

# “Sustainable Tourism within the Western Mediterranean”

## WestMED Initiative Side Event

Sun&Blue Congress 2024

### OBJECTIVE

*The popularity of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal regions amongst tourists remains at an all-time high. After a temporary covid dip, the latest figures show that [numbers of tourists have already reached pre-pandemic levels](#) and are further on the rise. **Traditional model is no longer viable.** Traditional ‘sun, sea and sand’ tourism has resulted in improved livelihoods for many local communities, [averaging 11.5% of total employment in Mediterranean countries](#). It is therefore, one of the leading sectors of the economy in the region.*

*At the same time, it also puts tremendous pressure on the environment. Mass tourism is one of the main causes of increased pollution and a driver for uncontrolled building along the coastlines. This, coupled to a growing demand for water, food and energy and the structurally rising temperatures (sea and land), severely impacts the region’s resources, and is therefore not viable in the long run. Additionally, these same [pressures lower the attractiveness of tourist destinations in the Mediterranean](#).*

*The European Commission is actively addressing many of these issues to safeguard the connection between economic welfare and the environment with the ‘Sustainable blue economy’ concept. This has been an ongoing process since 2013 – as part of the Commission’s targeted approach for several European Sea basins with dedicated blue strategies for the Atlantic ([Atlantic Action Plan](#)), the Black Sea ([Common Maritime Agenda](#)) and the Western Mediterranean ([WestMED Initiative](#)). For the Western Mediterranean the main objective was to ‘strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of the coastal and maritime tourism sector, as part of a smart and resilient blue economy – one of the key goals of the WestMED Initiative. This, by preserving the marine and coastal environment as well as marine cultural heritage and contributing to the attractiveness of coastal areas by means of ecotourism, digitalisation and mobilising private-public investments.’ In this sense, a new Technical Groups on Sustainable Tourism has been recently launched with the WestMED Initiative.*

*This side event under the [Sun&Blue Congress 2024](#) will be the “official launch” of the technical group as well as serve as hackathon for some concrete project ideas / proposals.*

***Do not miss this opportunity and come to our side event!***

PRACTICAL  
INFO —

21<sup>st</sup> November 2024  
11:30 – 17:30 CET

FIRST PART 11:30-13:30  
CET (open)

Networking lunch – 13:30 –  
15:30 CET

SECOND PART – 15:30 –  
17:30 CET (invite-only)

**IN PERSON ONLY**

**IN ENGLISH ONLY**

[REGISTRY - LINK](#)

Side Event included within  
the [Sun&Blue Congress 2024](#)

## Preliminary Agenda

*First Part: 11:30 – 12:30 CET*

*“Overview of the status of tourism within westmed”*

- 11:30 – 11:45 - Welcome by DG MARE – Mrs. Yasmin Schinasi-Romeu
- 11:45 – 12:00 – WestMED Initiative - Welcome by WestMED – Mrs. Marta Pascual & Mrs. Stephanie Vella
- 12:00 – 12:15 - UfM – Scaling up sustainable maritime and coastal tourism transformation in the Mediterranean – Mrs. Adriana Salazar
- 12:15 – 12:30 - WOC – Leadership Community on Sustainable Tourism within the MED – Mrs. Lisa Simone de Grunt
- 12:30 – 13:00 – Roundtable
  - ASCAME – Mr. Luis Miranda Molas
  - CRPM – Mrs. Flora Leroy
  - Interreg Office – Mr. Vincent Ernoux
  - MINCOTUR – Mrs. Illona Shekyants
- 13:00 – 13:30 – **Official launch** of the Technical Group on Sustainable Tourism within the WestMED – Mrs. Marta Pascual & Mrs. Stephanie Vella – NH Spain & NH Malta.

### **GROUP PHOTO**

*Second Part: 15:30 – 17:30 CET*

*“Tourism Proposals **HACKATHON**”*

- 15:30 – 16:00 – Explanations of the 1-2 project proposals – Mrs. Marta Pascual & Mrs. Stephanie Vella – NH Spain & NH Malta.
- 16:00 – 17:00 – **Hands-on** work on the project proposals
- 17:00 – 17:15 – Short summary of the proposals to the entire group and next steps.
- 17:15 – 17:30 – Closure of the WestMED Side event – TBC (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation from Spain) / Mrs. Yasmin Schinasi-Romeu (DG MARE)