

EDITOR'S NOTE SPECIAL ISSUE - 5TH INTERNATIONAL TOURISM CONGRESS – ITC'11

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This Special Issue of the *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation* (EJTHR) is based on papers presented at the 5th International Tourism Congress – ITC'11 that took place at the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, Portugal, in the School of Tourism and Maritime Technology, located in the city of Peniche, nowadays known as the Portuguese “capital” of the surf.

The place itself is charming, according to Graham Busby, a keynote speaker from the University of Plymouth. Busby's Conference report, published in the *Journal of Tourism Consumption and Practice* (Volume 4 No.1, 2012), starts with the following words: “Late November, west coast of Portugal; apart from the 22nd, the weather was incredible, akin to an Indian summer in England. Just the right note for this, the fifth, annual tourism congress held at the ESTM faculty inside the historic walls of Peniche. It's been quite some time since this reviewer felt so warmly welcomed by the Director and others of the organizing committee”.

Other keynote speakers were Chris Cooper (Oxford Brookes University), Graham Walters (London Metropolitan University), Graham Miller (University of Surrey), Miguel Moital (Bournemouth University), Ramón Rufin (Spanish University of Distance Teaching), and José Torres (CEO of Bloom Consulting, expert on Country Branding) and Paulo Almeida (from the host institution).

The success of the ITC'11 was also noted in Busby's report: “It was surprising to find individuals from so many distant locations (...) All in all, something like one hundred and twenty papers were presented”. Indeed, the synergic linkage between the ITC'11 and the EJTHR is creating a very favorable context to develop an interdisciplinary forum for discussing the mainstream questions in tourism research. This synergy is also a way to maximize the impact of the best papers submitted to the congress. A selection of these papers is now published in this special issue.

I present below shortly the sixteen selected papers:

“How do organic farmers view tourism? Perceptions of farmers in Alt Empordà” - *Armesto-López and Gómez-Martín (Spain)*: The aim of this research was to relate the two very different sectors of agriculture and tourism through a study of the perceptions held by a specific group of farmers in the Catalan region.

“Innovation, e-commerce and state” - *Ana Augusto (Portugal)*: When considering innovation processes such as the Internet based technologies, one mainly thinks of the private sector. However, as Ana Pedrosa Augusto (from Polytechnic Institute of Leiria) argues, the state is able to play an important role as an innovation agent in tourism.

“The legacy of transhumance in the National Park of Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise” - *Maria Avran (Romania) and Luca Zarrilli (Italy)*: The ancient heritage of transhumance has left signs in the territorial and cultural spheres in many territories, and these signs can still be understood and interpreted. Authors show the interesting initiatives that are undertaken by this National Park, which are conceived to combine the recovery of this historical legacy with institutional policies of environmental protection and sustainable tourist promotion.

“The municipalization of tourism and qualification of human resources” - *João Gomes, Manuel Salgado and José Martins (Portugal)*: The authors state that the municipalities cannot stand aside from and indemnify themselves from the issue of tourism since it will be an essential industry for economic growth and social well-being, especially because it will be necessary to create wealth and skilled jobs. In their field study conducted among 308 Portuguese municipalities, authors observed some disparities in the definition of policies and strategies relating to the qualification and training of staff in the tourism sector.

“Weather, climate and tourist behaviour”- *Martínez-Ibarra and Gómez-Martín (Spain)*: In a case study focused on the beach tourism of the Spanish Mediterranean coast, authors built up an image bank, supplied by web cameras and Argus video monitoring systems, located at 8 observation points along the Spanish coast. The collected data can help to correctly manage the basic tourist resources during the tourist season and thus enhance enjoyment of the beaches, the provision of services and the safety measures.

“Financial assessment of performance in the hotel industry” - *Catarina Nunes and Maria João Machado (Portugal)*: After reviewing of lit-

erature on the subject, authors concluded that the financial measures have a significant weight in the hotel industry performance assessment. However, they consider that such measures should be complemented by other non-financial measures that consider the particularities of this industry, as well as the specific characteristics of hotel service.

“Coastal tourism development and sustainability practices in Pattaya, Thailand” - *Lei Tin Jackie Ong (Australia)*: This paper addresses the socio-cultural aspect of sustainability as understood by the stakeholders and the benefits of implementing sustainability programs in Pattaya, Thailand, and it presents the current sustainability practices and highlights the aspects of contemporary coastal resort growth that are not receiving adequate attention by policy makers and planners.

“Benefits of group dynamics in personal and social development” - *Elsa Ramos and Patrícia Marques (Portugal)*: Group dynamics create a greater personal and social development of work teams, because they can improve leadership, cohesion, group and inter-personal interactions, group decision making and confidence. This is one of the inputs that Social Psychology can offer to all people working with groups, including in the fields of tourism recreation and entertainment.

“Sustainable tourism development: The role of international organizations” - **Wafaa Nasser (Liban) and Myriam Donsimoni (France)**: Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world; it can contribute strongly to the development of poor countries. In this context, authors state that the sustainable tourism development is un-separable from the action of International Organizations such as the United Nations, since their goal is to improve the quality of life of human beings nowadays but without affecting the quality of life of future populations.

“Touristic groups in Azores: the Finnish case” - *Luís Silveira (Portugal)*: The Scandinavian population has been one of the bets for a sustainable tourism in the Azores, and Finland one of the specific cases with weekly direct flights linking this country with the archipelago. In this context, author asks: Is this a correct bet? What can the Azores offer? What are Finnish searching in their vacation periods? After an inquiry, aiming to determine the Finnish tourist profile and the possible satisfaction with the Azores offer, the author came to a positive answer to these questions.

“The evolution of the image of Spain as a tourist destination” – *Marta Plumed Lasarte (Spain)*: In this article, the author concludes that

“Being the second most visited country in the world, Spain not only is not stopping branding and promoting actions, but it is spending more efforts to keep that great position in market and to adapt itself to the changes and the challenges that the tourist sector will ever get”. Throughout this article the author analyzes all the actions and promotional campaigns developed in Spain, examining its promotional strategy through various examples.

“Tourist experience - metamorphic expectations and experiences in tourist’s personal development: The case of the historic steam train in the Alto Douro Wine Region” – *Vânia Salvador and Sérgio Almeida (Portugal)*: The cultural surroundings may be assumed under certain circumstances as the main factor that motivates the individual to acquire the tourist experience. This article presents the results of field research focused on a particular tourist experience: a trip in an historic steam train within of the context of cultural landscape of the Douro Valley (Portugal). The intention of this work is to understand how these two elements relate and connect in the construction of the tourist experience, analyzing motivations, seduction factors and feelings.

“Factors with a greater impact on the level of innovation in the hotel industry in Spain” – *Antonio Martínez-López and Alfonso Vargas-Sánchez (Spain)*: This article analyses the relationships between certain determinants in the strategic management process on innovation in hotel organisations in Spain, as well as the influence of the level of innovation on competitive advantage and organisational performance. The empirical data showed that some factors of strategic management (namely support for creativity, innovation-oriented culture, business structure that facilitates innovation, competitive rivalry, cost leadership and differentiation strategies, and quality management) have a direct impact on the degree of innovation in the hotel industry.

“Religious tourism: Devotion or business opportunity?” - *Aida Carvalho (Portugal)*: The visit to a shrine is an important moment in the life of the believer. At the same time, tourism can be understood as an opportunity for human realization, for understanding between cultures and traditions, before being considered a danger to the faith. This case study focuses on the analysis of the profile of the individual who visits religious places, in order to understand the motivations that lie behind religious tourism.

“Tourists’ satisfaction with Santiago de Compostela during the Holy Year 2010 and its implications to their future behaviour” - *Fidel Martínez Roget and Ewa Pawlowska (Spain)*: The analysis of tourist

satisfaction is of singular relevance to those involved in the management of tourism. This article presents a survey mainly focused on the destination image, tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. The study shows that the level of satisfaction and loyalty is quite high. Nevertheless the analysis of the sample has revealed some significant differences between groups.

“21st century Cascais: How the waves of time forged a cultural heritage also enjoyed by tourists” - *Cristina Carvalho (Portugal)*: Since the mid-20th century the town Cascais (located 25km away from Lisbon) has been converting stones into tapestries, fortifications into museums and hotels, a convent into a cultural centre, a lighthouse into a pioneering museum, and an octopus into a brand. This paper is focused on two main topics: the historic evolution and tangible cultural heritage of Cascais, followed by the intangible heritage tourists may enjoy while visiting that coastal setting.