

Landscape and leisure in Europe: parasitism and symbiosis

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Introduction

In the early nineteenth century, many people worked themselves to death, eighteen hours a day, six days a week, with no days off. Leisure time was scarce. Only few people had the time and means to repose, divert and travel. Leisure and tourism were the privilege of a small elite. But times have changed. The introduction of a five day working week and holidays combined with rising incomes and affordable transportation have brought leisure and tourism within the reach of most people in developed countries. In Europe, the average amount of free time has gradually increased to 4-6 hours a day (Aliaga 2006)² and a wide range of leisure and tourist opportunities have come within reach in contemporary society.

Defining leisure and tourism

What is considered as leisure and tourism varies depending on approaches, interests and culture. There are many definitions of leisure. They may be based on temporality: juxtaposed to work, biological needs and other commitments (freedom from obligations). Other definitions are based on activities or practices which have been predefined as 'leisure activities'. The last type of definitions is based on experiences: leisure is individually defined by the meaning of the activity, not by its form. The concept of recreation is closely related to leisure and is usually defined as an activity in leisure time or the 're-creating' impact of leisure activities on one's body or mind.

A quick search for importance of tourism' and 'importance of leisure' on Google reveals that tourism especially refers to economic and employment aspects and leisure refers to stress reduction, health and quality of life. The World Tourism Organization uses a broad concept for tourism: 'Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes' (UNWTO 2004). This definition seems to include leisure to a certain extent. Activities in the daily living environment however are excluded. Others stress that "tourism and leisure are inter-related because their practices often occupy the same *shared spaces*" (Shaw & Williams 2002 : 9). In their view, leisure and tourism are 'tied together in the same *time-space framework*' (Shaw & Williams 2002 : 8). In other words, the distinction is not temporal nor time based.

So "tourism, recreation and leisure are generally seen as a set of interrelated and overlapping concepts. While there are many important concepts, definitions of leisure, recreation and tourism remain contested in terms of how, where, and when and why they are used" (Hall & Page 2002: 3). Leisure and tourism comprise a wide variety of activities of variable duration in various environments. It includes urban, rural and natural environments, both public and private, indoors and outdoors. Different countries work with different interpretations of leisure and tourism as well. Usually the same kind of activities are considered as leisure activities (walking, biking, swimming, sunbathing), but social and cultural connotations are different.

¹ This essay was based on some introductory reports of the project Landscape and leisure, describing trends and impacts, facts and figures concerning leisure and landscape in Europe. The reports can be downloaded on the site www.landscapeandleisure.eu.

² The amount of working hours differs between countries. Americans work more hours than Europeans. (Alesina et al. 2005). US employees work over 200 hours per year more than in the EU-15. Consequently, Europeans have more leisure time than their US counterparts.

		Spatial reach		
		Local	National	International
Time	Years	Permanent migration		
	Months	Seasonal migrants Educational visits Extended holiday tourism		
	Weeks	Holiday tourism		
	Days	Business travel Short break holidays Day excursions		
	Hours	Local leisure Commuting		

Temporal and spatial dimensions of the range of leisure and tourism (elaboration of a model of Bell & Ward (2000) in Shaw & Williams (2002)).

Even though the majority of free time is spent in and around the house³, the impacts of increasing free time have gone far beyond daily living environs. From the late 19th century, city centres, peri-urban areas and scenic landscapes have grown into true leisure and tourist landscapes, both in a functional and mental sense. Coastal and alpine areas have turned into mass tourist resorts, city centres and derelict areas have been redeveloped for urban entertainment, and rural landscapes have gradually transformed into 'rurban' residential landscapes with ample supply of leisure attractions and facilities. Many regional economies have become largely dependent on leisure and tourism. In other areas the impacts of leisure and tourism have been less conspicuous. In the absence of leisure and tourist facilities and attractions these landscapes appear unchanged, but in use and meaning they are clearly leisure and tourism related.

Dynamics in leisure and tourism

The nature and importance of leisure and tourism have changed considerably over the last decades. International tourism has grown dramatically over the last fifty years. Tourism has become highly dynamic in all dimensions, including its character and locations. Improved infrastructure, car ownership, aviation and better integration of transport systems have increased people's action radius. World leisure and tourism demands continue to exceed expectations and show sustained growth. Leisure and tourism have become major economic activities which add substantially to national economies and employment rates.

Consumer culture, based on intensified commodity circulation, has caused expanding leisure industries providing an increasing and varied supply. The range of leisure and tourism products and activities becomes ever more diverse and dynamic (Mommaas et

³ The main free activity is watching TV and video; one third to more than one-half of free time is spent on it (Aliaga 2006).

al. 2000; Meethan 2001). Products, services and places are no longer primarily assessed and chosen for their functional value but for their symbolic and experiential value. The expected experience value of products and activities has become increasingly dominant (Schulze 1992; Jensen 1999; Pine and Gilmore 1999). Free time is seen less as 'spare time' than as 'ultimate experience time' (Metz 2002) and people expect assured leisure satisfaction. Traditional supplies of sun, sea and pleasure or a simple, tranquil stroll in the countryside no longer do. Consumers have become very demanding. They expect high quality goods and services and unique, memorable experiences. In their competition to attract consumers, leisure industries and authorities have introduced new, ever more spectacular, leisure and tourism facilities. However, these tendencies to intensify, enlarge, multiply or accelerate experiences are counteracted by a re-appreciation of their counterparts: modesty, deceleration, quietness and complete relaxation.

Leisure and tourism in Europe

International tourist arrivals in Europe grew from 25.3 million in 1950 to 414.4 million in 2002, which represents a progression of 1537% in half a century (Leidner 2004). Although Europe is losing market share to other continents, it will remain the world's largest tourist receiving region in the short and medium term, in both inbound and outbound international tourism (Spörel 2007). Six of the world's top 10 tourist destinations (in terms of arrivals) are in Europe: France, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, Germany and Austria (Mintel 2006).

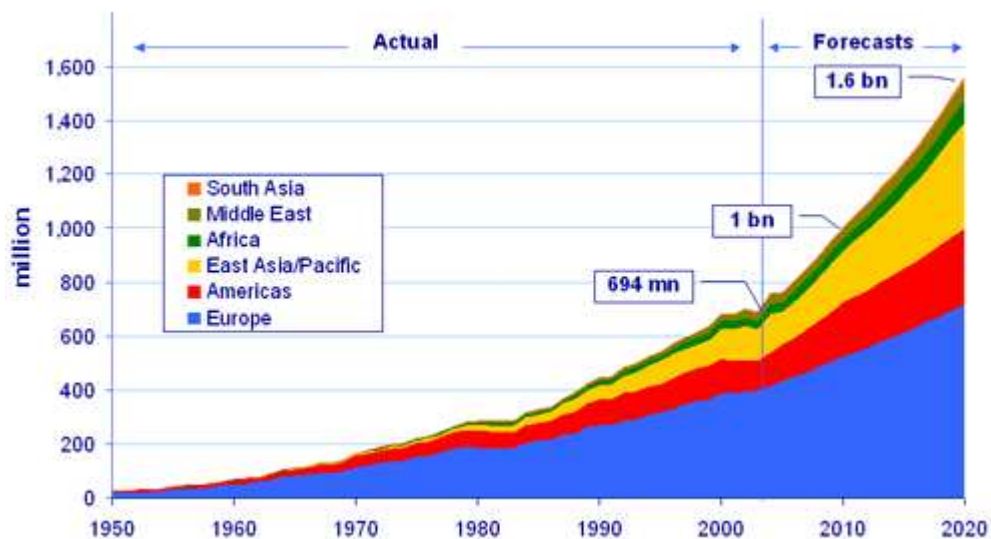
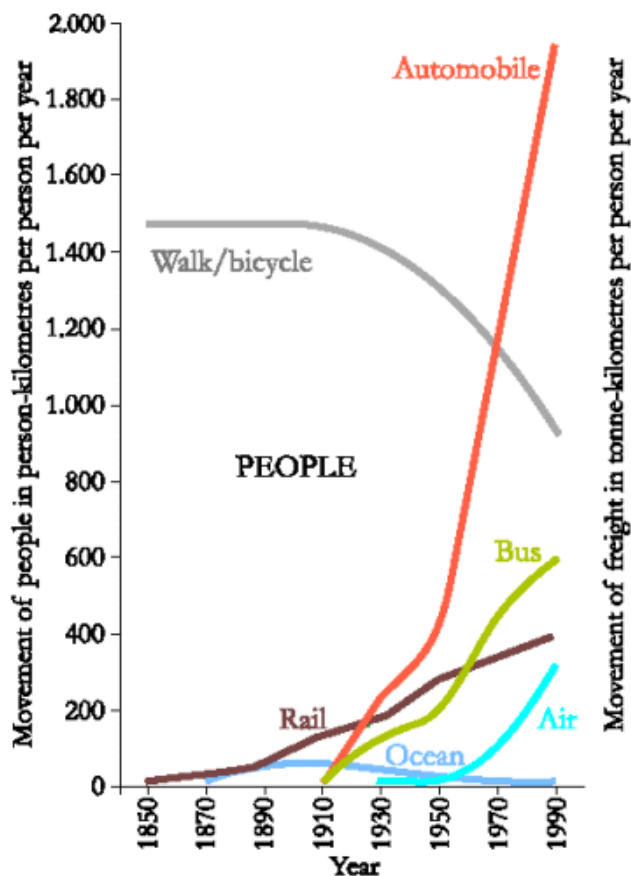


Figure 1 Tourism: Actual growth (1950 – 2004) and forecast (Source: UNWTO see *Historical perspective*)

Tourism produces 5% of European GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and indirect , tourism related spending produces another 10% of European GDP (Mintel 2006). Depending on the definition of the sector, tourism employs 7 to 9 million persons in the European Union. If indirect employment is taken into account, over 20.6 million jobs could be recorded (the share of tourism employment varying between 4 and 12% of total EU employment, depending on the definition) (Leidner 2004).

In total about 900 million holiday trips (88% of all nights spent in EU-25 collective accommodation), almost evenly distributed between short (1-3 nights) and long holidays (4 and more nights) were made by EU tourists in 2005. France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Spain together accounted for almost two thirds of these trips (Spörel 2007). Inbound tourism takes a considerable share: residents represent almost 60 % of all nights spent in collective accommodation in 2005 (Spörel 2007). The main three destinations for outbound tourism, measured by the number of trips of 4 nights or more are Spain, Italy and France. Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands generate most tourism in the EU-25 (Spörel 2007). Germany is set to reinforce its number one world ranking in 2006 in terms of international tourism expenditure, with United Kingdom and France in the top 4 as well. If current trends are maintained, the Russian Federation will continue to be one of the markets offering the best growth potential over the foreseeable future (ETC 2006). Although accurate statistics about leisure related expenditures cannot be found at a European scale, national statistics suggest that they exceed tourism expenditures.



Share of different means of transport (Source: ...)

The conventional form of tourism that came with the development of jet-planes and package holidays is generally labelled mass-tourism. Alternative forms of tourism, often labelled as 'independent' or 'rural tourism' if they are geographically situated away from urbanised (seaside) areas are predominantly believed to play a pivotal role. Main segments are agrotourism (tourism related to the participation in agricultural activities), cultural tourism (based on cultural resources), ecotourism (based on natural resources), active tourism (sports and adventure), and health tourism (physical and mental personal care, wellness). However the distinction between mass tourism and 'independent' tourism is not as strict and clear as it seems. These days, many hybrids exist and a variety of package deals is offered in 'independent' segments.

Consequently, it is very difficult to get hold of reliable data on the relative share of mass tourism and 'independent' segments. Hall et al (2003) estimate the contribution of rural tourism to total supply at 10 to 25 %. . In 2002, the World Tourism Organization estimated yearly growth rates of 6% against an average of 2 %. Some countries in Southern en Eastern Europe showed much higher rates, up to 20 %. According to Eurogites, there are about 400.000+ rural accommodation units in Europe / 4.000.000+ bed places. The multiplier ratio of rural tourism is above 2,2 (one Euro of tourism spending creates 2,2 Euros for the local economy). Agrotourism is a substantial complementary income: 4 bed places create income equivalent to 1 employment and in Austria for example, 1 out of 5 farmers provide this service (Ehrlich 2006). "Ecotourism, in the strictest sense of the word, still only accounts for a small proportion of the total tourism market. Current estimates are between 3-7% of the market (WTTC, WTO, Earth Council 1996).

A greater diversity in life-styles, values and attitudes implies that the behaviour of consumers and travellers will be harder to predict and marked by a greater diversity. The tourist industry is being polarized into the mega and the micro, the safe and the unsafe, the mass tourists and the individualists, the mega airlines and the low cost-carriers. It is increasingly being polarized into large global players and really regional ones, losing its middle ground (Nordin 2005). Small independent tour operators thrive in highly differential niche markets . In the UK for example there is a strong demand for specialist activities such as walking, cycling and golfing holidays (Mintel 2006). The English Tourism Council (2000) describes some of the changing values and attitudes likely to



have an impact on tourism and include for instance a growing search for more authentic products: a focus on nostalgia, roots, other cultures and identity, an increasing interest in spiritual and intellectual activity. Rural tourism is a growing segment. This increase is caused by the development of new tourist markets and changing economies caused by European integration. In practice, rural tourism usually involves small-scale, low-profile forms of leisure and tourism (Veer 2005).

Another growth market is health an fitness tourism, which can be seen as part of a larger societal trend, places ever higher value on well-being and balance. "With more material

wealth and well-being leisure has emerged as an ever more important value factor” (Nordin 2005:20). Although health tourism has existed for a long time, being popular in many European (mountain) regions, its appeal has now broadened to a much larger market segment. (Nordin 2005).

Leisure and tourism also change through the arrival of new consumer groups: a rising number of urban dwellers, vital and well-to-do seniors, tourists from growth markets like Central and Eastern Europe, Asia and the Pacific. Significantly improved education levels increased the demand for more complex forms of entertainment, often characterised by ‘active exploration’ rather than passive consumption. At the same time, people are increasingly looking for simple pleasures, which they seek to find in the countryside: ‘peace and quietness’, ‘space’, ‘authenticity’, ‘nature’ and ‘health’. Due to growing mobility and lower prices new, alternative, destinations have come within reach. As people’s reach increases, the distinction between typical leisure and tourist destinations diminishes. A competitive, globalizing market and high consumer demands have made quality a major distinctive factor. Remote places which offer high-quality, varied, safe leisure or tourist supply will be preferred over nearby mediocrity. Traditionally popular destinations are no longer obvious; if quality is inferior and no action is taken, decline is inevitable⁴.

Demographic trends

Whereas population grows worldwide, especially in Asia and Africa, the European population will diminish over the next fifty years. Consequently, in future Europeans will be relatively old compared to other continents. Worldwide, the population aged 60 and over is growing faster than any other age group. The 60+ population, at 605 million today, will almost double to 1.2 billion by 2025. By 2050 it will reach 2 billion, marking the first time in history when people aged 60 and over outnumber children aged 14 and under. By 2050, an estimated 35% of the European population will be over the age of 60, compared to 20% today (www.healthandfuture.org). Ageing and early retirements have already caused an increase of senior tourists with ample leisure time at their disposal. Aged people are prepared to pay more for safety and comfort than young people and families (Evers et al. 2006 : 62). City trips are very popular among aged people, and so is health tourism. The future seniors, who are now among the 16-35 age group with rising incomes and extended social and professional networks, will have grown accustomed to travel. A concentration of well-to-do aged people will probably cause economic growth in suburban areas, tourist coastal areas and in the countryside of their youth (Evers et al. 2006). Still, demographic changes are not equally distributed. While some regions are dealing with population growth, others are subject to depopulation, declining birth rates and an aging population. Regions that cope with depopulation are relatively inaccessible, such as mountain regions, small islands, and peripheral regions (Dammers 2006). Leisure and tourism developments can help counteracting depopulation of areas by the job opportunities it creates, but the “seasonal character of much tourism may create problems for destinations that are heavily dependent on it” as well (UNEPTIE 2002).

⁴ The development of tourist destinations has been modelled by G.W. Butler (1980) as going through a cycle of phases; the Tourist Area Life Cycle. After exploration of the area by pioneers, first involvement takes place from local businesses, followed by a period of strong and rapid growth and a subsequent period of maturation in which growth rates are declining. If no action is taken, this will eventually lead to decline, but another scenario is rejuvenation in which case investments are made for reposition and renovation.

Leisure and tourism as driving forces

Because of their great economic importance leisure and tourism are increasingly seen as the main contributor to current and future regional economies. Isolated locations, difficult climate conditions, inaccessible terrain and suchlike hamper the economic viability of agriculture in various areas. Leisure and tourism developments are supposed to provide pinning communities with alternatives to stay alive. Great scenic or natural beauty become important assets for leisure and tourism development. Lively and strong cultural identity and traditions can also contribute to the tourist potential of a region (Jouen, 2000, European Communities, 2003). Derelict areas are being transformed from hostile no-go areas into attractive leisure destinations with the objective to create new employment and attract new residents. In regions where the dominant position of agriculture is under pressure due to urbanization, processes of transformation and diversification can be observed as well. In rural areas agriculture increasingly has to compete with other sectors and functions which are claiming their place in the countryside. Entrepreneurs have to deal with increasing competition and different requirements in regard to the quality of products, production processes, plant and animal health and welfare and the environment. Rural areas are in demand both in terms of housing and leisure activities. This in turn leads to new opportunities for socioeconomic developments (Veer 2005). Leisure and tourism are considered as important economic supports of future rural economies.

Combined all these processes cause major changes at the local, regional, national and international scale. Leisure and tourism have made serious contribution to the changing the landscapes of Europe. These processes are complex, multi-faced phenomena influenced by a variety of economic, socio-cultural and other driving forces. Depending on the context, these driving forces are dealt with in many different ways, causing both positive and negative impacts. Some landscapes turn out to be temporarily attractive, geared towards short-term economic profits; others prove long-lasting, beautiful, attractive and imaginative. Leisure and tourism act like parasites; consuming life, space and meaning without regard. "In the sheer volume of its geographical flows and presence impact, tourism represents a highly effective factor of change in the landscape" (Terkenli 2002: 227). "The pre-existing landscape is either greatly modified (as in heritage planning in urban areas) or totally obliterated (as in the building of Disney theme-parks)" (Rodaway 1995: 262 in Terkenli 2002). Yet, leisure and tourism can also create new landscape qualities and contributed to sustainable landscape development; settling a symbiotic relation with mutual profits. Positive and negative impacts often turn out to be two sides of the same coin: people and regions profit from leisure and tourism developments, but these come at a price. The development of leisure and tourism needs to be subjected to careful planning in order to become and remain a valuable contributor to people and landscape. 'Sustainable development' strategies attempt to find more well-balanced approaches.

Cultural differences

"Culture is the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artefacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning" (Bates and Plog 1990). Different histories and traditions make for some distinctly different cultures within the EU. Within Europe there are three cultural clusters. There are the Northern European countries, which include the Netherlands, Britain and Switzerland as well as the Scandinavian countries. A second cluster is called Catholic Europe, which includes Belgium, Austria, Portugal, Spain, France and Italy. A third cluster is made up by the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe (Inglehart 1997).

Northern European culture can be characterised as post-materialist: self-expression and individuality are placed above traditional-rational forms of authority such as a strong police force and bureaucracy, and a relatively high value placed on non-material qualities such as well-being and ethical considerations. Northern Europeans place relatively high value on leisure as they focus on wellbeing more than welfare. Post-material travellers are moving away from the well-known holiday resorts. In Scandinavian countries for example, leisure is closely related to outdoor living, in Germany to sports and activity, and in the UK to rural tourism (Bruls 2002). Post-materialists are looking for so called 'authentic experiences'. In the process of economic development much of the pristine nature and small-scale agricultural landscape has been lost in post-industrial societies. This, combined with a growing focus on immaterial values, has led to a re-appreciation of pre-industrial landscapes. Post-material travellers look for landscapes that are authentic in the sense that they have not been planned or shaped for the purpose of leisure and tourism.

Eastern European culture scores relatively high on materialism. Although they prefer secular-rational authority like their northern European counterparts, they combine this with a high value of material needs related to survival. As materialist culture is more concerned with welfare, work is relatively important and leisure is less important. Whereas many Northern Europeans consider leisure a necessity, many Eastern Europeans consider leisure a luxury, through which people can portray their wealth. Holidays abroad for example, are a good example of this kind of conspicuous consumption. This is likely only enhanced by the fact that under communism travel between countries was severely restricted and could only be undertaken by a selected few. Well-known holiday resorts are popular holiday destinations amongst Eastern Europeans and other materialists.

The cluster of Catholic Countries takes its place somewhere in between, focussing more on traditional authority than Eastern Europeans, but less on survival. In Southern Europe, social relations and social space characterize leisure culture, converging in a strong food culture that brings people together to eat or drink outside the working place or the home. These differences in present day values between countries are a reflection of the difference in economic and cultural history between these countries.

Both Poland and Turkey fall outside of the three European clusters identified by Inglehart. Both Turkey's and Poland's value systems have more in common with the South Asia cluster, which is distinctly more material than the European clusters. Turkey of course has neither a socialist nor a Christian background, making it different from other European countries, whereas Poland is different because it has maintained its roman-catholic tradition throughout the years of socialism (Inglehart 1997).

Changing landscapes

A person's wish to visit a particular environment (landscape) is socially constructed, and thus inherently subject to change and diversity (Urry 1995). "Shifts in perception of what are regarded as being desirable landscapes are associated with social and cultural changes in the society that tourists originate from" (Holden 2000: 25). For example, in the mid-eighteenth century a marked shift was noticed through the increased preference for romantic and picturesque scenery. "The previous landscapes of fashion were those of the European low countries, that is, Belgium and Holland, because they illustrated the human ability to dominate nature to provide agriculturally productive terrain" (Holden 2000:25). In the nineteenth century, sublime landscapes of 'wilderness' (like mountains and rugged coastlines) gained prominence as places to visit. The English developed mountaineering and laid the foundations for Alpine tourism.

When looking at the impacts of leisure and tourism on European landscapes, regional differences become apparent. Climate, tradition, presence of cultural and natural attractions, socio-political conditions, geographical position and other factors determine landscape appearance, use and meaning. Some landscapes have become mono-functional tourist areas, other have absorbed leisure and tourism activities maintaining their original character. Some areas have been popular destinations for many decades or even centuries, others recently appeared on the scene.). "Over-reliance on tourism, especially mass tourism, carries significant risks to tourism-dependent economies. Economic recession and the impacts of natural disasters as well as changing tourism patterns can have a devastating effect on the local tourism sector" (UNEPTIE 2002). The North Sea for example has encountered a serious competitor in the Baltic Sea after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the British countryside suffered severely from foot and mouth disease. With the intention of controlling the spread of the disease, public rights of way across land were closed by order. As walkers play a vital role in the British rural economy, the ban severely damaged the popularity of areas such as the Lake District (www.ramblers.org.uk). Mass tourist areas, scenic landscapes, cities and highly urbanized regions; the main tourism and leisure destinations of Europe, are all undergoing many changes.

Areas of mass tourism

Apart from cities, which attract many tourists, coastal and mountain areas are the most popular tourist landscapes. Large parts of these landscapes have been completely transformed and adapted to tourism, consisting of agglomerations of mass tourist resorts. Landscape qualities that were once the main motive for tourist developments have



become side issues. Amusement, shopping and social activities come to the forefront. Souvenir shops, theme parks, clubs, discotheques and marinas with luxurious yachts have surpassed beaches and picturesque fishing ports as major attractions. In popular Alpine tourist resorts, the 'Après-ski' seems to have replaced the ski slopes as the main attraction.

Increased consumption in mass tourist areas puts pressure on scarce natural resources. One of the most critical resources is fresh water. Excessive personal use, and a rise in facilities such as swimming pools and golf courses have lead to scarcity, especially in dryer regions and on small islands. On the Balearics for example groundwater levels have dropped over 90 meters since 1975. Vast numbers of tourist also produce large amounts of waste. Many small communities have increasing difficulty dealing with this mountain of rubbish. On Mallorca and Ibiza, relatively small islands, authorities have had to introduce tourist taxes to deal with waste and litter caused by the million of tourists that visit each year (www.iucn.org).

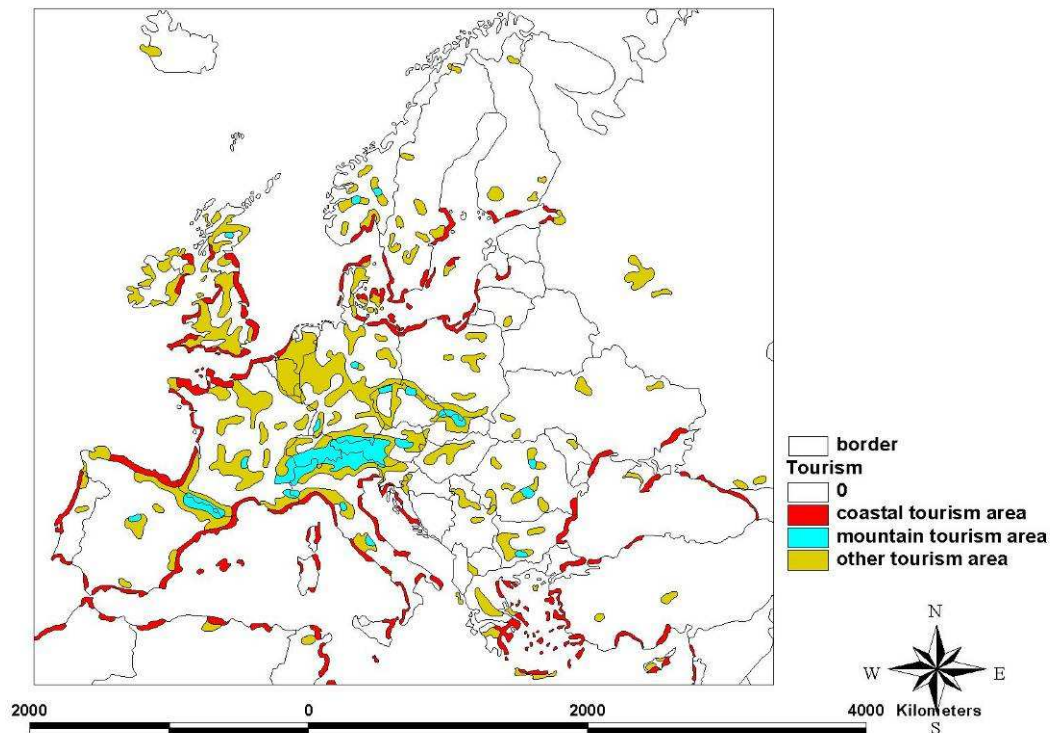


Figure 2 Most popular tourist landscapes in Europe (Source: Grote Bosatlas 2001).

Climate change

Many of the primary tourist resorts in Europe are threatened by climate change. Coastal areas face rising sea levels, which lead to coastal erosion. Already many tourist amenities, such as coastal golf courses and hotels, require protection. Although the predicted strength and effects of climate change differ, it is expected by many that even a relatively small change in temperature will have an effect on tourism in Europe. Popular tourist destinations, such as the Mediterranean, will change from regions with very good or excellent summer conditions up to the 2020s into regions with only good or acceptable conditions by the 2080s. These areas may face decline, as scenarios predict Northern Europe to change into a region with very good or even excellent summer conditions. The European Commission reported that “North Sea beaches would replace the Riviera as a vacation destination. The annual migration of rich North Europeans to the south could stop – with dramatic consequences for the economies of Spain, Greece and Italy” (Financial Times 5-1-2007). On the other hand, impacts might also be restricted to seasonal shifts. Climatic conditions in Antalya, Turkey, for example will drastically subside in summer but spring and autumn will become more favourable (Amelung 2006).

Many resorts show little respect to local and regional identity. Ski resorts all over Europe are being built in a generic Alpine-look tourist chalet style which has little to do with traditional building styles and their subtle local architectural differences. Natural coast lines are being built up and remodelled: in Italy for example, 43% of the coast is completely built up (www.iucn.org). Seaside resorts have been built up with high-rise hotels and apartments. The construction of accommodation, infrastructure and other tourist facilities has changed landscapes and has had severe physical impacts like land degradation and damaged coastal and alpine ecosystems. The same can be said for tourist activities; intensive and unsustainable use of vulnerable ecosystems like marine and coastal areas and alpine regions contribute to the loss of biodiversity and cause erosion. The Alps, for example, have managed to obtain 12 % of the worldwide sales in tourism. But the 40.000 kilometers of ski runs that have been created for tourism have brought about large deforestation and severe erosion (www.iucn.org). Biodiversity also suffers due to trampling and disturbance (In't Veld et al. 2006).

Map 10.3 Expected threat of tourism and recreation sector on coastal landscape types

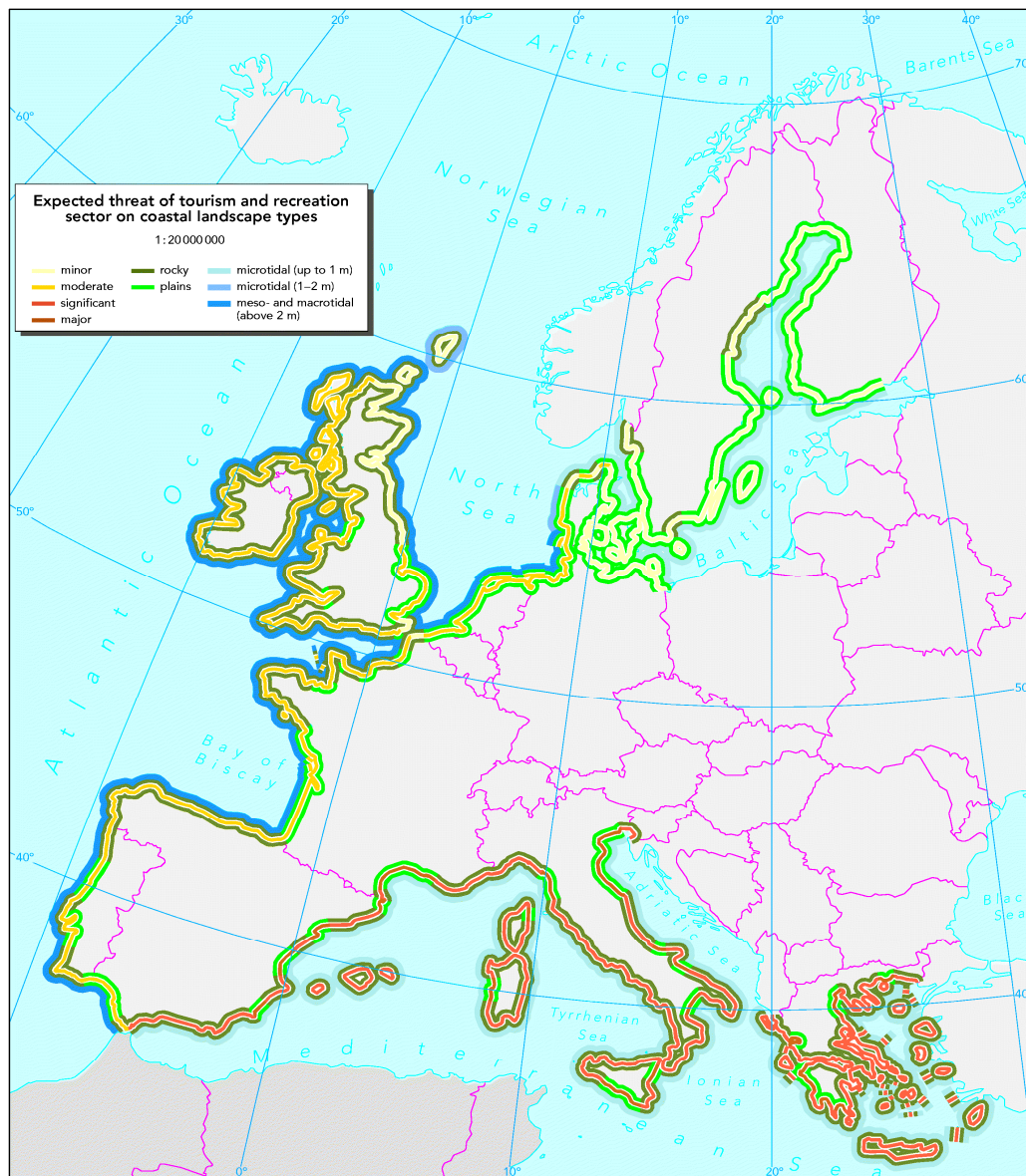


Figure 3 Expected threats of tourism and recreation on coastal landscape types (source: EEA)

Besides causing pressure on natural resources, tourism also leads to socio-economic pressure. Small communities host numbers of visitors that exceed their population by far. Once areas become more attractive for tourists, every day living costs and real estate prices rise, often making places unaffordable for those people that grew up in them. The development of tourism can produce cutting contrasts of rich, tourism enclaves in poor surroundings and can negatively affect the relationship between hosts and visitors. In addition, the reliance on tourism makes regions very vulnerable.

One example of a destination that is has to cope with a massive influx of tourists is Malta. “Malta has only 380,000 residents, but received 1.2 million tourists in 1999. As 25% of GDP (and indirectly 40%), tourism generated more than \$650 million in foreign exchange earnings. Malta's high dependence on tourism and a limited number of export products makes its trade performance vulnerable to shifts in international demand”(Washington Times).

Besides (potentially) leading to negative impacts, examples of responsible tourism development strategies exist as well. Artist Cesar Manrique for example encouraged tourism development of the Canary Island of Lanzarote based on environmental capacity and local identity. He lobbied successfully for the use of traditional colours in buildings and for a ban on high rise hotels on the island.

Alpine countries are working towards a more sustainable future. In 1991, Alpine countries formulated the Alpine Convention, an agreement between various countries for the protection and sustainable development of the Alpine Region. It was signed by Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Slovenia, the EU and Monaco (www.cipra.org/en/alpenkonvention).

The areas of mass tourism most likely to become the subject of change are those that have a narrow focus. Most coastal tourist resorts for example aimed to attract mass tourism by focusing on market segments on the lower end of the socioeconomic scale. Price was favored over quality and standards. However, times have changes. People are no longer content with just sun, sea and amusement. The experienced tourist has come to expect better quality and a more varied supply. This has lead to the diversification of leisure and tourism, creating new and different segments: sports and adventure, culture, wellness and nature. Hinterlands of main tourist destinations are likely to be exploited and developed in order to meet contemporary needs and wishes and to compensate decreased expenditure.

Cities and urbanized regions

The major driving force behind the use and adjustments of landscapes for *leisure* purposes is ongoing urbanization. The world's urban population increased from 220 million in 1900 to 732 million in 1950 and is estimated to have reached 3.2 billion in 2005; corresponding with 49% of the global population (UN DESA 2005). The proportion of the European population residing in urban areas is expected to rise from 72% in 2005 to 78 % in 2033 (UN DESA 2005).

Major area	Population (x 1000)			% urban
	urban	rural	total	
Europe	525 628	202 762	728 389	72.2
Eastern Europe	203 260	94 068	297 328	68.4

Northern Europe	80 225	15 568	95 792	83.7
Southern Europe	99 090	50 299	149 389	66.3
Western Europe	143 053	42 862	185 879	77.0

Figure 4 Population of urban and rural areas in 2005 (at mid-year and percentage urban based on UN DESA 2005).

The physical pattern of urban growth in Europe is predominantly one of urban sprawl: the low-density expansion of large urban areas, mainly into the surrounding agricultural areas and driven by market conditions. (EEA 2006). “Urban sprawl is most noticeable in countries or regions with high population density and economic activity (Belgium, the Netherlands, southern and western Germany, northern Italy, the Paris region) and/or rapid economic growth (Ireland, Portugal, Eastern Germany, the Madrid region). New development patterns can also be observed, around smaller towns or in the countryside, along transportation corridors, and along many parts of the coast usually connected to river valleys. The latter is exemplified by the so-called 'inverse T' of urban sprawl along the Rhône valley down to the Mediterranean coast. Hot spots of urban sprawl are also common along already highly populated coastal strips, such as in the case of Spain where the artificial areas may cover up to 50 % of the total land area” (EUKN 2006).

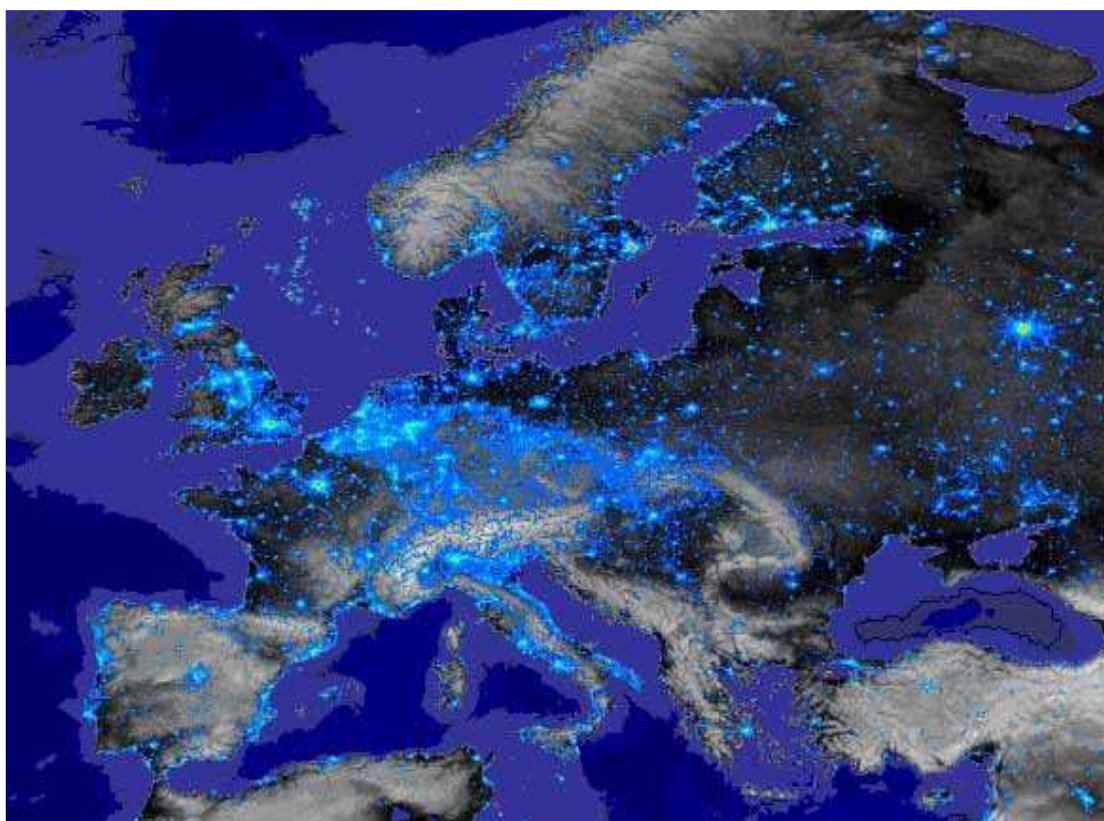


Figure 5 Night image of Europe (source: Nasa). Urban sprawl is clearly visible. A major part of the European population is concentrated in a large, very highly populated arc, the so-called ‘blue banana’ (1500 km long comprising 70 million inhabitants) that links Southern England to Lombardy, encompassing the Benelux and the Rhine-Ruhr basin. Yet, the image shows that the ‘blue banana’ has become a ‘blue kangaroo’.

Not all cities are expanding, some regions experience urban shrinkage, most noteworthy in Post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe, especially in former Eastern Germany. The collapse of industries, unable to cope in a highly competitive global market, have led to high levels of unemployment, forcing people to move away (see also www.shrinkingcities.com).

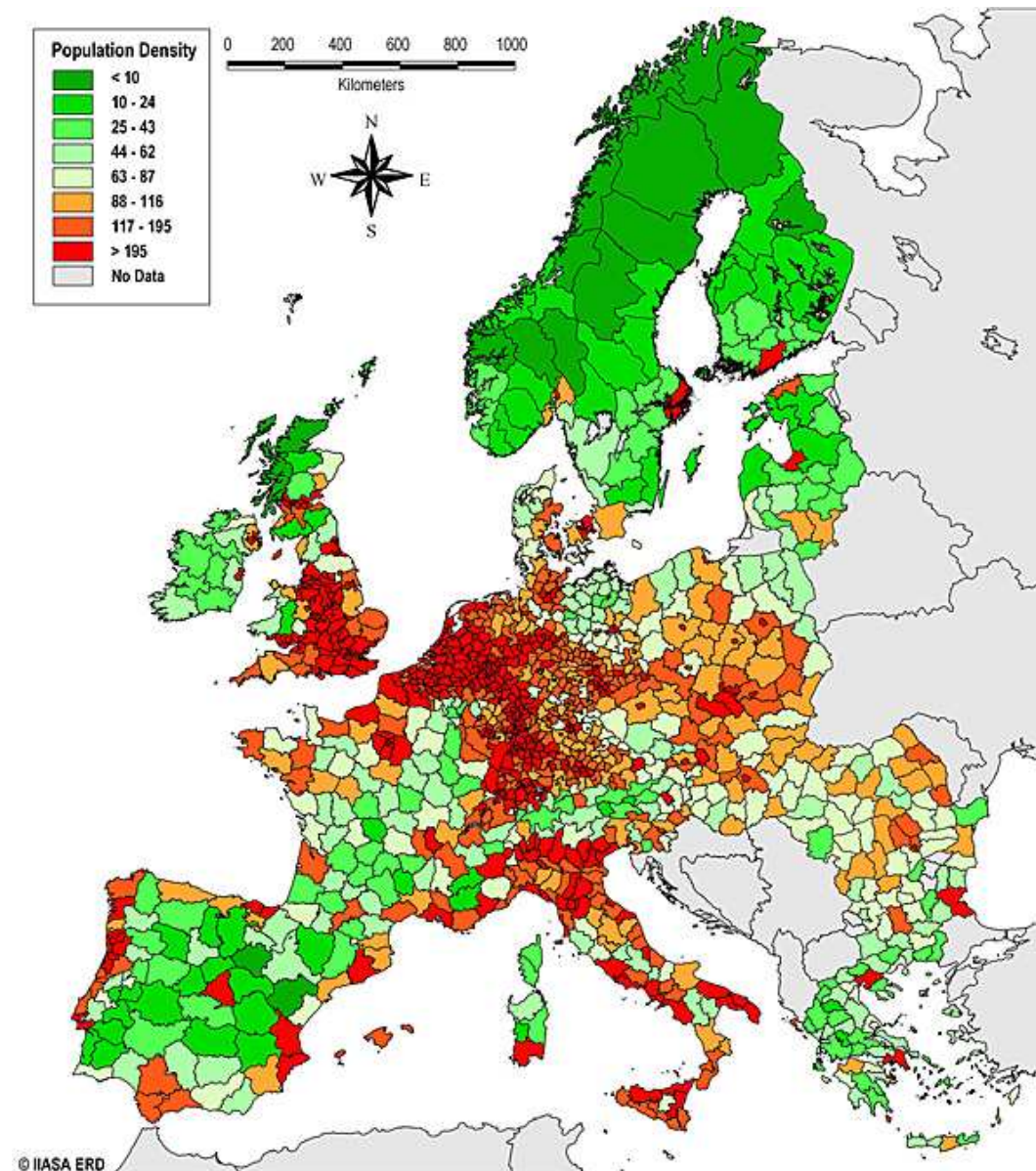


Figure 6 Europe's population density for NUTS 3 level areas (source: IAASA)

Most leisure activities take place in urban environments. "Citizens prefer urban areas over the countryside, not only in general but also for outdoor recreation" (Harms 2006: 61). Even for outdoor recreation, walking and cycling, about two third of the activities take place in urban areas. In the Netherlands, 90 %(!) of leisure activities in 'green' areas take place in the city (Dagevos 2004); public gardens, parks and park forests are very popular leisure environments. However, many cities suffer from high deficiencies of green areas for leisure purposes and people generally aren't prepared to travel long distances for (leisure) activities undertaken on a regular basis. As a result, pressure on

peri-urban areas is high. Attractive cultural and natural landscapes in the vicinity of urban areas are increasingly being adjusted to accommodate leisure needs and wishes of urban dwellers. Although the predominant land use may still be agriculture or nature; the character of these landscapes is plural and diverse. When agricultural landscapes in the vicinity of urban areas are considered unattractive or unsuitable to accommodate large volumes of visitors, recreation areas, park forests, golf courses and other outdoor recreation areas are being developed, as enclaves or intertwined with other land use. For non-regular or incidental leisure activities though, people tend to accept longer distances and more travel time. From a supply point of view, it means that the catchment area of recreation and tourist attractions has increased. Mega attractions like Eurodisney in France or Europa Park in Germany have only been able to flourish because of increased mobility and people's changing habit to go on holiday more than once a year. These mass attractions tend to be located in the vicinity of metropolitan areas. Cities and theme parks profit from their mutual presence and good access.

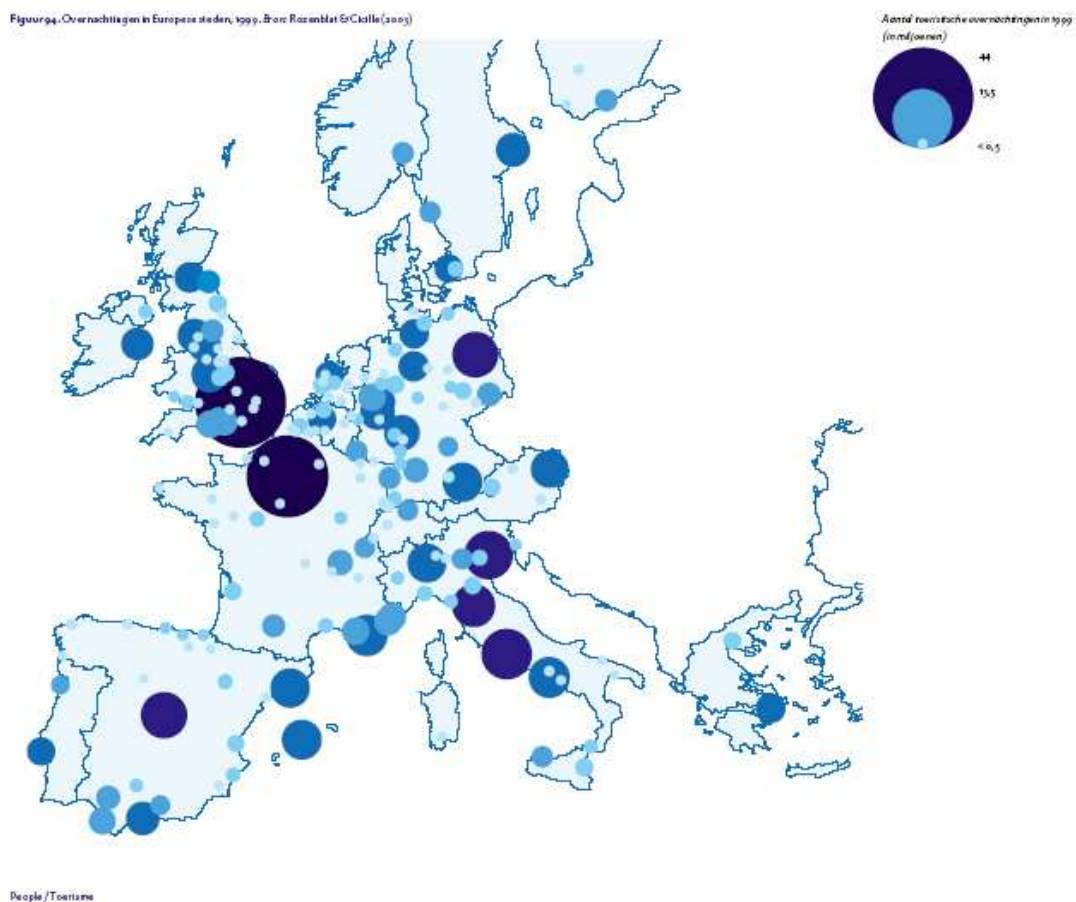


Figure 7 Overnight stays in European cities in 1999 (Evers et al 2006, based on Rozenblat and Cicille 2003).

Cities are popular tourist destinations as well; they are short trip destinations par excellence with their accumulation of diverse attractions and events. In London, tourists buy 30% of theatre tickets and account for half of all visits to London attractions (www.visitlondon.com). Commercialized entertainment has become indispensable for urban economies, therefore urban revitalizations has become crucial for feasibility and survival (Hannigan 1998). In 2004, city tourism had a share of 38% of all European outbound travel (UN WTO 2004). Germany and UK are the two top source markets of European City Tourism demand, Paris and London are the most favourite destinations.



The explosive growth of low cost carriers has also made a major contribution to the growth of urban tourism. Many cities that were previously out of reach have now become viable options for a weekend break, or short holiday, and are now direct competition for short holidays in one's own country. In France for example, average tourism growth rates are about 2%, but for Paris these were 9%.

Low cost carriers

Low-cost carriers have brought destinations within reach that used to be too far away and/or too expensive for short trips. According to the sector itself, low-cost airlines now account for 12% of all scheduled flight operations and 15% of all available seats. One in eight of the world's scheduled flights is being provided by low-cost operators. Even in the established intra-European and domestic US markets, low-cost airlines continue to expand. Within Europe, there are 24% more budget flights today than in April 2005 (www.oag.com, see Press releases april 2006).

Low-cost carriers in Europe		
Connections	Departures per day	Airports with discount airlines
Great Britain (312)	Great Britain (659)	France (27)
Germany (141)	Germany (314)	Italy (25)
Italy (115)	Italy (166)	Great Britain (24)
Spain (106)	France (152)	Germany ((21)
France (78)	Spain (138)	Spain (13)
Ireland (34)	Ireland (79)	Norway (13)
Belgium (30)	Belgium (64)	Sweden (7)
Sweden (26)	Norway (53)	Ireland (5)
Netherlands (24)	Netherlands (39)	Netherlands (5)
Norway (5)	Switzerland (38)	Austria (4)
	Sweden (33)	

Source: Based on Low-Cost Monitor 2003, in Luftfartsverket 2003.

Low-cost carriers in Europe (Source: Nordin 2005).

Scenic landscapes

While amusement and social motives appear to prevail in mass tourist areas, scenic landscapes are, first of all, valued for their landscape qualities: scenic views, cultural

heritage, wildlife and picturesque villages. The English Tourism Council (2000) describes some of the changing values and attitudes likely to have an impact on tourism: a growing search for more authentic products, a focus on nostalgia, roots, other cultures and identity, and an increasing interest in spiritual and intellectual activity. These trends are articulated in the emergence of products that capitalise on the cultural resources of a certain area. Cultural tourism is defined by ATLAS⁵ as ‘The movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs’. Many sub-segments can be identified such as heritage tourism⁶, spiritual tourism, agritourism, gastronomic tourism etc. Motivations may be very different but nature, experience, and cultural authenticity are always core factors. The popularity of many of these landscapes lies in their supposed un-spoilt and authentic character. The Polish Tourist Office advertises with “1000 years of tradition”, Romanian Tourist Information proudly presents “regions that seem bastions of a medieval past long since lost elsewhere”, the



Official website for tourism in Spain characterises Galicia as a region where “people are marked by a landscape of mountains which has led to a traditional isolation from the rest of the country, allowing them to preserve, almost intact, ancestral traditions, customs and even languages”, the Dutch Tourist Office presents Drenthe as “a province with mystic landscape charm where echoes from the rich local culture still sound”.

Other landscapes are especially attractive for their natural qualities. Nature areas and rural landscapes attract people who enjoy landscapes for their natural beauty and like watching wildlife. Again, the conception of un-spoilt, intact landscapes prevails: the ‘wilder’ the better. Obviously, this is all illusion, as most landscapes have undergone major changes. In countries such as Germany, Denmark, Sweden, France and Italy, structural transformations date back to the beginning of the twentieth century or the 1950s. In other countries such as Portugal, Ireland, Spain, Greece and Finland, the countryside has only recently had to deal with problems such as the exodus of the rural population, increasing unemployment and the accelerated restructuring of production. In addition, tourism itself has also caused considerable change to scenic landscapes. The



more these landscape are physically adjusted to leisure purposes, the less ‘wild’ and authentic they become. Like areas of mass tourism, they have been adjusted for tourist purposes, though not that radical. Tourist facilities and accommodations were developed, the landscape was opened up, natural and landscape features were transformed into tourist attractions. However, compared to mass tourist resorts, entrepreneurship is more local, individual and less organized.

⁵ ATLAS is the Association for Tourism & Leisure Education, a network of universities with research and education interests in tourism and leisure

⁶ Mind that the segments are defined as tourism segments but include leisure and recreation.

Scenic landscapes are subject to fundamental economic and socio-cultural changes caused by leisure and tourism. Leisure and tourism can improve local liveability, for example by means of better infrastructure and investments in green space and recreational areas. Residents benefit from commercial (shops) and public (cultural events and communal activities) facilities that are primarily developed for tourism. In rural areas with pressurised and heavily subsidised agricultural sectors leisure and tourism form a welcome diversification of the local economies, as rural leisure and tourism are closely related to the consumption of locally produced goods. 'Leakage' – tourist spending that leaves the local economy through the import of goods and services – is significantly lower than in the case of mass-package tourism. Tourism and recreation are beneficial for the local labour market and can help to counteract the depopulation of the countryside. Positive spin-offs for the environment are improved environmental management and planning of the area. Similar to the improvement of local awareness about the value of cultural heritage of a community, tourism can raise awareness about the value of natural



resources. Visitation and appreciation of natural areas will increase the willingness of local and national governments to invest in nature preservation. In some cases visitors contribute directly to finance of natural park protection. Many scenic landscapes have come under strict protection to conserve their special qualities. These areas are designated as National Parks, Protected Area Network Parks, Areas of Outstanding National Beauty and a variety of other conservation formulas.

Yet the impacts of leisure and tourism are not purely positive. It is clear that scenic landscapes have to cope with both positive and negative impacts of leisure and tourism. Often, they appear two sides of the same coin. "The seasonal character of much tourism may create problems for destinations that are heavily dependent on it" (UNEPTIE 2002). Negative impacts include increased traffic and littering. Vulnerable ecosystems and heritage sites can suffer degradation at the hand of uncontrolled tourism. Moreover, when the social and cultural carrying capacity of local communities is overexploited, it tourism can cause clashes. Areas are increasingly subjected to extensive regional branding. "Rural areas are becoming a green backdrop setting for present-day pleasure. Landscapes are packed, commoditised and presented for consumption; the more 'authentic' the better" (Metz 2002: 181). When religious rituals, traditional ethnic rites and festivals are reduced and sanitized to conform to tourist expectations, and the original identity is lost (UNEPTIE 2002), commoditisation becomes a problem. Local 'identity' and privacy of community members may deteriorate.

Rural tourism and ecotourism

The concept of rural tourism (or 'rurally located tourism') is based on the following: "Farmers who operate a tourism-related sideline business and entrepreneurs in rural areas with a tourism-related (sideline) business and the use by holidaymakers and tourists of what is offered by these businesses." Recreational activities in the countryside, such as walking, cycling, fishing, horse riding, outdoor activities and cultural tourism, are regarded as part of rural tourism. Also think about staying in small-scale accommodation such as family hotels, castles and country estates, camping on the farm, individual second homes etc. (WTO 2004, Van Woudenberg, 1992). Rural tourism initiators do not necessarily have to be farmers, but can also be inhabitants and entrepreneurs from the region.

Eco-tourism is defined by the International Ecotourism Society as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people”. According to the Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism, ecotourism "embraces the principles of sustainable tourism and the following principles which distinguish it from the wider concept of sustainable tourism:

- Contributes actively to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage,
 - Includes local and indigenous communities in its planning, development and operation, contributing to their well-being,
 - Interprets the natural and cultural heritage of the destination to visitor,
- Lends itself better to independent travellers, as well as to organized tours for small size groups". Ecotourism isn't necessarily restricted to rural tourism. It also includes sustainable tourist resorts like Mata de Sesimbra in Portugal, which was developed in cooperation with the WWF.

Current markets make demands on rural tourism in terms of quality, safety, hygiene and comfort: - “rural tourism is not such a cheap form of tourism as was thought before”. “While landscape, accommodation, food and drinks etc. must meet the visitors’ desire for the new and unfamiliar, they must at the same time not be too new or strange because few visitors are actually looking for completely new things”. Various countries introduced a quality mark or rating system for rural (eco)tourism, such as the Irish ‘Farm and Country Standards’. Classifications are mostly based on the scope and level of the facilities provided, hospitality, hygiene and safety and attention to the environment and landscape.

Future challenges for the European landscape

Preceding examples, facts and figures have shown that the influence of leisure and tourism on landscapes is extensive and radical. The affected landscapes include not only environments designed and built purely for leisure purposes but almost any landscape. Cityscapes, areas around urban agglomerations, traditional tourist landscapes, remote new tourist destinations in former peripheral regions; their meaning as leisure and/or tourist landscape increases. The main function of many landscapes is gradually shifting towards “offering relaxation, space and recreation” (Frerichs and De Wijs 2001). It is obvious that such changing attitudes bring about different expectations of usefulness and experiential qualities. The more dominant the consumptive image of landscapes, the more obvious the process of commodification. Many regions attempt to make a profit from leisure and tourism, especially when other economic carriers are failing. After all, leisure and tourism are major economic forces worldwide and Europe is still one of the major players.

The impact of leisure and tourism is noticeable everywhere, from local daily life to international, global flows, with complex interference on all levels. However, regional differences within Europe are manifold and dynamic. Both landscapes and local, regional and national contexts are diverse. Shifting tourist flows, ongoing urbanization and changing wishes and demands force existing leisure and tourist areas to adjust in order to prevent decline and stimulate other areas to develop landscapes as leisure and tourist destinations.

The wish to make quick profits and a lack of interest from market parties and authorities have lead to rapid, unregulated growth of low quality leisure and tourist destinations. Landscapes degenerated and suffered biodiversity loss and environmental problems. Where tourism was primarily focused on amusement and fun, and had little relation to landscape features, developments turned out to be nothing less than parasitic. These forms of tourism have degraded the environment, longterm economic viability, social structures and cultural traditions of local landscapes and communities. The arguments in preceding paragraphs made clear that such impacts are certainly not restricted to mass tourist areas. Leisure and tourist developments can have diverse negative impacts if economic interests prevail one-sidedly. Yet, when landscapes hold the main assets on which the tourism industry depends and tourism flows are in proportion to the regions capacity, conservation and careful management of key qualities are a must. If mutual profits are better balanced, leisure and tourism can develop a symbiosis with local communities, and landscapes will thrive.

Quality and sustainability are directly linked and interdependent (UN WTO). “Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments” (UNEP). This statement makes clear that sustainable leisure and tourism is as complex and diverse as leisure and tourism in general. Sustainability is a concept open to various interpretations and elaborations. Different stakeholders in different contexts will produce different visions and solutions for different landscapes, based on the same general principles of sustainable development. The challenge is to develop sustainable forms of

leisure and tourism taking people, planet and profit into account and elaborating them into size-fit solutions that appeal to both local communities and visitors. It will add to the planning and management of “future changes in a way which recognises the great diversity and the quality of the landscapes that we inherit and which seeks to preserve, or even enhance, that diversity and quality instead of allowing them to decline”, as formulated by the European Landscape Convention.

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