and Coordination of the General Secretariat of Tourism supervises and provides its consent for all the tourism promotion activities of all public sector entities.

2.2 Please, describe what organisations/agencies are used to deliver services at the national and regional level and the services that they deliver. (maximum 800 characters)

Other institutions that are supervised by the Greek Ministry of Culture and Tourism are:

- **The Organisation of Tourism Education and Training (O.T.E.K.) (ex. Schools of Tourist Professions)**

The Organisation of Tourism Education and Training (O.T.E.K) is the specialized Greek state institution that provides education and training for professions in the field of Tourism. O.T.E.K operates as a legal entity of Public Law, under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Today, O.T.E.K includes the former Schools of Tourism Professions and the Schools for Tour Guides. In particular, OTEK operates 2 Advanced Schools of Tourism Education, 8 Vocational Schools (Secondary Education), 9 Institutes of Vocational Training (Post-Secondary Education) and 4 Schools of Tourist Guides. Furthermore, the Institutes of Vocational Training of the OTEK provide specialisation in the fields of Culinary Art, Hospitality and Catering Operations, Travel Agencies Operations and Housekeeping Assistance. In the field of alternative tourism, the Institutes of Vocational Training is currently operating three new specializations -Mountain Escort, Thalassotherapy-Spa Specialist, Balneotherapy-Spa Specialist.

- **The Hellenic Tourism Development Co. (HTDC) (ex-Hellenic Tourist Properties SA)**

The Tourism Development Co. is a public corporation and organisation managing real estate assets, supervised by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which manages public tourism assets, acting in between the public and the private sector in order to assure optimal property development, thereby contributing to meeting tourism property goals. The Company's main scope of activity is to manage and administrate the state-owned tourism property while securing optimal development through modern financial techniques that promote the synergies. The state owned tourism property portfolio managed by Tourism Development Co., consists of business units - casinos, marinas, hotels, organized beaches, natural springs, campings, ski centers, golf courses, etc. - and undeveloped sites.

- **The Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (HCC)**

The Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, supervised by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, operates as a legal entity governed by public law. Since 1935, the HCC is an important statutory advisor of the State on tourism matters and has by law as members all the hotels operating in Greece. The Chamber is

managed by an Administrative Council of elected representatives of the hotels all over the country and representatives of the State. The HCC is member of the Confederation of National Hotel and Restaurant Associations in the European Union (HOTREC).

A more detailed presentation of the above-mentioned bodies has been already provided in the previous years' report.

It is important to add at this point that tourism services are provided not only at the central level –as delineated above- but also at the regional and local levels. Regions, Decentralised Administration and Municipalities set up and implement tourism programmes related to and in favour of their area of responsibility. The administration status (central, regional, local) of the country has been recently reformed by L. 3852/2010 (Gov. Gazette 87/A'/7.6.2010), entitled "New Architecture of Local Government and Decentralised Administration – Programme Kallikratis".

2.3 Please, describe which other bodies and organisations are involved at the national level and the process for involving them. (maximum 800 characters)

All relevant bodies and organisations as well as the process for involving them, are mentioned in the previous years' report.

It is important to add that in order to better manage the resources of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF), the Special Unit of Coordination, Management and Implementation of Tourism Projects of the General Secretariat of Tourism was established (Gov. Gazette B/1635 and modified by Gov. Gazette B/315) and according the modification of the joint ministerial decision 67343/29.12.2000 (Gov. Gazette 240/B/11.02.2011) its competencies have been assumed by the Special Service of Culture and Tourism.

During 2010, said Special Service coordinated its actions with all of its supervised agencies, namely the Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO), the Hellenic Tourism Development Co. (HTDC), the Organisation of Tourism Education and Training (O.T.E.K.) and the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (HCC), as far as the submission of the suggestions on the co-funded programmes of tourism were concerned. The Special Service is also responsible for the approval and assessment of the co-funded programmes of tourism.

2.4 Please provide a diagram/organogram of the organisational structure for tourism identifying the relationship between national, regional and local bodies. Provide also a short description of the core responsibilities and competencies of each of the organisations. Include also information regarding the direct and indirect links between other departments, stakeholder organisations and unions. Information about mechanisms of decision

making process participation from outsider organisations, e.g. forums, advisory committees is also requested.
(maximum of 2.000 characters)

Coordination of the policies within the public administration is achieved by bringing closer the Heads and Senior Officials of the Ministries whose competencies are directly linked to tourism within the framework of the **National Board of Tourism**. In said Board, the local administration is represented as well.

The mission of the National Board of Tourism is to establish, follow-up and update -if necessary- the National Development Strategy after achieving broad stakeholder consensus as well as mobilise all the productive sectors to implement the strategy and coordinate their efforts. Its principal aim is to contribute to the improvement of the national competitiveness taking into account the relevant international assessment systems and promote the country's role within the international and regional markets so as to take the lead in the Balkans and the South-East Europe.

Apart from this formal and direct linkages with ministries and services of joint-competency, more indirect linkages are mentioned involving cooperation with trade associations and professional unions, chambers and research centres (i.e HATTA, SETE, etc).

Greece participates and cooperate among others with the Tourism Advisory Committee of the European Commission, the World Tourism Organisation, the Organisation for the Economic Cooperation and Development, the EUROSTAT, the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, etc.

2.5 Please provide information about financial data, including spend on tourism as a percentage of overall government spend, the level of national funding support for tourism marketing, the amount of EU funding support made available for tourism and data concerning the support to SMEs and Destinations. (500 characters)

The tourism sector covers 1.1% of the National Public Investment Programme 2010, with 112.000.000,00€; 50.000.000,00€ are channelled to co-funded programmes with the participation at the Structural Funds of the EU and 62.000.000,00 are entirely funded from national recourses.

3. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

3.1 Is there a current National Strategy for tourism? Yes No

If yes, please, provide information in bullet point format about the key aims, objectives and priorities of the strategy highlighting those that are designed to address sustainability issues in economic, environmental and social terms in particular those related in the six aims included in the Agenda. In preparing the tourism strategy,

explain how consideration has been given to the 9 principles set out in the Agenda (para2.3 p5) and given in the appendix. (maximum 1.000 characters)

The Greek Ministry of Culture and Tourism lays special emphasis on the promotion of the Greek tourism resources and cultural heritage as well as the actual cultural creations and events, combining all three sectors of tourism, culture and sports. Revenue from tourism contributes essentially to the balance of payments of the country while tourism is the instrument of regional development par excellence.

The ***National Strategy for Tourism*** aims at broadly promoting the Greek culture as well as creating a human-centred and environment-friendly identity of the Greek tourism. In particular, strategic objective of the Ministry (General Secretariat for Tourism) is to enhance the local-featured and social identity of tourism activity as well as modernise the national tourism product systematically, by enriching the tourism offer with innovative and diversified services. Within this framework, the national tourism policy is set as a horizontal umbrella under which synergies are encouraged among multiple productive sectors in order to develop and upgrade tourism throughout the country and against seasonality.

More specifically, the priorities of the Greek tourism policy are as follows:

- ❖ lengthening of the tourism period – mitigating seasonality
- ❖ upgrading of accommodation (specifications, investment incentives)
- ❖ integration of tourism businesses into the new technologies (use of new technologies for the protection of the natural and human tourism product, internet, e-commerce, tour operating etc.)
- ❖ dealing with tourism related issues created by outstanding interministerial matters.
- ❖ Training of human resources (e.g. with accreditation of new skills).

Furthermore, the primary strategic objective for the Programme Period 2007-2013 is to increase demand and upgrade the quality of the tourism product and the services provided at all levels. In particular, the different objectives of said period 2007-2013 are:

- ❖ The development of the natural-cultural resources of the country for the enhancement of the tourism product.
- ❖ The differentiation of the tourism product with the dynamic development of the special forms of tourism together with the rational extension and the continuous upgrade of the tourist activities which are connected to the traditional “sea and sun” model.
- ❖ The creation or upgrade of the country’s tourism infrastructure including the

infrastructure required for the development of special forms of tourism.

- ❖ The upgrade of qualifications and skills and the valorisation of human resources in tourism, which are essential for the development of the tourism sector.
- ❖ The enhancement of the international promotion of the country as a secure and attractive tourist destination.
- ❖ The mitigation of seasonality all over the Greek territory through the increased influx of foreign visitors and the enhancement of domestic tourism.
- ❖ The rational management of spatial planning problems which have long held back the development of the sector and the promotion of legal and institutional issues required for the dynamic development of all tourism forms in the framework of the environment-friendly and sustainable development of the country, with respect to the environment and the cultural heritage at national and local level.
- ❖ The encouragement of innovative actions with the valorisation of the achievements and the tools of Knowledge Society, the modern Information and Communication Technologies and the modern financial tools.
- ❖ Interventions in the tourism sector aim at providing special and integrated tourist services and promoting and further developing the special forms of tourism in order to mitigate seasonality.
- ❖ At the same time, the publicity and promotion of our country's tourism product will be targeted at attracting tourists to special destinations that will be enhanced through the programmed public works within the framework of the operational programme "Entrepreneurship – Competitiveness" and other relative programmes (Regional and Sectoral Operational Programmes).
- ❖ Upgrading the human capital of the tourism sector through a network of interventions in the field of tourism education and training.

As far as **Product Development** is concerned, the overall strategy incorporates nine distinct tourism sectors:

- ❖ Seaside Tourism – Sea & Sun – Diving
- ❖ Nautical Tourism
- ❖ Cultural and Religious Tourism
- ❖ Touring – Gastronomy
- ❖ MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions)
- ❖ Countryside - Rural – AgroTourism
- ❖ Health and Wellness Tourism
- ❖ City Breaks and

❖ Sport Tourism.

As far as the strategy of tourism promotion is concerned, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism proceeded to the development of a new strategy based on three different directions:

- a) creation of a new image and brand, based on the visitor's experience,
- b) design a new communication and setting a marketing strategy which emphasises a strong, "smart" and targeted presence of the country in the network and
- c) development and extension of the tourism product to overcome the traditional three-folded model "Sea, Sun, Sand" and cover diversified products which will emphasise tourism activities of special interest and relevant tourism markets. The implemented actions aim at promoting tourism of 52 weeks per year throughout the country.

Greek tourism promotion through the internet and the international media continued for 2010; the advertising campaign of the GNTO appears every year in the internet, travel agencies and international tv networks, newspapers and magazines. For 2010, an important communication tool in order to confront bad publicity was entitled "You in Greece". Real people from all over the world with different social, racial or other background, seeking for new experiences and true human values, promote Greece as a unique destination, throw into relief its still unexplored beauties and spread this message to the whole world. This is what YOUINGREECE is all about: a chance for everyone to recite their unique, authentic story from Greece. Their own testimonies "bring to life" Greece's eternal fascination! The slogan for this year's particularly imaginative campaign, depending on the services the GNTO wishes to advertise, may be altered into "You and your family in Greece" when family vacations are concerned, or into "Youth in Greece" for forms of tourism addressed to younger tourists, or even into "Culture in Greece", promoting the priceless cultural treasures of the country that have long constituted a major attracting pole for tourists from all over the world. The GNTO participated also this year in the most important international tourism fairs and other fairs of special interest (amounted to 102).

Through the NSFR, the Action Plan for Tourism is mainly funded by the sectoral operational programme "Entrepreneurship – Competitiveness" 2007-2013. In particular, the relevant resources are directed to the development of tourism infrastructure, actions of state aid, actions funded through the Investment Law as well as actions of education and training of the human resources. The actions of state aid are designed taking into consideration sustainability issues, comprising 4 basic programmes implemented by all 13 Greek regions:

a) Green Tourism, b) Alternative Tourism, c) Cooperate and Innovate and d) Modernisation of the tourism sector. Additionally, the General Secretariat of Tourism is going to participate to the following three programmes of the NSFR: a) operational programme "Digital Convergence", b) operational programme "Administrative Reform" and c) programmes of "European Territorial Cooperation".

3.2 Who was the initiator and who is responsible for its implementation? (maximum 200 characters)

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism that coordinates its actions with other Ministries with which it shares the responsibility to implement the National Tourism Strategy -given the ample competency scope of tourism as an activity. For the implementation of national tourism policy, the General Secretariat of Tourism supervises the services of the Greek National Tourism Organisation (central and regional tourism services) and also assumes the role of coordinator of the works of the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, the Ministry of Rural Development and Food and the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks. The Greek Ministry of Culture and Tourism also cooperates closely with the Ministry of Economy, Competitiveness and Shipping as well as the Hellenic Statistical Authority. The Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs approves the curricula of the Schools of the Organisation of Tourism Education and Training.

Generally speaking, the National Strategy for Tourism results from a consultation of the Ministry with the social stakeholders, the regions and the ministries of joint responsibility – which develop synergies with tourism.

3.3 How is the strategy monitored and how often? (maximum 500 characters)

The national tourism strategy is monitored twice a year, once per semester, by an institutionalised collective body of wide composition, the National Board of Tourism. As already mentioned, said official board involves the participation of the most important tourism stakeholders in the tourism policy decision-making by encouraging their participation. Other aspects of the national tourism strategy are monitored and re-oriented, if necessary, by services/Directorates of the General Secretariat of Tourism or by closer interministerial schemes.

More precisely, as far the national tourism promotion strategy is concerned, the monitoring of the compatibility of the promotional initiatives of the regions and the decentralised administration with the centrally-formed planning and concept, is constantly assumed by the Directorate of Tourism Policy and Coordination of the General Secretariat of

3.4 What tourism specific legislation exists? (maximum 500 characters)

The General Secretariat of Tourism has routed a series of actions of legislative nature for the completion, complementation or upgrade of the institutional framework, which are necessary for the development of the sector and the successful implementation of the designed policies. The main tourism legislation is mentioned in the previous years' annual report. Relevant developments are the following:

By L. 3844/2010 "Adaptation of the Greek legislation to Directive 2006/123 of the European Parliament and the Council concerning services in internal market and other dispositions" (Gov. Gazette 63/A'), empowering dispositions were given to the competent Ministries for the issuance of administrative regulations of compliance with the spirit and letter of the Directive 2006/123/EC. As a consequence, Common Ministerial Decisions - C.M.D. (concerning mainly the simplification of procedures of granting the Special Operation Label and the integration of these procedures into the Common Service Centers provided for by the Directive) were issued for the following tourism businesses:

- 1) Rent A Car (C.M.D. no 16597/2010, Gov. Gazette 2156/B')
- 2) Rent A Moto (C.M.D. no 16598/2010, Gov. Gazette 2189/B')
- 3) Tourist Agencies (C.M.D. no 1597/2011, Gov. Gazette 180/B')
- 4) Thematic Parks (C.M.D. no DIADP/F.A.2.1./1619/2011, Gov. Gazette 28/B')
- 5) Conference Centers (C.M.D. no DIADP /F.A.2.1./1621/2011, Gov. Gazette 29/B')
- 6) Tourist accommodation (C.M.D. no DIADP /F.A.2.1./1622/2011, Gov. Gazette 27/B')
- 7) Golf courses (C.M.D. no DIADP /F.A.2.1./1623/2011, Gov. Gazette 29/B')
- 8) Ski centers (C.M.D. no DIADP/F.A.2.1./1624/2011, Gov. Gazette 28/B')
- 9) Centers of Coach and Sports Tourism (C.M.D. no DIADP/F.A.2.1./1626/2011, Gov. Gazette 26/B')
- 10) Race-track (C.M.D. no DIADP/F.A.2.1./1628/2011, Gov. Gazette 25/B').

Cross-border service provision by tourism businesses in the Greek territory (C.M.D. no 2874/2011, Gov. Gazette 421/B').

Two important recently published laws concerning investments are:

- The Investment Law 3908/2011, which replaced the L. 3299/2004.
- L. 3894/2010 for the "Acceleration and Transparency of the Implementation of Strategic Investments".

4. MEASURES AND INITIATIVES

This section provides Member States with an opportunity to outline specific initiatives and policies that are or are going to be adopted to manage and develop tourism activity in ways which respond to the key challenges of the Agenda and which fall within the six main aims of the Agenda itself.

1 Economic prosperity

- a. To ensure the long term competitiveness, viability and prosperity of tourism enterprises and destinations.
- b. To provide quality employment opportunities, offering fair pay and conditions for all employees and avoiding all forms of discrimination.

2 Social equity and cohesion

- a. To enhance the quality of life of local communities through tourism, and engage them in its planning and management
- b. To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, religion, disability or in other ways.

3 Environmental and cultural protection

- a. To minimise pollution and degradation of the global and local environment and the use of scarce resources by tourism activities.
- b. To maintain and strengthen cultural richness and biodiversity and contribute to their appreciation and conservation.

4.1 Please set out, briefly, the steps which have been or will be taken, if any, to address the 7 key challenges for the delivery of sustainable and competitive tourism, covered in the TSG report and referred to in the 'Agenda'.

4.1.1 Reducing the seasonality of demand. (maximum 200 characters)

Seasonality, with its associated problems of congestion, environmental damage and under-utilisation of resources, causes major difficulties to the competent authorities, the travel industry and the local communities. For this purpose, the General Secretariat of Tourism intends to increasingly mitigate it by enriching and diversifying the tourism product through special forms of tourism ("tourism for 52 weeks"). By enhancing the special tourism infrastructure (marines, thalassotherapy centers, conference centers, ski centers etc.) and promoting the special forms of tourism (sea tourism, dive tourism, winter tourism, mountain tourism, climbing tourism, gastronomic tourism, religious tourism, cultural tourism, historical tourism, sports tourism, ecological tourism, adventure tourism, city tourism, senior tourism, tourism for persons with special needs etc.), supported through the current operational programme and by the new Investment Law (3908/2011), the distribution of tourism

demand throughout the whole year is achieved, thus decongesting the regions “struck” by mass tourism.

The overall strategy is to offer a variety of options, penetrate into as many and different markets as possible as well as set an influential tourism pattern, confirming the country’s capability to meet the expectations of visitors with varied motives and multiple demands. All this variety is expected to ensure the viability of tourism enterprises operating through the whole year. In addition, an objective of paramount significance is the quality improvement in every aspect –in services, tourism infrastructure, visitors attracted in the country- which will contribute to the improvement of Greece’s global presence (new markets, further boosting of traditional markets) and at the same time ensure favourable conditions for greater investments.

Additionally, special emphasis is put by the GNTTO on the creation of infrastructure of tourist activities in low season: In particular, the organisation completed several ecotourism routes, trekking paths and information kiosks throughout Greece within the framework of co financed operational programmes (i.e. Santorini, Evia, Alonissos, Prefecture of Heraklion, Marathonas, Lakonia). Furthermore, it proceeded to the auctioning of important projects, such as ecotourist routes in Old Epidavros, Skopelos, Ithaca and Vitina, the promotion of climbing routes in Astraka of Ioannina and the regeneration of the lake region in Perama of Ioannina.

More than this, the GNTTO runs the programme “Tourism for all”, granting coupons of Social Tourism to all people, disabled or not. Said programmes refer to the period from October to March, which constitutes a low tourism demand period for Greece.

Furthermore, OTEK contributes to the mitigation of the seasonality of tourism demand by enriching tourism education with new programmes as well as operating new specialisations in the field of alternative forms of tourism (i.e. Mountain Escort, Thalassotherapy-Spa Specialist, Balneotherapy-Spa Specialist).

Moreover, the Hellenic Tourism Development Co. (HTDC) promotes the development and markets green tourism products and services which have a profound influence on tourism demand, eliminating seasonality. For instance, it has proceeded to the construction and operation of environment friendly campings in Skotina, Pieria and Fanari, Komotini, to the creation of trekking paths and mountain bike in the ski centre of Parnassos, as well as to the valorisation and utilisation of the “portfolio” of national thermal springs.

Strategies for addressing seasonality problems also include spreading tourists geographically, tackling transport congestion issues and implementing visitor management techniques and restricted access arrangements.

It is true that the consequences of all the relevant issues with tourism transportation developments are maximised in Greece since the airplane overwhelmingly dominates as a mean of foreign tourists' arrival. For this reason, all the efforts of the tourism authorities (and of the ministries with which they share the tourism competency) are concerted to the direction of tackling the accessibility issue of several destinations through the development and promotion of alternative means.

4.1.3 Improving the quality of tourism jobs. (maximum 200 characters)

The aim of the Greek tourism employment policy is to create new quality employment without discriminations as well as improve the quality of existing jobs related to tourism by enhancing career progression and opportunities. While setting up the national tourism policy, the General Secretariat of Tourism takes into consideration not only the interests of tourism entrepreneurs but also of the large number of employees working in the tourism sector. In this respect, all programmes of state aid referring to tourism are linked to the responsibility for the entrepreneurs who are subsidised to maintain jobs.

The Greek Organisation of Tourism Education and Training operates as a legal entity of Public Law, under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. OTEK is the specialised Greek state institution that provides education and training for professions in the field of tourism and intends to gradually meet all the challenges of the sector which fall within its scope of activity. Said organization strives to constantly modernise and mainly extend its educational content, by enriching its programmes and syllabus with new and up-to-date specialisations and subjects. OTEK's functioning is based on L. 3105/2003 (Gov. Gazette A' /29/10-02-2003).

First of all, OTEK's contribution to the improvement of the quality of tourism jobs is directly attained by its programmes of education and training. The running programme, with the co-funding by the European Social Fund, promotes education and training of tourism employees with the aim to upgrade their qualifications and skills and improve the quality of tourism jobs in general by incorporating the perspective of lifelong learning). As far as Continuing Training is concerned, each year OTEK operates courses of continuous training in various cities, addressed to people already working on tourism or to seasonally unemployed workers, who only have knowledge of their workplace based on experience. The participants

have the possibility to systematise and complement their technical skills with the necessary theoretical knowledge in order to improve their performance to service provision. The programme of “continuous training of workers and seasonally unemployed workers under the prospect of modernising and upgrading the offered services in the field of tourism 2009-2010” started in 10/02/2009 and was completed in 31/03/2010.

It is essential to add at this point that the Social Tourism programmes subsidised by the GNT0, are aiming, inter alia, at supporting employment as a whole in the Greek tourism enterprises.

4.1.4 Maintaining and enhancing community prosperity and the quality of life, in the face of change. (maximum 200 characters)

The **Special Framework of Spatial Planning for Tourism** principally aims at improving living conditions and prosperity levels in the regions of the country and in favor of the local communities. In this respect, it sets guidelines, regulations and criteria for the physical planning and the organisation of tourism in the Greek territory in general, and at the same time defines the necessary infrastructure. The plan has been prepared to guide investment decisions and provide specifications for the type and intensity of tourism development. It is expected to open up development possibilities for the Greek tourism through the thematic, spatial and temporal expansion of tourism activity under the conditions of sustainability and quality. For this reason, it incorporates a long-term perspective for the next 15-year period (2009-2024).

In addition, tourism developing areas are integrated to the incentive regime of the National Development Law and the tourism enterprises are supported through the co-funded programmes of the EU (NSFP). In particular:

a) Through the development and promotion of alternative and special forms of tourism, the General Secretariat of Tourism and the GNT0 intend to boost sustainable tourism. These forms of tourism are integrated into local development plans and are supported by local communities’ initiatives. The programme “*Alternative Tourism*” finances investment plans for the establishment and the modernisation of tourism enterprises which support tourism of special and alternative interests (nautical, sport – training, climbing, adventure tourism, city breaks and seniors’ tourism, gastronomy, etc) as well as plans for the restoration and promotion of traditional cultural and historical resources of tourist interest (i.e. traditional wooden ships, industrial heritage, handcraft establishments, etc). The development of alternative tourism aims at attracting high revenue tourists, mitigating seasonality of

demand and diffusing tourist flows throughout Greece. Moreover, infrastructure of low scale and with respect to the environment is created (natural, social, cultural and economic environment), valorizing its development potential.

b) In order to promote the sustainable local and regional tourism development through the *National Public Investment Programme* many actions were also funded (the programme is still running). Said actions were implemented in cooperation with the local authorities and other bodies and involved the organisation of cultural events of tourist interest as well the elaboration of studies and the carrying-out of tourism development plans aiming at local and regional prosperity.

The Social Tourism programmes, implemented and subsidised by the GNTO, contribute to the improvement of the prosperity and the standard of living of local communities through the increase of tourism traffic and subsequently of the aggregated demand-consumption.

Taking into consideration the challenges set in the "Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism" and with a view to maintaining and improving the prosperity of local communities involved in and affected by the tourism activity, O TEK gradually incorporates the sustainability principles into its programmes of education and training.

The Hellenic Tourism Development Co. aims, inter alia, a) at creating new jobs in the tourism infrastructure it supports, not only at the construction phase but also during its operation. The multiplier effects of said investments will be important, since they concern innovative enterprises of high quality services; b) at contributing to the improvement of the quality of life, mainly due to its offer of spaces for common use (ie. the creation of the biking/cycling route throughout the coastal front of Attica).

4.1.5 Minimising resource use and the production of waste. (maximum 200 characters)

First of all, it is essential that tourism overdeveloped/saturated areas are characterised as such, in order to be exempted from the incentive regime of the National Development Law. Such conditionality is very important to contain overcoming their carrying capacity as well as minimising the use of natural resources and waste production. As far as the tourism enterprises are concerned, they are increasingly oriented towards the adoption of environment-friendly practices as well as general actions of protection of the environment, through the acquisition of ecological quality labels, such as the eco-flower, the green key, the green tourism, the green hospitality, the green globe, the ocean eco-label, the Nordic swan, etc.

Within the framework of the NSFR and under the sectoral operational programme

“Entrepreneurship – Competitiveness” 2007-2013, the General Secretariat of Tourism runs the programme “Green Tourism” which gives tourism enterprises the possibility to implement models of environment-friendly management of total quality (i.e. eco-hotels). It also finances investment plans for energy and resources’ saving as well as for the use by tourism enterprises of renewable sources of energy. This programme also funds investment plans of tourism enterprises willing to minimise waste production. All enterprises which will fulfill those purposes will be granted ecological certification.

Furthermore, the GNTO promotes certification systems aiming at environment-friendly management of tourism enterprises (European Ecolabel scheme, green key).

The Hellenic Tourism Development Co. aims at the decrease of the energy it uses and mainly of its ecological footprint, through actions such as: a) in the Centre Ski of Parnassos, the use of two wind engines for the power generation of 2MW, equal to the relative consumption of the facility, of snow-ploughs and snow-ply machines of antipollution technology as well as of the space heating through biomass burning and b) the creation of a desalination unit of 2000m³/d production through the use of renewable sources of energy in Paliouri, Chalkidiki, which will cover not only the energy needs of the involved company but also and mainly the water supply of the local community whose population during the summer rates to 10.000.

4.1.6 Conserving and giving value to natural and cultural heritage. (maximum 200 characters)

Culture is a comparative advantage, since it contributes to the development of tourism of high and medium per capita spending, of special-thematic forms of tourism, as well as forms contributing to the mitigation of seasonality. Therefore, it contributes to the improvement of the attractiveness of the country, its regions and cities, both through the protection and promotion of the Cultural Heritage, which is directly related to the preservation of the natural and physical environment, and through the development of modern culture.

The Greek Ministry of Culture and Tourism lays special emphasis on infrastructure promoting the rich natural and cultural resources of the country and giving value to the abundant Greek tourism resources, cultural heritage and important ecosystem. Relevant actions concern:

- ❖ Ecotourism – Hiking trails
- ❖ Tourist refugees – moorings
- ❖ Information Centers and Centers of Environmental Education
- ❖ Creation of museums and exhibition centers
- ❖ Utilisation of listed monuments (movable and immovable) as well as of locations of high natural and cultural value

- ❖ Thematic cultural networks
- ❖ Restoration, upgrading, modernisation and utilisation of the tourism properties
- ❖ Targeted actions for the development of special infrastructure supporting alternative tourism (i.e. diving, sport tourism, etc).

In particular, during 2010 the following infrastructure projects were integrated into the NSFP:

- Promotion of the climbing route of Astrakas (Mountain Timfi) – Installation of protection and energy saving systems (natural environment)
- Promotion of the climbing route of Olympos – Installation of protection and energy saving systems (natural environment)
- Ecotourism Routes of the island of Skopelos (natural environment)
- Ecotourism Routes of the Municipality of Vytina (natural environment)
- Ecotourism Routes of the island of Ithaca (natural environment)
- Ecotourism Routes of the island of Kefalonia (natural environment)
- Promotion of the climbing paths of Fthiotida (natural environment)
- Tourism valorization and promotion of the lake region of the Municipality of Perama of Ioannina (natural environment)
- Tourism valorization and promotion of areas of the Municipality of of Kymi of the island of Evia (natural environment)
- Improvement of the area of Kyani Akti and of the castle of Pantocrator of the Municipality of Preveza (natural and cultural environment)
- Electroluminescence of the fortress of Spinaloga (natural and cultural environment)
- Regeneration and promotion of paths close to the Small Theater of Ancient Epidavros (natural and cultural environment)
- Regeneration and promotion of old Electricity and improvement of the surrounding area of the Municipality of Archanes, Heraklion, Crete (cultural environment)
- Regeneration of the surrounding area of the Holy Monastery of Saint George of Neraida of the Municipality of Stilida (cultural environment)
- Restoration of the house of Elefterios Venizelos of Halepa, Chania, Crete (cultural environment)
- Infrastructure for the attraction, management and information of visitors of the area of Ancient Olympia (cultural environment)
- Museum of Mastiha of the island of Chios (cultural environment)
- Museum of Silversmith of Ioannina (cultural environment)
- Museum of the Technology of Paper and of the Greek Printing of Corfu (cultural environment).

In addition, the GNTO actually completed the restoration of Poretsos Monastery in the Prefecture of Ilia and the creation of a Cultural Centre as well as the restoration of buildings of traditional architecture and the creation of museums and Centers of Environmental Information (mansion-house Petralia, School of Orini at the Municipality of Lampeia, Prefecture of Ilia). The organization has also proceeded to studies for the promotion of the old electric plant in Archanes of Heraklion, Crete, of the castle of Pantokratoras in Preveza and of the Monastery of St. George in Stylida and to the integration of the projects into co-funded operational programmes.

The Hellenic Tourism Development Co. promotes the protection of the natural and cultural heritage and the recognition of its value through: a) the promotion of protected areas, such as the water reserve of the Fanari, Komotini, b) the utilisation of listed monuments, such as the museum and the gardens of Achillion in Corfu, the island of Spinaloga, as well as the balneal centre of Aidipsos and finally c) the compliance of a series of hotels with the international environmental management models ISO 14001, EMAS and the promotion of actions of accreditation (Greenbuilding, ECOLABEL, EEAS, DGNB, ISO 26000) for their ecological labelling. Involved resources are: the Ski Centre of Parnassos, which is a part of the National Park of Parnassos, the Ecological Camping of Fanari in Komotini, which is part of the National Park of the water reserve of the lake Vistonida, the public character park of Paliouri in Chalkidiki, other facilities in the caves of Dyros and the Ecological Park of Kaifas.

Similarly, OOTEK proceeded to the instauration of the facades of the two listed buildings of Italian architecture where the Advanced School of Tourism Education and the Secondary Technical Vocational School of Rhodes are located.

Certainly, the Greek cultural and natural resources are integral part of the national strategy of product development and respective promotion worldwide. Aspects of this heritage and the contemporary reality are incorporated in the international advertising campaign of the Ministry and the GNTO (communicated through the media, printed material, internet, fairs and road shows participation). Additionally, the Greek brand draws much of its power from these unique characteristics.

4.1.7 Making holidays available to all. (maximum 200 characters)

The right to tourism for all the Greek citizens dominates the Greek tourism and social policy. First of all, under the scope of its competency and with a view to contributing to the enhancement of the competitiveness of the hospitality industry, the General Secretariat for Tourism has fixed the minimum prices of over-night stay for 2010 at same level as 2009.

The programme "Tourism for All", elaborated and subsidised by the GNTO, offers low-income groups of the population the opportunity to take holidays throughout the year, as follows:

-Programme "Tourism for all": involved 6-day holidays and lasted from 09/07/2010 to 31/03/2011, supporting the tourism activity of low or middle-income persons, employees, pensioners or independent workers, persons with special needs, and other categories of insured persons, by subsidising tourism enterprises to offer lower prices for said categories.

-Programme for the Third Age: lasted from 01/10/2010 to 31/03/2011 and subsidized

6 overnight stays in hotels or rooms to let throughout the country for pensioners beneficiaries of more than 60 years old.

4.2 As key challenges may change over time, please identify any other areas that are becoming a new challenge. (maximum 600 characters)

A top priority and a great challenge for the Greek Ministry of Culture and Tourism is the consistency, synergy and complementarity of all three thematic axes which constitute the three-fold scheme "culture-tourism-sports", based on the principles of sustainable development. In this respect, we mention indicatively, the project "Promotion and Management of the Cultural Content of Wine and Grapevine in Greece", which has been submitted for valorization and integration to the operational programme "Digital Convergence" and which aims at further developing wine tourism. In addition, Greece actively participates in the Wine Culture Tourism Exchange of the Council of Europe.

Equally challenging seems the promotion of integrated development and innovation systems in regions (geographic and thematic) with strong business background and with the presence of active and extroverted research centers.

The liberalisation of services within the internal (community) market is expected to create new conditions in which the Greek public administration has to quickly and effectively adapt.

For the Hellenic Tourism Development Co. a niche market and focus of interest are the ecological parks: the organisation supports the development and markets green tourism products and services, such as the construction and functioning of environment-friendly planned and certified eco-campings in Paliouri, Chalkidiki and Fanari, Komotini.

Finally, a real challenge –under the present inconvenience of the Greek economy and the unfavourable climate- is to find imaginative and creative ways for the maximum possible promotion of the Greek tourism and the country as a whole, since funds from the regular national budget are very limited.

4.3 Please identify and describe a specific initiative, which is related to the 7 key challenges, that is innovative/ successful and which would be of interest to or of help to other Member States. (maximum 2.000 characters)

The adoption of a new development model in service of the people and their real needs is a core necessity of the modern times which requires radical changes in our mentality and lifestyle. Green development respects the natural, social, cultural and economic environment, which is considered as development resources. Green development is a top priority also for Greece and entails comprehensive policy proposals in order to restructure

the productive base of the economy, attain balanced regional development and create new and better employment. For the Greek government, green development is a key opening up new horizons for greater competitiveness, attracting new investments and upgrading the quality of life for all citizens since it stimulates new business opportunities.

In this respect, taking into consideration research results and the claims of modern travellers concerning the respect for the environment as well as the needs of tourism enterprises in order to maintain their competitiveness, the former Special Unit of Coordination, Management and Implementation of Tourism Projects of the General Secretariat of Tourism elaborated and will implement, after consultations, an extensive manual for "Green Tourism", a great innovation first time applied in the tourism sector. The action "**Green Tourism**" concerns investment plans for all the country and has a total budget of 30.000.000€. Said investment plans aim at a) developing the environmental conscience and sensibility of all actors involved in the tourism process as well as the corporate social responsibility of tourism enterprises, b) upgrading and improving the quality of services offered as well as the environmental performance of tourism units and c) creating infrastructure and action plans which fulfil the criteria of ecological certification. The action addresses existing accommodation (hotels, campings, rooms to let and apartments, a total of 35.000 enterprises which are eligible) in order to implement models of environment-friendly management for energy and resources' saving as well as for the use of renewable sources of energy.

The Hellenic Tourism Development Co. supports tourism works adopting procedures based on the principles of green planning, which contribute to the protection and promotion of the natural and cultural heritage while ensuring sustainable development and all year-long operation. Within this framework, the organisation will proceed to investments with a view to upgrading the national tourism product, such as the creation of the "Eco-Development Park of Thermal Springs of Kaiafas aiming at:

- a) an integrated and complex intervention in favour of the protection and the appropriate management of the natural environment with simultaneous actions for the environmental restoration of the distressed area of the property damages by the fires of 2007,
- b) the prolongation of the tourism period through the creation of a new ecotourism attraction pole, which will operate in a complementary and not competitive way vis-à-vis already existing tourism enterprises of the Prefecture involved (Ilia),
- c) the operational upgrade of the thermal springs through the creation of a sustainable and

model destination for therapeutic tourism and

d) the offer of various opportunities of entertainment, well-being, rejuvenation of the body and education, compatible with the ecological fragility of the wider area.

5. MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Three mechanisms for implementing the Agenda were identified in the "Agenda": sustainable destinations, sustainable businesses and responsible tourists.

5.1 Sustainable destinations: What support is given to strengthen destination management at the regional/destination level (supportive policy environment, knowledge networks, training programmes, establishment of measures/indicators for benchmarking, etc.)? (maximum 600 characters)

In the 4th Programme Period 2007-2013, whose principal and declared aim is to enhance entrepreneurship and competitiveness, know-how on destination management is mainly provided to the decentralised administration (i.e. the General Secretariats of the 13 Regions) and the local authorities. Destination management can be of strictly public nature or take the form of cooperations with collective professional bodies, chambers and tourism business units. An important development in destination management could also come from the anticipated development of clusters (cooperation networks) in the tourism sector.

At European level, Greece constantly participates in the European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) project of the European Commission, which aims to promote sustainable tourism development models for emerging destinations across the Union. The winning destination of last year, whose theme was "Aquatic Tourism", was the Lake Kerkini.

5.2 Sustainable businesses: What support is given to strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of businesses (supportive policy environment, orientation of business support services to sustainability, training, financial incentives, etc.)? (maximum 600 characters)

An important law to boost business sustainability and competitiveness is L. 3894/2010 for the Acceleration and Transparency of the Implementation of Strategic Investments.

The current operational programme "Entrepreneurship – Competitiveness" promotes the development of investment plans for acquiring total quality standards for energy saving, environmental waste management - thus enhancing the competitiveness of tourism SMEs.

Upgrade of tourism investments is also promoted:

- ❖ Establishment, expansion and modernisation of hotel units.
- ❖ Conversion of listed traditional buildings into main tourism accommodation.
- ❖ Enhancement of SMEs' business plans comprising actions such as mergers and

cooperations, for modernisation and upgraded presence in the tourism markets, namely the markets of thematic form of tourism.

- ❖ Enhancement of business plans for the modernisation and upgrade of restaurant business, gastronomic tourism and traditional cafes.
- ❖ Qualitative modernisation of accommodation not included in the Development Law (hotels, Boutique hotels and tourist campings for lower classes, furnished rooms and apartments of all key categories for rent as well as very small hotels of any class).
- ❖ Restoration and upgrade of traditional or other buildings with great architectural value for tourism accommodation, programmes of camping modernisation (Hellenic Tourism Development Co and other public or municipal corporations).

In particular, the relevant resources are directed to the development of tourism infrastructure, actions of state aid, actions funded through the Investment Law as well as actions of education and training of the human resources. The actions of state aid are designed so as to take into consideration sustainability issues, comprising 4 basic programmes implemented by all 13 Greek regions: a) Green Tourism, b) Alternative Tourism, c) Cooperate and Innovate and d) Modernisation of the tourism sector.

The General Secretariat for Tourism runs the programme "*Green Tourism*" which gives tourism enterprises the possibility to implement models of environment-friendly management of total quality (i.e. eco-hotels). It also finances investment plans for energy and resources' saving as well as for the use by tourism enterprises of renewable sources of energy. In addition, the "Green Tourism" programme provides with funding investment plans for the reinforcement of environmental and social corporate responsibility.

The General Secretariat for Tourism also runs the programme "*Alternative Tourism*" which falls under the field of national subsidies for the tourism sector through the NSRF. Said action has a total budget of 20.000.000€ and is also funded through the operational programme "Entrepreneurship – Competitiveness". Investments plans of existing enterprises, which operated before 1/1/2010 and were active or are going to extend their activity in the service provision of alternative tourism, are supported throughout the country. Each investment plan has a budget from 10.000€ to 400.000€. In particular, the programme supports enterprises active in the following fields: sport tourism, recreational tourism, sea tourism, rural tourism, gastronomic tourism, health and wellness tourism. The main objectives of the Action "Alternative Tourism" are:

1. The development and promotion of alternative tourist services and activities.

2. The differentiation of the provided tourist products and services from the services corresponding to forms of mass tourism.
3. The interconnection of the provided tourist services and products with the local production and products.
4. The tourism exploitation of the local natural and cultural resources.

The proposals (investment plans) that can receive funding, concern the procurement of systems and equipment for the exercise of alternative tourist activity, the forming of existing building facilities and areas directly connected to the development of the specific activity, the planning, programming and implementation of actions for the promotion of alternative tourist activities and, finally, the development and application of quality management systems. It is also programmed during the a' semester of 2001 a complementary action to be published, entitled "Alternative Tourism for new Enterprises", with an additional budget of 8.000.000€.

The programme "*Cooperate and Innovate*" concerns investment plans aimed at enhancing cooperation among tourism enterprises and/or public services in order to create clusters for the promotion of the tourism product as well as of research and development in favour of its the improvement and enrichment.

The programme "*Modernise*" concerns the upgrade and the modernisation of functional and other qualitative characteristics of tourist accommodation - hotels and campings of low category, which not fall into the Investment Law as well as rooms to let and apartments of all keys categories.

Generally speaking, the NSFR 2007-2013 for tourism, promotes actions that contribute to the enhancement of the sustainability of the existing tourism enterprises as well as their modernisation through the incorporation of new technologies in their operation. Relevant interventions constitute part of an integrated business development strategy aiming at multiplied positive results, high added value, decrease in functional and administrative costs, cutting of bureaucracy burdens and consequently improvement of the competitiveness of the tourism enterprises what goes hand in hand with the upgrading of the quality of the offered services.

In addition, all the complex of GNTQ competencies (controlling, supervising and regulative) intends to promote sound entrepreneurship through the creation of a stable framework of regulations related to tourism and the creation of favorable conditions in order to attract crucial for the national economy tourism investments. To that direction, we

mention:

- the ***Manual of Tourism Investments***, which is uploaded to the web site of the GNT0 and is also available in a printed form that contains information concerning each Development/Investment Law,
- many organizations of awareness events in the regions in cooperation with agents of joint responsibility that are carried out, for instance with Invest in Greece (company of the Ministry of Regional Development and Competitiveness),
- the cooperation of the General Secretariat of Tourism, of GNT0 and of intermediate management bodies of the community support framework for the diffusion of information in relation to investment programmes.

The enhancement of tourism entrepreneurship increasingly in respect of the principle of sustainable development is also effectuated through the implementation of the ***National Development Law***. Furthermore, it is noted that special tourism infrastructure, a great number of which has a character directly oriented to sustainability principles (tourism ports and pleasure boats, marinas, convention centers, golf courses, relevant to thermal springs infrastructure, spa and health centers, ski centers, centers of training and sport tourism, race-tracks and thematic parks) are subsidized –at very high rates- throughout Greece.

5.3 Responsible tourists: What support is given to promote responsible choices by tourists (e.g. sustainability in education, national marketing and media campaigns, promotion of certification schemes)? (maximum 600 characters)

As said, in order to support sustainable business and promote responsible choices by tourists, the certification of quality of tourism enterprises is subsidised in order to acquire ISO 14.000, the Green Key or the European Ecolabel scheme (GNT0).

Within the framework of 3rd Community Support Framework, the advertisement and promotion of environmental-friendly accommodation and their participation in national and international fairs are subsidised as well as the design and production of advertising electronic material, the construction of web pages, banners, the development of electronic systems in favor of e-marketing, etc.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in cooperation with other bodies of the wider communication sector launched an advertising campaign entitled “The Alliance for Greece”, which aims at raising the awareness of the Greek society through communicating a dynamic, effective and appealing social message. Said campaign is implemented by the GNT0 free of charge and initially comprises three television spots with a central message:

"Greece, Part of our Heart". Spots are invested with verses for Greece, written by eminent Greek poets, such as Odysseas Elytis, Giannis Ritsos and Lorenzo Mavilis. The protagonists of the next phase of the campaign will be people of every day life.

6. DATA AND INDICATORS

Eurostat will provide, as an annex, the key statistical data required to support the reporting process covering around 20 indicators². These are mainly related to the aim of 'economic prosperity'.

Please, identify indicators that are being used or developed which could add to the range of information being provided by Eurostat, particularly in relation to social and environmental issues (other indicators from the TSG report, visitors/ residents satisfaction, etc.). (maximum 500 characters)

7. COMPLEMENTARY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If necessary use the following box to provide additional complementary information that has not already been covered.

The Cruise is a special form of tourism with significant development potential in a country like Greece which is surrounded by sea and has a great number of ports. This is the reason why it owns a distinctive place in our country's tourism campaign which has acquired a polythematic character over the past few years. Consequently, the steps taken to enhance the cruise sector have a significant impact on the development of Greek tourism as a whole.

By Law 3872/2010 (Gov. Gazette 148 A') under title "Tour-cruising by third country flag ships sailing from a Greek port and other provisions", issues concerning cruise liberalisation are regulated. In particular, the above mentioned law is part of a comprehensive policy for the development of sea tourism, the valorisation of Greek ports and marines. Apart from the removal of cabotage, it comprises the upgrade of port infrastructure, the provision of fueling services and cruise service. The implementation of Law 3872/2010 is expected to bring multiplying benefits to our country's tourism development. Specifically, it is expected to benefit both regional tourism development and the tourism businesses which are linked to sea cruise.

As far as the port facilities and infrastructure are concerned, the central policy objectives are as follows:

- ❖ Rational spatial planning in relevant strategic positions in order to develop the economic activities of the ports

² These indicators have been selected from the 50 TSG indicators on the basis of the possibility to calculate them at the European level.

- ❖ Minimisation of the adverse impacts on the environment
- ❖ Non alteration of the natural and cultural resources
- ❖ Guarantying the viability and the increase of competitiveness of the services provided to the tourism ports of any form
- ❖ Influx of new investors - managers for the operation of tourism port infrastructure
- ❖ Selection of a managing body and assignment of the tourism ports whose external harbor works have already been carried out by the GNT0
- ❖ Creation of a primary system of basic port infrastructure (marines), assisted by a secondary auxiliary system (moorings and shelters) so as to create a complete network of harbors all over Greece.

According to an existing spatial planning study (National System of Yacht Basins), the Greek map has been divided into nine sea subsystems – navigation zones according to the economic, cultural or environmental features of each region.

As said and given the present difficult economic conjuncture for Greece, tourism constitutes the main national economy's "powerhouse". Since tourism is widely considered as vital in determining Greece's overall performance, the Greek Government has proceeded to:

- ❖ The abolition of landing fees at all the airports of the country –except the International Airport Eleftherios Venizelos. In particular, Greece's Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks announced, that it is waiving landing, takeoff and stopover fees for all aircraft using Greek airports, except for Athens International Airport, from April until the end of 2011, in an attempt to boost tourism.
- ❖ Bringing down the VAT rate for hotel accommodation to 6.5%.

The Deputy Minister

George Nikitiades

APPENDIX

Principles of sustainable tourism:

- **Taking a holistic and integrated approach**

All the various impacts of tourism should be taken into account in its planning and development. Furthermore, tourism should be well balanced and integrated with a whole range of activities that affect society and the environment.

- **Planning for the long term**

Sustainable development is about taking care of the needs of future generations as well as our own. Long term planning requires the ability to sustain actions over time.

- **Achieving an appropriate pace and rhythm of development**

The level, pace and shape of development should reflect and respect the character, resources and needs of host communities and destinations.

- **Involving all stakeholders**

A sustainable approach requires widespread and committed participation in decision making and practical implementation by all those implicated in the outcome.

- **Using best available knowledge**

Policies and actions should be informed by the latest and best knowledge available. Information on tourism trends and impacts, and skills and experience, should be shared across Europe.

- **Minimising and managing risk – the precautionary principle**

Where there is uncertainty about outcomes, there should be full evaluation and preventative action should be taken to avoid damage to the environment or society.

- **Reflecting impacts in costs – user and polluter pays**

Prices should reflect the real costs to society of consumption and production activities. This has implications not simply for pollution but for charging for the use of facilities that have significant management costs attached to them.

- **Setting and respecting limits, where appropriate**

The carrying capacity of individual sites and wider areas should be recognised, with a readiness and ability to limit, where and when appropriate, the amount of tourism development and volume of tourist flows.

- **Undertaking continuous monitoring**

Sustainability is all about understanding impacts and being alert to them all the time, so that the necessary changes and improvements can be made.

June 17th 2008