

EDITOR'S NOTE

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In the inaugural issue of *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation (EJTHR)*, we expressed the hope that this journal will represent an adequate nutrient for a scientific germination and anchorage for many projects. Furthermore, we presented EJTHR as a partner for the international cooperation, mainly to encourage the tourism research networks. Indeed, the main goal for the creation of this scientific journal was to support the development of international partnerships in tourism research, and to highlight the most significant outputs of the international cooperation networks.

A few months later, we are finding a high degree of support for this project by reputable researchers from the most prestigious universities worldwide. We are thus encouraged to continue to step in the direction we previously defined.

In the inaugural issue of the EJTHR we also noted that although the name of the journal includes the adjective “European”, its content will reflect all issues that are relevant for tourism in all over the world. As we said, the adjective “European” is related to the specific positioning intended for the EJTHR: to become a significant reference for European researchers in the tourism field.

Although tourism became a global phenomenon, European tourism is still a topical issue, because it represents a significant part of the world tourism and, from the qualitative point of view, it presents very specific aspects, which one can describe as following:

The cultural diversity of the European countries. This continent is shaped by medium or small countries, and it includes so much cultural diversity, in terms of cultural heritage, languages and history.

This vast mosaic of cultures also includes a huge value as a model for civilization, as Europe has always been a reference for the whole world. One can refer, for instance, the great legacy of Greek and Roman civilizations, the Renaissance and the subsequent global dissemination of European traditions, practices and values, caused by the expansion of world trade. No wonder that cultural tourism has mainly focused on this continent. Furthermore, the European cultural her-

itage is spread along the other continents. For example, there are 21 sites classified as World Heritage of Portuguese Origin (UNESCO) in Africa, Asia and South America.

Since the beginning of tourism, from the XIX century to the present, the European tourist market always had an unquestioned dominance in the world. According to UNWTO (2010), Europe in 2009 accounted for 52% of international tourist arrivals and 48% of international tourism, with receipts of 296 billion Euros. In the top 10 arrivals per country, are six European countries (France, Spain, Italy, UK, Turkey and Germany). And if we consider the revenue generated by tourism, seven of the 10 most important destinations in the world are European countries, namely: Spain, France, Italy, Germany, UK, Turkey and Austria.

The richness and diversity of cultural heritage in Europe, associated with its primacy in world tourism market, are the main reasons that led editors of EJTHR to invite the scientific community from all over the world to reflect together on the specificities of European tourism. For this purpose, the EJTHR will organize every two years an international conference devoted to European tourism.

The 1st international conference of the European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation EJTHR will take place in Santiago de Compostela (Spain), and will run in May 2012 under the motto "Tourism Destination Branding, Heritage and Authenticity". The Conference will be promoted by the publisher of the journal (Polytechnic Institute of Leiria) in partnership with CETUR - Centre for Tourism Studies of the University of Santiago de Compostela.

The themes suggested for this international forum are: (a) Search for meaning and religious tourism; (b) Tourism and cultural heritage in Europe; (c) Tourism and natural heritage in Europe, (d) Brand strategies for cultural and religious tourism; (e) From the tourist imaginary to the destination branding.

The papers presented at the Conference of EJTHR will be published in a special issue. So, we invite you to join us in a vast and deep reflection concerning the tourism in Europe, because we believe that the great richness of European tourism, like the European integration process, consists in its immense diversity.