

EDITOR'S NOTE

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The *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation* (EJTHR) was created by an initiative of GITUR (the Tourism Research Group at the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria) and it was launched during the 4th International Tourism Congress, also sponsored by GITUR, which took place in November 2010 in Peniche, Portugal.

Since this moment six issues were published, and the experience accumulated in two years confirms that the reasons which led to the creation of this publication are really relevant in the current context of the development of scientific research in the field of tourism. As we wrote in the first issue, the complexity of tourism comes not only from the fact that it is a multidisciplinary field, but also from the fact that this is an activity in constant evolution and continuously interacting with all the other spheres of society: leisure and work, technology and transport, consumption patterns and lifestyles, history and heritage, culture and environment, etc. Consequently, a deep understanding of tourism as a global phenomenon is quite equivalent to a deep understanding of the society where this phenomenon is occurring. The challenge is, hence, colossal, and trying to be successful, the main goal of EJTHR is to encourage the tourism research community to approach this complex phenomenon as best possible.

This is why the EJTHR's mission is fourfold:

- to share new and relevant knowledge among professionals and scholars of tourism throughout the world;
- to stimulate the discussion on emerging research issues in the tourism domains;
- to foster networking tourism research community;
- to provide expert opinion on crucial research issues for the "tourism industry".

In order to ensure that EJTHR's mission can be successfully achieved, the Editorial Board defined a set of basic principles which determine

the editorial policy of the journal. Besides the universal principle of "blind peer review", the following additional principles were defined:

- a) to adopt English as the working language, and this way to try to be useful for all the research community worldwide;
- b) to be connected with a large network of academic experts, from all over the world, inviting to the EJTHR's Advisory Board a significant amount of PhD scholars of high reputation in the research community;
- c) to adopt a statute that ensures the independence between the journal's property and the journal's editorial responsibility;
- d) to promote international conferences on very crucial research domains, aiming to create the appropriate setting for new scientific advances.

If the first principle (the use of English as work language) is easily fulfilled though an administrative process, the implementation of the others represents a continuous challenge and requires great efforts from all of us. Let us briefly review the progress made by EJTHR in achieving the objectives mentioned previously.

1. Step by step, the composition of the EJTHR's Advisory Board is growing up. At the beginning it included 89 members; nowadays it includes around 110 members. The amount of universities and countries represented in the EJTHR's Advisory Board is also growing up accordingly.

2. The new EJTHR statute, published in this issue, was approved by the Scientific Committee of GITUR, in order to integrate the experience obtained along these first two years. The new EJTHR statute will allow stepping forward to consolidate this editorial project. According to the new EJTHR's, the more prestigious specialists from different countries are being invited as associate editors. In result, the decision process concerning the choice of reviewers is now more decentralized, and the EJTHR Editorial Board is more and more connected with an intensive network of PhD experts from different countries. The list of associate editors will include one or two representative members from the most relevant countries from all the continents. The first associate editors are the following:

- Miguel Moital – Bournemouth University, United Kingdom;
- Xosé Santos Solla – University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain;
- Ruben Camilo Lois – University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain;
- Gui Lohmann - Southern Cross University, Australia;
- Anna Trono – University of Salento, Italy.

The richness and diversity of cultural heritage in Europe, associated with the primacy of European Tourism in the world tourism market, were the main reasons that led EJTHR's editors to invite the scientific

community from all over the world to reflect together on the specificities of European tourism. For this purpose, the EJTHR's Editorial Board decided to organize every two years an international conference devoted to current issues of European tourism.

The first edition of the EJTHR conference was held in the University of Santiago de Compostela, 21st - 22nd June, and it was dedicated to very specific issues, namely the destination branding, the heritage and the religious tourism.

The themes suggested in this first international conference were the following:

- the search for meaning and religious tourism;
- tourism and cultural and/or natural heritage;
- the brand strategies for cultural and religious tourism;
- the linkage between the tourist imaginary and the destination branding.

As expected, the response of the research community was very positive: the high turnout of participants, and the great quality of their papers, showed that this bet was won with great success. Authors from 27 countries, from all over the world, presented their research papers, covering all the issues proposed by the organizers. As one can verify by reading the conference proceedings, most of these papers present a very rich and current data, consisting in a real contribution to advancing knowledge of destination brand, heritage and cultural and religious tourism issues. Furthermore, some of the best papers of the 1st EJTHR Conference on Destination Branding, Heritage and Authenticity will be published in the next issues of this journal.

Because of the achieved success, this biennial conference will be held in 2014 under the same device: Destination Branding, Heritage and Authenticity. This second edition will be in southern Italy, the University of Salento, in the city of Lecce, and it will be chaired by Professor Anna Trono. Soon, on the EJTHR website, new information will be delivered, but you are already invited!