

23rd November 2023

The 8th Mediterranean Tourism Forum **MEDITERRANEAN LIFE**
LOW-IMPACT INVESTMENTS FAVOUR EVERYONE

VENUE: HILTON, MALTA

0815hrs Registration

0900hrs Andrew Agius Muscat, Secretary General Mediterranean Tourism Foundation

0920hrs Hon Clayton Bartolo, Minister of Tourism, Malta,

0930hrs Tony Zahra, Mediterranean Tourism Foundation President,

Mediterranean Ministers of Tourism MOU Signature

0940hrs Conference Opening Show – *MEDITERRANEAN LIFE*

1000 hrs Introduction by Moderators Rajan Datar - BBC Broadcaster and Journalist (UK), Angela Attard Fenech, Tumas Group Executive (Malta), Biljana Braithwaite – Sustineri CEO and ESG Adria Summit Founder (Montenegro), Sofia Bennani - Knowledge Management Expert (Morocco), Majlind Lazimi Holwarth Managing Director (Albania), Aradhana Khowala - Aptamind CEO & Founder – (UK) and Adesewa Josh, TRT Broadcast Journalist (Nigeria).

1010hrs DISCUSSION: *LIFE - LOW IMPACT INVESTMENTS FAVOUR EVERYONE*

Amid the climate emergency, the delicate balance between tourism and the environment has gained unprecedented attention. Tourism is intricately tied to authentic experiences of a destination's natural and cultural elements, encompassing the natural world and the story of our lives and traditions. It also plays a significant role in the Mediterranean region's economy, providing livelihoods to many. However, tourism can also trigger social and environmental disruptions. This session delves into the theme of LIFE, exploring its economic, philosophical, and sociological aspects. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing that, beyond green regulations and management trends, Low Impact Investments Favour Everyone (LIFE), advocating for sustainability in the travel, hospitality, and tourism sectors.

Facilitated by Rajan Datar - BBC Broadcaster and Journalist (UK) and Angela Attard Fenech, Tumas Group Executive (Malta)

Prof Jim Coleman; Economist, WSP (UK)

Prof Frank Martela; Philosopher and author (Finland)

Don Andrea Ciucci; Coordinator of the Secretariat of the Pontifical Academy for Life (Vatican)

1040hrs TOMORROW ON-BOARD - CONVERSATION WITH MR. BILAL EKŞİ, TURKISH AIRLINES CEO (TURKIYE), facilitated by Rajan Datar- BBC Broadcaster and Journalist (UK)

1055hrs DISCUSSION: TRAVEL - A TRAVEL BOOM POWERED BY REVENGE HOLIDAYS

The travel industry is experiencing a resurgence in "revenge holidays," with strong earnings anticipated in 2023. However, the entire travel supply chain, including airlines, car rentals, hotels, and restaurants, is under strain, with negative experiences easily going viral. This session delves into the political, economic, social, and technological impacts on the travel industry, addressing global economic trends, geopolitical factors, and evolving consumer spending patterns. It highlights the need for travel leaders to prepare their organizations for the surge in travelers and seize opportunities to redefine their value propositions for increased customer loyalty. The discussion also considers whether travel will continue to take precedence over other discretionary spending amidst ongoing economic turbulence. The speakers will address the critical question whether demand for sunny Mediterranean getaways will wane sooner or later as the economic turbulence which we are already sensing keeps gaining momentum at an international level.

Facilitated by Rajan Datar - BBC Broadcaster and Journalist (UK) and Sofia Bennani - Knowledge Management Expert (Morocco).

Hamid Bentahar, President Moroccan Confederation of Tourism (Morocco)

Andreas Scriven, Deloitte Hospitality & Leisure, Lead Partner (UK)

Bart Van De Winkel, Asset Management, (Holland)

1125hrs JUST TRANSITION – CONVERSATION WITH ALEXANDROS VASSILIKOS, PRESIDENT, HOTREC AND CHAIRMAN AND CEO AIROTEL GROUP OF HOTELS, (GREECE) facilitated by Rajan Datar- BBC Broadcaster and Journalist (UK)

1140hrs DISCUSSION: DESTINATIONS - FROM GOOD TO GREAT

The session emphasizes that while 'good' forms the foundation for 'great,' Mediterranean tourism destinations must actively strive for greatness rather than settle for mediocrity. It delves into defining what constitutes 'good' and 'great,' particularly in the context of challenges related to over-tourism. Traditionally seen as benign, tourism brings leisure, economic prosperity, and environmental conservation. However, the debate questions the notion that tourism can only bring positive outcomes. With growing tourist numbers, the discussion explores whether it's the right time for Mediterranean destinations to transition from 'good' to 'great' by fostering responsible, authentic, and exclusive experiences while being mindful of the environment. Innovation and entrepreneurship play key roles in driving sustainability efforts and net-zero initiatives. The session aims to help industry professionals prepare for these transformative changes.

Facilitated by Rajan Datar - BBC Broadcaster and Journalist (UK) and Biljana Braithwaite – Sustineri CEO and ESG Adria Summit Founder (Montenegro).

Thanos Michaelides, Cyprus Hotels Association, President (Cyprus)

Carlo Micallef, Malta Tourism Authority, CEO (Malta)

Ivana Vladovic, Split-Dalmatia County Tourist Board, Head (Croatia)

1210hrs THE BRAIN STAGE: THINK. CREATE. GROW. The BRAIN Stage brings together two core topics of our time: digitization potential and impact. The speakers on this stage will not only share their expertise and experience with the delegates but will also present to the FORUM the outcome of projects and think tank sessions spearheaded within the umbrella of the Business Research And Innovation Network (BRAIN) a MTF initiative which was launched last year.

Facilitated by Aradhana Khowala, Aptamind CEO & Founder (UK) and Majlind Lazimi Horwath Managing Director (Albania).

Profs Dimitrios Buhalis - Bournemouth University (Greece)– **ACADEMIC RESEARCH PAPERS**

Daniel Surya, Group Executive Chairman and Co-Founder - WIR Group (Indonesia) - **HOW METAVERSE, BLOCKCHAIN AND AI ARE REDEFINING TOURISM SUCCESS**

Michael Haddad; UNDP Regional Goodwill Ambassador for Climate Change and Accessibility (Lebanon) - **PROMOTING ACCESSIBLE TOURISM FOR ALL**

1240hrs DISCUSSION: HOSPITALITY – THE REMARKABLE POWER OF GIVING PEOPLE MORE THAN THEY EXPECT

The session advocates for "unreasonable hospitality" as the path to providing exceptional guest experiences. This approach involves going above and beyond to create deep emotional connections with guests. The debate highlights the importance of relationships in hospitality and the need for intentionality in nurturing them. Speakers will discuss strategies to inspire staff, fostering their creativity and intellect in their roles. The session emphasizes the value of prioritizing connection over perfection to create an ideal hospitality environment. It also shares best practices for recruiting and training the right individuals, forming a hospitality dream team. Prioritizing a hospitality-first culture improves talent retention, customer loyalty, and profitability, differentiating exceptional businesses from the rest. In a time where lasting team and customer relationships are a challenge, authentic hospitality emerges as the key to success.

Facilitated by Rajan Datar - BBC Broadcaster and Journalist and Adesewa Josh, TRT Broadcast Journalist (Nigeria)

Chef Gino D'Acampo, Celebrity Chef and media personality (Italy)

Dimitris Manikis, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, President and Managing Director EMEA (Greece)

Anne Golden, Vice President Operations – UK & North America, General Manager of Pan Pacific London, winner of the AA Hotel of the Year – London 2022 (UK)

1310hrs ONE MEDITERRANEAN LIFE - CONVERSATION WITH HE BORUT PAHOR, FORMER PRESIDENT OF SLOVENIA facilitated by Rajan Datar- BBC Broadcaster and Journalist (UK)

1325hrs LUNCH