

The Committee of the Regions has called for an EU-wide maritime and coastal tourism strategy to be launched to tackle slow economic growth and persistently high levels of youth unemployment in Europe. The Committee – the EU's assembly of local and regional authorities – also argued that the EU must go further to support the diversification of the sector, improve cooperation between Europe's coastal regions, and create a more coherent plan between local, national and EU governments.

With Europe's maritime tourism sector employing 3.2 million people generating €183 billion each year, the Committee of the Regions adopted an opinion on a European Strategy for Coastal and Maritime Tourism reacting to recent European Commission's proposals on the issue. The opinion led, by **Vasco Alves Cordeiro**, President of the Government of the Azores, welcomes the Commission's recognition of the important role the sector plays in tackling Europe's stalling economic recovery. Launching an EU-wide tourism strategy to contribute to delivering so-called "Blue Growth" can create much needed jobs, the Committee argues, but its success hinges on involving a range of different policies including environment, transport and training.

Speaking in Brussels President Cordeiro stressed that what was urgently needed is a far more coherent and ambitious tourism strategy between local, national and EU governments, "Tourism is the backbone of many local economies in Europe's coastal regions. It can contribute to tackling youth unemployment and help kick-start growth in Europe. But to make this a reality we need ambition and we urgently need to improve cooperation between all levels of government"

Crucially, bolstering the tourism sector requires a strategy designed to meet the specific needs of each coastal and maritime region. The EU should focus its efforts to encourage those coastal regions whose economies rely so heavily on tourism to exploit their unique local and regional services and products, whilst protecting the environment. By promoting the diversification of the sector the problem of seasonality could be tackled attracting tourists all year around and so boosting local economies.

With his region having recently been awarded the Quality Coast Award for excellence in sustainable tourism, President Cordeiro added, "Coastal regions must take advantage of the cultural and environmental wealth they hold. We also need to share knowledge and experiences and invest in vocational training programmes – especially for young people - to diversify the sector and reduce our over-dependence on tourism found in the high season."

The Committee also points to the importance of improving regional cooperation to share knowledge on tourism and raises serious concerns about the poor connections and transport infrastructure for some coastal regions - especially those so reliant on air transport, such as islands - which is restricting the flow of tourists and subsequently holding back growth. It calls for sufficient funds from the EU budget 2014-2020 to be made available to support tourism in coastal regions and enhance their sustainable infrastructure.

<http://cor.europa.eu/fr/news/Pages/coastal-tourism-strategy.aspx>

Consultez la source sur Veille info tourisme: [La stratégie européenne du tourisme littoral devra se diversifier pour stimuler la croissance et la création d'emplois -Cities and regions EU coastal tourism strategy must go local to boost growth and create jobs](#)