

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

## COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RECOMMENDATION No. R (79) 4

### OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES CONCERNING PRINCIPLES OF A STRATEGY FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MOUNTAIN REGIONS

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 February 1979  
at the 299th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15. *b* of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

1. Recalling its Resolution (74) 7 on the economic and social problems of mountain regions ;
2. Considering the importance of the role played by mountain regions as excellent recreation areas for millions of Europeans and as factors for improving the quality of life ;
3. Aware of the dangers for inhabitants of mountain regions if tourism in those regions is allowed to develop excessively and without control, namely :
  - that farming and natural balances in those regions will suffer because of multiple forms of pollution and the scale of tourist resorts,
  - that the flow of capital from outside will be such that instead of participating in their regions' economic activities they merely witness them, and that this capital undermines the social and cultural components of the areas in question,
  - that they will not benefit from the tourist boom and may even suffer financially without receiving anything in return ;
4. Being anxious, however, to ensure that the inhabitants of mountain regions shall take part in the development of tourism ;
5. Remembering findings of intergovernmental studies concerning :
  - the establishment of new mountain resorts,
  - the funding of basic and tourist amenities,
  - reception facilities in such resorts and integration in villages,
  - how surrounding valleys may benefit from tourism near lakes or the sea ;
6. Considering that those studies culminated in the definition of "twenty-seven principles of a strategy of tourism development in mountain regions", and bearing in mind the responsibility of governments to see to it that the principles are applied,
7. Recommends that governments of the Council of Europe member states shall create either a legal framework, where one does not already exist, or lay down binding directives or recommendations for the local authorities concerned, for the application of the following principles :

## **General**

### *First principle*

The new forms of society created by tourism must promote personal fulfilment, and this holds good for residents as well as tourists ; the standard of human relations between those living in tourist regions and those who go there to seek relaxation, physical activity or cultural enrichment is therefore of importance.

### *Second principle*

Partial solutions dictated more by customer requirements than by the mountain world's characteristics and equilibrium are not enough to ensure that mountain areas make economic progress and are not left out of the general expansion of tourism.

### *Third principle*

The constant changes in society caused by tourism must not lead to the loss of traditional cultural values or harm the cultural heritage of tourist regions.

### *Fourth principle*

The various stimuli and campaigns necessary for the expansion of tourist activities must be co-ordinated and geared to the overall development of the regions concerned.

A policy for the development of tourism must be part of an integrated and coherent programme involving three master plans :

- socio-economic,
- land use,
- financial.

This implies taking a very broad view of the problems and endeavouring to evaluate the short- and long-term effects of the projects undertaken.

This overall objective may give rise to the formulation of instructions for encouraging and co-ordinating initiatives in the public and private sectors.

### *Fifth principle*

As far as possible, existing villages should serve as a nucleus for tourist development provided that their character, structure and architecture and the close human relations usually found in them are not liable to be jeopardised by an excessive concentration of people and new facilities.

### *Sixth principle*

The services, amenities and areas developed for the needs of tourists must be planned and set up so that they can be also used by the local population, which may possibly justify their remaining in operation outside the tourist seasons, if only for short periods.

### *Seventh principle*

Basic public services, whose cost is generally high in mountain regions, must not be neglected, particularly the building and maintenance of roads, the establishment of sewage treatment systems and the institution of waste removal and disposal services.

Intermunicipal co-operation will often be necessary to solve problems raised by the introduction and running of these services.

### *Eighth principle*

Local authorities have an essential role to play in developing the rich tourist potential of mountain regions, because they alone exercise wide responsibilities in the public interest which they cannot and must not abandon.

The various projects for the development of tourism should be co-ordinated at municipal and regional level. This calls for initiative on the part of municipalities, which would be well advised to draw up overall development plans together, so as to increase their bargaining power with public, semi-public or private bodies and make it easier to raise large sums of money. In

this connection it is desirable that the municipalities should have their own receipts from tourism so that they can fulfil their tasks.

In order to accomplish these tasks successfully, local authorities should have control of land use.

#### *Ninth principle*

The important place of mountain regions in European geography and the value of the development and organisation of their recreational function for urban populations in Europe necessitates new forms of co-operation between regions. This co-operation could with advantage be institutionalised within the various Council of Europe bodies.

#### *Tenth principle*

The local population should participate in the development of mountain areas from the outset. They should play a part in designing, setting up, managing and further developing tourist facilities.

### **Socio-economic master plan**

#### *Eleventh principle*

The expansion of tourism must not result in the weakening, not to say destruction, of existing economic activities. In particular, traditional mountain activities such as agriculture and forestry—so necessary for the conservation of the natural environment—must not be replaced by one single tourist industry.

Rather, this new activity must become part of the local economy without upsetting it and help other activities to be modernised, not merely kept alive.

In order to prevent tourist expansion from leading to an economic monostructure, the primary and secondary sectors must be developed in such a way that most of the services required, particularly in connection with tourism, can be provided in the region concerned.

Diversified, independent economic structures, the modernisation of flourishing agriculture and forestry, the promotion of commerce and craftsmanship and the establishment of industrial activities relatively independent of tourism will all ensure that regions affected by rapid tourist expansion enjoy balanced economic growth less subject to the fluctuations of the economy.

#### *Twelfth principle*

To satisfy the many social, cultural and economic aspirations of the local population, balance between the expansion of tourism and the simultaneous development of other economic activities is required.

Excessive tourist concentration must not be allowed to result in the separate development of a single activity or the isolation of social and economic groups.

#### *Thirteenth principle*

In tourist regions vocational guidance and training should be geared to tourist trades. Manpower needs in tourist enterprises should be supplied primarily by local labour so as to improve the employment situation. In order to do this, however, the social standing of the various occupations in the tourist industry should be enhanced by means of appropriate measures.

#### *Fourteenth principle*

The traditional ways of life of village communities and the individual's private sphere must be preserved. For example, families which let rooms must keep an adequate living area for themselves.

#### *Fifteenth principle*

Agricultural, pastoral and forestry activities must be developed side by side with but independently of tourism, even if those aspects relating to conservation of the natural environment assume a growing importance and justify financial compensation.

Those who live and work in mountain areas (including farmers and foresters), who manage a natural heritage of great value, must be the first to benefit from its enhancement.

#### *Sixteenth principle*

Utilisation of capacity can be increased by providing amenities in the pre- and post-season periods and developing summer and winter as equally important seasons. Accordingly, natural conditions permitting, winter tourism must be particularly developed where there is already extensive summer tourism.

Maximum use of facilities, and hence of manpower, can also be achieved by fully exploiting the natural conditions of the area in order to promote very diversified forms of holiday activity and so attract the widest range of visitors. The need to encourage low-cost and family tourism should be mentioned in this context.

A comprehensive "tourism package"—not merely housing capacity—should be developed and marketed efficiently.

#### **Master plan for land use**

##### *Seventeenth principle*

Tourist development based on several growth centres is desirable in order to avoid using too much space and scattering buildings over the landscape. This implies the apparently contradictory needs to avoid dispersing tourist amenities and yet to cover sufficiently large areas so as to achieve better integration with the mountain environment.

##### *Eighteenth principle*

The creation of new housing areas should allow for the harmonious development of villages so as to strengthen existing structures without damaging their general architectural integrity.

This will be achieved if the principles governing town planning (existing, newly drawn-up or revised plans) are respected and if the characteristic features of the landscape are not jeopardised, for instance by the haphazard scattering of housing areas or isolated houses, by huge buildings or by the proliferation of advertising hoardings.

##### *Nineteenth principle*

The capacities of the tourism infrastructure installations must be co-ordinated among themselves and with those of the tourism superstructure. This applies particularly to ski-lifts.

When co-ordinating capacities, account must be taken of special tourist requirements, such as weekend school holidays, which may be of primary importance if big towns are close to the tourist facilities.

##### *Twentieth principle*

Tourist development must not entail excessive and uncontrolled use of space by the infrastructure or by reception and leisure facilities. The recreation area must be maintained in its original, varied form, avoiding as far as possible superfluous man-made amenities or private control which would reduce public accessibility.

Although it may be necessary in some cases to limit free space, this must be the exception and apply only to small areas.

##### *Twenty-first principle*

Special attention is to be paid to the protection of the mountain environment :

— in areas with intensive tourism, every effort will be made to eliminate atmospheric pollution, for example by using only non-polluting forms of energy, and noise ;

— in some other areas, the quality of the natural environment represents the principal asset for the development of tourism. It should be enhanced, not merely protected, by a policy linking conservation measures (parks, nature reserves, etc.) with a campaign among the visitors.

##### *Twenty-second principle*

Certain forms of land use, such as the proliferation of second homes or permanent camp and caravan sites, take up a great deal of space ; the investment and running costs involved for the general infrastructure and public services, moreover, are out of proportion to their real economic impact.

The areas devoted to these forms of tourism should therefore be restricted and their extension checked by municipal land use plans ensuring control over the real estate market.

#### **Financial master plan**

##### *Twenty-third principle*

Tourist development should be essentially a product of local and regional initiative. Outside investment should be reserved for large-scale projects conceived in terms of a general strategy which cannot be financed from local and regional resources alone.

In the remaining cases, generally the most numerous, tourist development should be the outcome of public and private local initiative, mobilising the manpower and capital potential of the region concerned and advancing at a rate such that the reception capacity of the local population is not exceeded.

##### *Twenty-fourth principle*

Subject to certain conditions arising from the requirements of an overall concept, local investors could be given advantages over outside investors.

A financial incentive scheme should be established to eliminate distortions of competition and ensure an even distribution of the extra costs arising from special difficulties or obstacles to development.

##### *Twenty-fifth principle*

The private sector which profits by tourism should contribute more to the cost of tourist facilities. The form of participation must be worked out case by case in the light of the particular circumstances of the country and region concerned (establishment of mixed investment companies, recourse to taxes or other charges, etc.).

##### *Twenty-sixth principle*

The use of part of the revenue from taxes and particularly other charges (fee for inclusion in the infrastructure network, miscellaneous charges, etc.) is another way for municipalities to finance their basic facilities and tourist installations.

Taxes on tourism (i.e. professional tax, visitors' tax, etc.) would be used mainly to cover the running costs of facilities and installations.

##### *Twenty-seventh principle*

The control of tourism development by local authorities following the foregoing principles entails increased government aid (subsidies for the establishment and running of facilities, long-term loans at low interest, etc.).

#### **Concluding remarks**

The euphoria engendered by the development of tourism in the 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s has been considerably mitigated by the slow growth of development and by losses in the past few years. Nevertheless, tourism still offers many opportunities for developing mountain regions. The demands made on man in his work, the multiple stresses of an urban environment which he has been unable to overcome, and the physical stress he faces because of changes in ways of life and standards of living all contribute to wakening a need of recuperation in even larger groups of the population. According to estimates, only a third—and probably less—of the European population goes on holiday regularly.

Mountain regions, especially the Alpine ones because of their central situation, have an important part to play in the foreseeable expansion of leisure and tourist activities in Europe. For that reason the Council of Europe member nations should try to achieve the broadest possible consensus in order to work out joint strategies for the development of those regions. The planning of mountain regions, no longer a purely national matter, should now be given a truly European dimension.