



Draft Agenda
UfM Conference: The Tourism Sector
Employment-related opportunities and challenges
2-3 July 2025
Athens, Greece

Wednesday, 02 nd July	
Local Time	Agenda Item
09:00- 09:30	Registration and welcome coffee
09:30 – 10:30	Opening Session
09:30 – 09:40	Welcome remarks Mrs. Marwa Farghali <i>Senior Economic Advisor</i> <i>Economic Development and Employment Division</i> <i>UfM Secretariat</i>
09:40 – 09:50	Scene setter Mr. Mohammed Elrazzaz <i>Head of Sector, Economic Development and Employment Division</i> <i>UfM Secretariat</i>
09:50 – 10:05	Keynote Speeches H.E Dr. Hisham Zaazou <i>Former Minister of Tourism of Egypt</i>
10:05 – 10:20	H.E Ms. Niki Kerameus <i>Minister of Labour and Social Security of Hellenic Republic</i>
10:20 – 10:30	Group Picture
10:30- 11:30	Panel 1: Skilling and Job Creation <i>While being one of the most important job creators in the region, the tourism sector suffers from the mismatch between skills acquired in training and education and the actual needs of the job market. This panel explores strategies to address the skills gap in the Mediterranean tourism sector, focusing on developing targeted vocational training programs and initiatives to enhance workforce competencies. Discussions will include aligning educational curricula with industry needs, promoting continuous learning,</i>



and creating employment opportunities that cater to the evolving demands of the tourism market.

Round I:

Speakers will be invited to respond and debate the following questions:

- In what ways does seasonal tourism impact employment stability in Mediterranean economies, and what strategies can be used to address job seasonality?
- How can Mediterranean countries improve workforce skills and training to meet the changing demands of the tourism industry and enhance job quality?

Scene Setter and moderator

Mrs. Emmanuelle Roure

Team Leader Neighbourhood/Central Asia/Gulf countries

EMPL/E3 International Affairs and ETF Unit

European Commission

Panelists:

- **Mrs. Angela Gerekou** - President, Greek National Tourism Organization (Greece) [Video message](#)
- **Dr. Klodiana Gorica**- Professor of Sustainable Tourism and Marketing, Executive Director InSET – Institute for Sustainable Development, Environment and Tourism (Albania)
- **Mr. Aoun Abi Aoun**- Senior Trainer Global Sustainable Tourism Academy (Lebanon)
- **Mr. Gabriele Manzano** - General Director for knowledge, research, job and business of Emilia-Romagna Region (Italy)

Round II:

Speakers will be invited to respond and debate the following questions:

- How does the growth of digital and tech-driven tourism platforms (e.g., booking websites, travel apps) influence job creation in traditional tourism sectors across the Mediterranean?



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering tourism as a value chain that comprises a full spectrum of products and services, how can countries move higher up this value chain? <p>Scene setter and moderator: Dr. Tina Segota Associate Professor of Tourism at University of Maribor (Slovenia)</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Theodor Grassos, Secretary General, EVBB Pact for Skills (Greece) Dr. Vincent Beyer, Legal Expert, International Investment Agreements Section, Division on Investment and Enterprise (UNCTAD) Dr. Soha Bahgat, Tourism Lecturer at French university in Egypt (Egypt) Mrs. Magda Peistikou – PR & Events Training Manager, INSETE (Greece)
10:30 – 12:00	AGORA: Get to know inspiring tourism projects from the UfM region and exchange experience
12:00 – 13:00	<p>Panel 2: Private Sector engagement, Entrepreneurship and Innovation</p> <p><i>This panel examines the pivotal role of private enterprises and investors in advancing the tourism sector’s competitiveness and resilience in the region. Key discussion points include fostering public-private-people partnerships to enhance tourism infrastructure and services, encouraging private sector investment in sustainable tourism initiatives, and exploring how entrepreneurs can drive innovation in the sector. The private sector perspective will inform the discussions of this session.</i></p> <p>Round I: Speakers will be invited to respond and debate the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is the private sector driving innovation in tourism within the Mediterranean, and what are the key trends shaping the industry? - How can the private sector maximize its return on investment in Tourism while leveraging its social impact?



	<p>Scene setter and moderator: <i>Mrs. Eri Pavlaki</i> <i>StarSleep/WomenDoBusiness (Greece)</i></p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Joonas Tuomivaara - Director of Partnerships, Valo Hotel & Work (Finland) • Katerina Saridaki – Director, CapsuleT Accelerator (Greece) TBC • Mr. Ahmed Yehia, Founder & CEO of ECO Group (Egypt) • Mrs. Isslem Jerbi, Tourism Consultant and Trainer at Djerba Management Organization (Tunisia) <p>Round II: <i>Speakers will be invited to respond and debate the following questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What role does entrepreneurship play in diversifying tourism offerings across the Mediterranean, and what are some best practices that can be replicated in the region? - How can Mediterranean tourism businesses better utilize data analytics and customer insights to personalize offerings and optimize service delivery? <p>Scene setter and moderator: <i>Mrs. Silvia Aviles Giraud</i>, Event Director at TIS - Tourism Innovation Summit (Spain) TBC</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Glenn Cauwenberghs, Senior Innovation Specialist (UN Tourism) TBC • Mr. Peter Louis, Founder & CEO Surv (Egypt) • Mrs. Cecilia Serravalle, Travel4Impact • Mr. Christos Spatharakis, Co-Founder & CEO Ferryhopper (Greece)
13:00 – 14:30	Networking Lunch
15:00 – 17:00	Field Visit
17:00 – 20:00	Networking event



Thursday, 3 rd July	
Local Time	Agenda Item
09:00 – 09:20	<i>Debriefing and reflections on the Field Visit</i>
09:20 – 10:20	AGORA: Get to know inspiring tourism projects from the UfM region and exchange experience
10:20 – 11:00	Debriefing on the AGORA
11:00 – 12:00	<p>Panel 3- Sustainable and Eco-tourism</p> <p><i>This panel explores how sustainable tourism can support the livelihood of citizens and communities in the region. Discussions will focus on implementing eco-friendly initiatives to preserve natural and cultural heritage and developing business models that balance economic growth with social and environmental stewardship, especially in rural and coastal areas. The panel will also highlight successful case studies and collaborative efforts that have led to sustainable tourism development in the region.</i></p> <p>Round I</p> <p><i>Speakers will be invited to respond and debate the following questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do Mediterranean tourism entrepreneurs balance the need for profitability with sustainability and responsible tourism practices? How can tourism endeavors be bankable <i>and</i> eco-friendly? - How can the Mediterranean tourism industry encourage visitors to adopt more sustainable behaviors, such as reducing waste, conserving water, and supporting local communities? <p>Scene setter and moderator: Mrs. Nidal Majdalani – Tourism Consultant, Author, Journalist (Lebanon) TBC</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Ante Mandic – Associate professor of sustainable tourism at University of Split (Croatia) • Mrs. Laura Thabet – Founder of Nawaya (Egypt) • Mrs. Habiba El Kasri, Founder of Asgunfa (Morocco)



	<p><u>Round II</u></p> <p><i>Speakers will be invited to respond and debate the following questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do eco-tourism and sustainable travel contribute to the long-term resilience of Mediterranean tourism in the face of climate change and environmental degradation? - What are some success stories and undergoing initiatives that can inform and inspire future sustainable tourism efforts? <p>Scene setter and moderator: <i>Mrs. Maysa Shahateet, Consultant in Tourism and Heritage Management (Jordan)</i></p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mrs. Nevila Popa, Sustainable Economic Development Expert, Travel and Tourism Consultant (Albania)</i> • <i>Mr. Sherif Al Ghamrawi – CEO & Founder Basata Ecolodge (Egypt)</i> • <i>Mrs. Andjela Djokic – FitCamp Montenegro, Fair BNB Ambassador (Montenegro)</i>
12:00 – 12:30	<p><u>Wrap-up and Conclusions</u></p> <p>Mr. Andreas Garbade <i>GIZ Advisor, UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment</i></p> <p>Mr. Saïd Kajji <i>Project Analyst, Economic Development and Employment Division UfM Secretariat</i></p>
12:30 – 14:00	<p><u>Networking Lunch</u></p>

Simultaneous interpretation Arabic/English/French/ Greek

Venue:

Radisson Blu Park Hotel in Athens, Athens - Greece