

AN ETHICS CHARTER FOR CULTURAL TOURISM

*in conjunction with:
Alliance Internationale de Tourisme
Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile
and Automobil Club d'Italia*

The ever increasing number of tourists and the corresponding trend towards mass tourism mean that urgent action must be taken to deal with the issues associated with quality tourism and the protection of a country's cultural heritage from improper and over-use. Hence the need to define ways of access to cultural assets that can favour an awareness of the variety of cultural heritage and the preservation of environmental equilibrium in order to develop a 'compatible tourism'.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

The cultural heritage of a country is the result of its historical and artistic evolution and, as such, the custodian of its very identity.

This heritage is composed of assets – both tangible and intangible – which thanks to their links with the history, arts and, in general, culture of a community bear witness not only to that country's customs and traditions, but also and above all to its spiritual roots.

To this end, institutions and private owners managing these assets should promote their knowledge, also by making available adequate documentation, and favour their enjoyment.

ITS UNIVERSAL CHARACTER

As cultural assets have a universal value and constitute the heritage of humanity at large, it is in the interests of the general public to see that they are both protected and put to the best use possible.

Artistic and cultural products are an integral part of the complex annals of civilization even when they are the expression of distinctively 'different' characteristics of one people.

At the same time, cultural assets highlight common characteristics which bring people together and favour the emergence of a cosmopolitan community.

CULTURAL TOURISM

Tourism designed around cultural heritage connects people with the civilisation which expressed it. It constitutes an encounter with a new and often different culture, increases knowledge and awareness, and enriches personality.

Enjoying leisure time and freely choosing how to use it are rights of the individual asserted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 24) and contribute to the development of the person.

It is in the general interest that all of the different forms of tourism currently practised should acquire ever more marked cultural connotations.

Making full use of cultural heritage goes beyond simple contacts with things or events; rather, it provides opportunities for acquiring fresh knowledge or deepening existing knowledge. Therefore, far from being a mere source of revenue, cultural tourism is a means towards spiritual enrichment.

FRIENDSHIP AND SOLIDARITY

Cultural heritage acts as a vehicle for establishing friendship between individuals and solidarity between peoples.

Cultural tourism brings people from all over the world into contact with communities of different origins and often of different cultural backgrounds. Consequently, by fostering friendship and better relations between these, it becomes an essential prerequisite for the growth of the local as well as the international communities.

Cultural tourism is an authentic factor of solidarity and peace.

PRE-EMINENCE OF THE COLLECTIVE INTEREST

Cultural tourism should be enabled to operate, in strict respect of ownership and possession of the relevant assets.

It can not become a mere economic activity which is not compatible with the conservation of the assets in question.

The universal significance of cultural assets requires that owners or possessors facilitate enjoyment of them in line with generally recognised rules and regulations.

Tourist operators can accede to cultural heritage only if they guarantee its integrity. To these needs they must adjust their major aims, means, methods, as well as their conduct.

A CULTURE OF TOURISM

The correct relationship between tourist activities and cultural heritage requires adequate training of every one involved in order to increase a better knowledge and a deeper awareness of the inherent value of this heritage.

Cultural assets are not mere economic resources and their enjoyment cannot be equated with the use of a commodity. The owners and managers of the assets that make up a country's cultural heritage, the managers of the relevant institutions, all those in charge of economic planning, as well as tourist operators and the people living in the neighbourhood of such cultural assets are all called upon to develop an awareness of the unique nature, value and non-reproducibility of such works and to view the implications of tourism in their right perspective.

To this end suitable training opportunities should be promoted that can allow sufficient judgement skills, appropriate rules of behaviour and assure adequate professional qualifications.

For their part, tourists must be made fully aware of the cultural implications of their approach to a cultural asset as well as the importance of grasping its full significance and drawing useful information and teachings from it.

Cultural tourism is an aim to be purposely sought after, rather than experienced passively or by chance. A tourist interested in studying further the significance of a cultural asset assures its respect and helps spread its message, and will also bring major benefits to its owners.

HOSPITALITY REQUIREMENTS

Cultural tourism requires thoroughly professional standards of hospitality in keeping with the needs of the local communities.

Promoting cultural assets means a real and true 'invitation': this involves in turn a hospitality coherent to the promises made and respectful towards the guests.

In addition to adequate information, it will consequently be necessary to arrange a fitting range of high-quality accommodation and other services to be provided without discrimination of any kind.

For their part, visitors must be aware of the specific nature not only of the customs and habits of any country they visit, but also of its culture. Religious and moral tradition and beliefs of the inhabitants should be particularly recognized and respected.

The criteria set forth in this **Ethics Charter of Cultural Tourism** are in no way intended to dictate rules to either institutions or individuals. They have been developed with the aim of highlighting universal principles capable of fostering travelling modes in keeping with the criteria that should govern cultural tourism, and encouraging all of the individuals involved to behave responsibly.

This Charter has been drawn up with specific reference to the conventions, recommendations and directives formulated on various official occasions and has been purposely designed for international and national organisations, as well as operators working directly in the field.

Paestum, 5 November 1999, 2nd Mediterranean Exchange of Archaeological Tourism
Ravello, 13 April 2000, European Observatory on Cultural Tourism