

First Regional Cruise Dialogue for the Atlantic, the North Sea and the Arctic

25 September 2018, Nantes

Previous events:

- ✓ *Pan-European Dialogue March 2015, Brussels*
- ✓ *First Mediterranean Regional Cruise Dialogue, October 2015, Olbia*
- ✓ *First Regional Cruise Dialogue for Baltic, October 2016, Copenhagen*

CONCLUSIONS

The Regional Cruise Dialogue for the Atlantic, the North Sea and the Arctic (ANSA) was the third and last of the regional cruise dialogues organised by DG MARE in the context of the European Commission's Strategy for more growth and jobs in the Coastal and Maritime Tourism.

Following an introductory panel, two thematic roundtables looked at (A) the tourism offer at destinations, the relationship between the port and the city and the cruise industry's contribution to the local economy, as well as (B) the environmental performance of the industry, the application of the Port Reception Facilities (PRF) Directive and the role of the cruise industry in promoting sustainability and innovative solutions. In each roundtable, key challenges for the sector were discussed and suggestions with specific examples were provided.

Discussion (A): *Integrated cruise destination management: port/city relation, cruise tourism impact on local economies and communities*

Contrary to the Mediterranean, "overtourism" is hardly a topic for the Atlantic, where many ports are rather looking to attract cruise lines. Congestion can be an issue on closed loop routes above all in North Sea ports (and cities). The application of the PRF Directive has become less problematic than what was mentioned during the "Regional Cruise Dialogue for the Baltic" but is still an issue for smaller ports receiving gigantic cruise ships. Participants agreed that there is a need for:

- Cooperation between different tourism stakeholders to create a cruise tourism experience that will make tourists (wish to) return;
- Regional cooperation between ports / joint promotion – marketing, infrastructure, itineraries;
- Adequate infrastructure in accordance with the PRF Directive or flexibility for alternatives by local ports;
- Consolidated data at local and regional level.

<u>Challenges</u>	<u>Suggestions</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Mobility / capacity	Predictability	Time slots, use peak off hours
Cooperation	Synergies	Itinerary
Knowledge building	ETO* on cruise, awareness events	Figures by country for local business, cruise days

*ETO = European Tourism Observatory

Discussion (B): *Removing bottlenecks for environmentally sustainable cruise tourism economy*

Problem of tourist invasion: Even if sometimes people in some ports where the big cruise liners are calling protest or even demonstrate against what they call a “tourist invasion” in their city, one should underline the fact that these cruise ships are calling to these ports because their local agents or other tourist operators want them to come. Sometimes even the local authorities are asking, through the local agents, for these cruise ships to come to their port and this is generally done with the agreement of the local tourist operators or other tourist players who also benefit from the visit of the cruise tourists. The economy of some very small cities or islands is even completely dependent on the cruise tourist. Participants agreed that there is a need for:

- "Green shipping rebates" for well performing ships;
- Make locals more aware and allow "ownership" of hosting cruise vessels, e.g. by attracting people through local events to visit the ships;
- Consistency with IMO (International Maritime Organisation) measures;
- Support from the European Commission to the proposed revision of the PRF Directive based on the operational needs of the ports and the industry

<u>Challenges</u>	<u>Suggestions</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Congestion	PRF, "Interporting"	Atlantic Blue Ports
Environmental issues	Optimising infrastructure, incentives for clean ships	Hamburg new terminal out of the city, green shipping rebates
Regulatory harmonisation	Share power	Working with local communities

Further good practices highlighted during the discussions are listed below:

- The ports of Zeebrugge and Dubrovnik are informing all tourists about off-peak times of city attractions;
- In Bruges, Dubrovnik, Paris, Amsterdam, agreements exist between tour operators and local attractions about off-peak exclusive visits which provide comfort to the tourist; ease the traffic in the city; increase the revenue of the attractions (and the city) by using off-peak visiting times;
- Cities dispersing tourists to various locations via different bus schedules and hop on/hop off bus routes to lift the pressure;
- The cruise industry launching the #wearecruise campaign where local business owners and employees explain how they benefit from cruise tourism;
- There are ideas of engagement between the cruise ship crew and the local authorities in order to increase understanding of working conditions on board a ship;
- There are greeting committees (in Nantes) and cruise clubs (in France) who organise visits in the cities. Local authorities are also organising cruise ship visits (in France, Netherlands, Italy or Spain) or cruise days (in Hamburg), cruise ship visits by schools to educate students on recycling (in Barcelona). All these are just a few examples of positive engagement with the public;
- 7 ports in Andalucía are working together to promote tourism and cruise tourism in their region.

All the discussions were very interesting and benefited from high quality input. Overall there was great commitment to contribute to the success of the dialogue and all participants expressed the will to support and participate in the next "Pan-European Cruise Dialogue". They also showed interest in the upcoming pilot project to prepare a "manual for sustainable cruise shipping", to be launched by the European Commission in 2019.