



# INTERNATIONAL TOURISM PLASTIC PLEDGE

*International tourism sector joins forces for a plastic pollution-free tourism industry*

Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world. This comes with great responsibility. Many countries, people and businesses are involved and economically dependent on the industry. Currently the tourism industry suffers from the consequences of plastic pollution. It negatively affects visual attractiveness of tourism destinations and contributes to pollution of soil and water, affects animal, plant and human health, and leads to biodiversity loss. On the other hand, the sector and holidaymakers contribute to the problem by creating waste at tourism destinations. We, the partners of this pledge, feel that international collaboration is key to increase our influence and contribute to a circular economy for plastics.

## OUR COMMITMENT

We acknowledge the urgency to take action to reduce plastic pollution. To achieve this we:

1. Share the intention to *come to a concrete roadmap for the international tourism sector*, in which we agree on concrete goals and a monitoring system to measure impact on our contribution to a circular economy for plastics and a plastic pollution-free tourism industry;
2. Continue our efforts to prevent plastic pollution in tourism by *reducing the use of single-use plastics*, to the best of our capacity;
3. *Exchange knowledge, best practices and tools available* on how the tourism sector can support the transition to a circular economy for plastics and prevent pollution.

## SIGNATURE

Organisation: WIND OF RENEWAL and WELCOMMON HOSTEL

Name and position: N. Chrysogelos, chair

Date: 01.10.2019

Signature:

## **ANNEX I: THE PARTNERS**

This International Tourism Plastic Pledge is signed by the first 100 partners on September 26th 2019 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The list of partners is regularly updated on the website [www.tourismplasticpledge.com](http://www.tourismplasticpledge.com).

## ANNEX II: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### WHY AN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM PLASTIC PLEDGE?

#### *The global importance of the tourism industry*

The tourism industry is one of the largest industries in the world and experiences large growth rates. Tourist arrivals in 2017 rose to 1,326 million<sup>1</sup> and are expected to reach 1.8 billion in 2030<sup>2</sup>. Many countries, people and businesses are involved and economically dependent on our sector. Globally one out of ten jobs is in the tourism industry. This is expected to grow to 11.6% of total employment in 2028. In 2018 the contribution of travel and tourism to the total GDP was 10.4%.<sup>3</sup>

Being one of the largest industries in the world comes with responsibility and the potential to make a real difference if we work together on common goals. We agree that tourism positively contributes to economic development worldwide, to respect and intercultural understanding. Travelling can be a great learning experience for those involved and has stimulated protection, conservation and pride of natural and cultural heritage. However, like other sectors, the tourism sector can also have a negative impact on communities and the environment like carbon emissions, human exploitation, overcrowding and creation of waste and pollution. This pledge concerns the latter.

#### *Plastic waste and tourism*

The world is producing more than 300 million tons of plastic. Each year around 8 million tons of plastic ends up in our oceans. It is estimated that by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the sea.<sup>4</sup> As a tourism industry, we suffer from the consequences of plastic pollution. Holidaymakers are looking for pristine beaches, unpolluted nature and cultural sights. Plastic pollution negatively affects visual attractiveness of destinations, contributes to pollution of soil and water, affects animal, plant and human health, and leads to biodiversity loss.

Unfortunately, our sector and holiday makers also contribute to the problem. For example, in the Mediterranean plastic represents 95% of the waste floating in the sea and lying on its beaches. With tourists visiting the region, marine litter increases by 40% each summer.<sup>5</sup> Other research shows that waste generated per hotel room can be twice as large as an average household in the same region.<sup>6</sup>

We acknowledge this contribution and recognise that international effort is needed in the entire tourism sector and supply chain to support the transition to a circular economy for plastics. The sector can contribute to reach this goal involving holidaymakers, local communities and destinations. As many destinations are economically dependent on the tourism industry, plastic pollution threatens their future income.

We applaud initiatives like the 'New Plastics Economy Global Commitment' led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation in collaboration with UNEP, other initiatives of plastic producers, users and recyclers, and increased legislation to reduce single-use plastics and plastic pollution. With this International Tourism Plastic Pledge we want to scale-up efforts and join

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284419876>

<sup>2</sup> [http://media.unwto.org/sites/all/files/inf\\_timeline-01.png](http://media.unwto.org/sites/all/files/inf_timeline-01.png)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/regions-2018/world2018.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/assets/downloads/EllenMacArthurFoundation\\_TheNewPlasticsEconomy\\_Pages.pdf](https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/assets/downloads/EllenMacArthurFoundation_TheNewPlasticsEconomy_Pages.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.panda.org/wwf\\_news/press\\_releases/?329099/The-Mediterranean-at-risk-of-becoming-a-sea-of-plastic-WWF-warns](https://www.panda.org/wwf_news/press_releases/?329099/The-Mediterranean-at-risk-of-becoming-a-sea-of-plastic-WWF-warns)

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/drivers\\_urb\\_change/urb\\_environment/pdf\\_Sustainability/DFID\\_DPU\\_Indonesia-Waste\\_Hotel.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/drivers_urb_change/urb_environment/pdf_Sustainability/DFID_DPU_Indonesia-Waste_Hotel.pdf)

forces internationally to increase our contribution to a circular economy for plastics to reduce plastic pollution.

## GOALS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TOURISM PLASTIC PLEDGE

We feel the urgency for the sector to take action. There is momentum to join forces to create more impact. The pledge serves three goals:

1. Create more *awareness* on this issue in the tourism sector and destinations and showcase that the sector can contribute to solutions;
2. Create more *impact* by stimulating the implementation of actions in the tourism sector to reduce, reuse and recycle plastics in the international tourism industry;
3. *Exchange of knowledge* to raise awareness and accelerate positive impact.

With this pledge we want to contribute to the *Sustainable Development Goals* as set by the UN. In particular the following four: 8 Decent work & Economic growth; 12 Sustainable consumption and production patterns; 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources; and 17 Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

## JOIN US

New partners are welcome to join. Requirements are that your organisation:

1. supports the pledge commitment;
2. is actively working in or with the tourism sector;
3. has at least 2 employees.

You can join by signing up via the website ([www.tourismplasticpledge.com](http://www.tourismplasticpledge.com)).

## COMMUNICATION

By signing the pledge you are expected to:

1. Communicate about why your organisation joined the International Tourism Plastic Pledge using your corporate (social) media channels;
2. Share Best Practices with the other partners.

MVO Nederland (CSR Netherlands) will support exchange and communication by:

1. Publishing the pledge on the MVO Nederland website (using the URL [www.tourismplasticpledge.com](http://www.tourismplasticpledge.com)), including contact information and a link to an overview where best practices can be shared by partners;
2. Providing a press release and social media toolkit regarding the pledge.

## ORGANISATION

MVO Nederland is the initiator of the pledge and will explore the process to come to a concrete roadmap for the sector. This includes the following tasks:

1. Respond to information requests on the pledge;
2. Design of the pledge and signing ceremony;
3. Develop a communication toolkit on the pledge for partners (see communication);
4. Facilitate a core group of pledge partners who want to support the process to come to a concrete roadmap and advise on its content;

5. Explore collaboration and partnerships to come to a concrete roadmap for the sector;
6. Inform pledge partners monthly on the progress made regarding the next steps.

MVO Nederland currently explores potential collaboration with CELTH, WWF and others to join forces.

## **FINANCIAL ASPECTS**

1. Partners participating in the pledge do so at their own expense. There are no financial funds available to support partners in the implementation.
2. For a successful roadmap additional international executing capacity is required. Together with the core group and other potential partners MVO Nederland will explore this.

## **DURATION**

1. The International Tourism Plastic Pledge will be effective from the date it was signed.
  2. A partner can withdraw from this pledge at any time, it will take 4 weeks to process.
  3. The pledge commitment will end when a more concrete roadmap has been agreed to, partners will have the freedom to decide at that point if they want to join this initiative.
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