The European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas and
the EU Tourism Policy

Stefania Petrosillo, EUROPARC Policy Officer

stefania.petrosillo@europarc.org

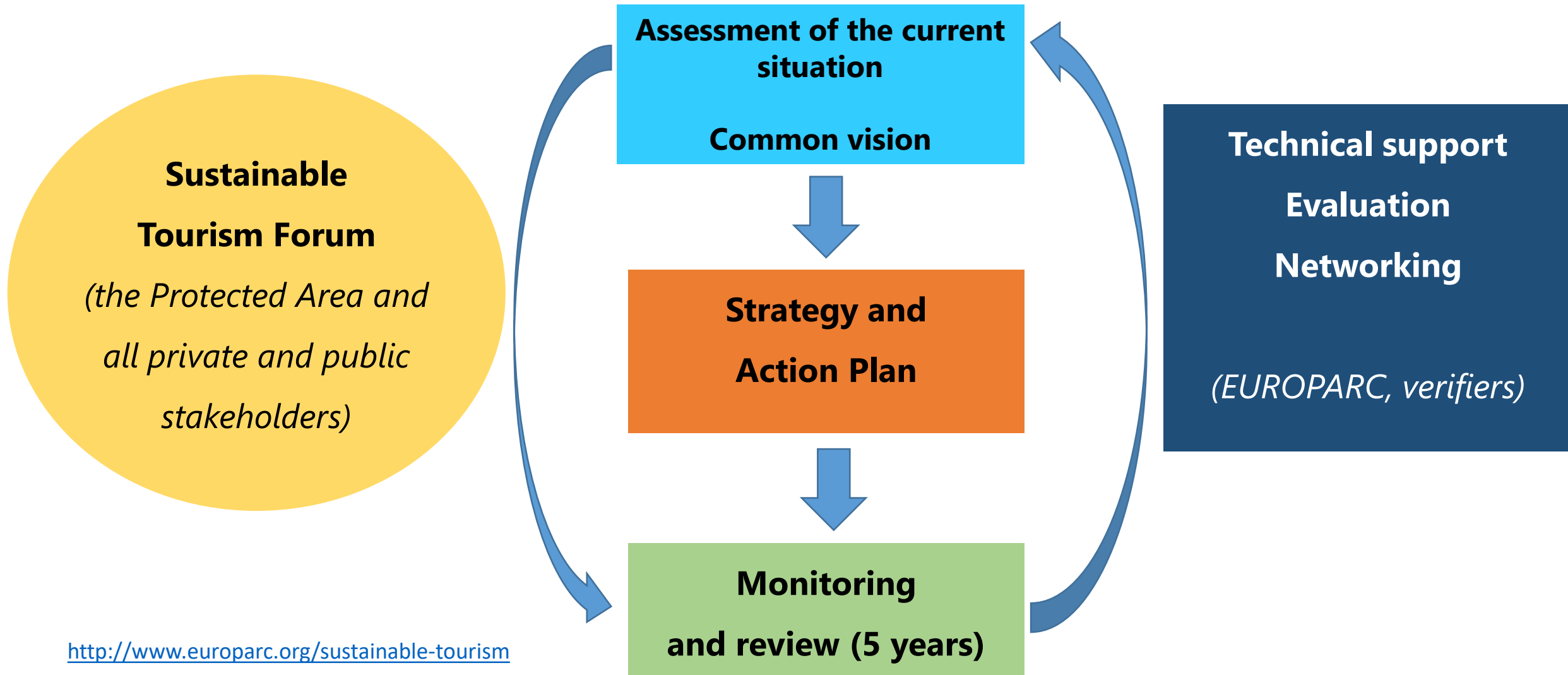The *European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECST)* is an EUROPARC **management tool** and **certification** for Protected Areas to develop tourism sustainably in partnership with local public and private actors

*2020 - **20th anniversary** of the Charter*

ECST Principles

1. Giving priority to **protection**

2. Contributing to sustainable **development**

3. Engaging all **stakeholders**

4. **Planning** sustainable tourism effectively

5. Pursuing continuous **improvement**

http://www.europarc.org/sustainable-tourism

ECST Methodology in a nutshell

EUROPARC
Sustainable Tourism
in Protected Areas

Sustainable Tourism Forum
(the Protected Area and all private and public stakeholders)

Assessment of the current situation

Common vision

Strategy and Action Plan

Monitoring and review (5 years)

Technical support

Evaluation

Networking

(EUROPARC, verifiers)

http://www.europarc.org/sustainable-tourism

ECST Key Topics (in the Strategy and the Action Plan)

1) Protecting valuable landscapes, biodiversity and cultural heritage

2) Supporting conservation through tourism

3) Reducing carbon footprint, pollution and wasteful resource use

4) Providing safe access, **quality** facilities and special experiences of the protected area, available to all visitors

5) Effectively **communicating the area** to visitors

6) Ensuring **social cohesion**

7) Strengthening **prosperity** in the local community

8) Providing training and capacity building

9) Monitoring tourism performance and Impacts

10) Communicating actions and engaging with the **Charter**

EU Tourism policy aims to

maintain Europe's standing as a **leading destination**
while maximising the industry's **contribution to growth and employment**
and promoting cooperation between EU countries,
particularly through the exchange of good practices.

The EU's competence in tourism is
support and **coordination**
to supplement the actions of <u>Member Countries</u>: **subsidiarity**

The European Commission Strategy and Action Plan

In June 2010, the European Commission adopted the Communication
"Europe, the world's No. 1 tourist destination –
a new political framework for tourism in Europe"

This communication set out a **strategy and action plan for EU tourism**.

Four priorities for action were identified:

1. To stimulate **competitiveness** in the European tourism sector

2. To promote the development of **sustainable**, **responsible**, and **high-quality** tourism

3. To consolidate **Europe's image** as a collection of sustainable, high-quality destinations

4. To maximise the potential of EU **financial policie**s for developing tourism

The European Commission has been working based of this Strategy and Action Plan, monitored and updated over time.

Terrorism and international insecurity

Increase of the international concern on climate change

European Green Deal

Pandemic of COVID-19

(…Ukrainian war…)

The European Parliament,

in its resolution of <u>25 March 2021</u>

on "**Establishing an EU strategy for sustainable tourism**"

encourages all EU actors to work for a

"transition to sustainable, responsible and smart tourism"

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0109_EN.pdf

> **!** *Note: The E. Parliament's resolutions are political documents that provide recommendations, directions and new objectives to the work of the E. Commission.*

The tourism industry directly and indirectly employs **27 million people**, which accounts for **11,2 % of total EU employment**, and which, in 2019, accounted for **10,3 % of EU gross domestic product (GDP)**

Tourism has an impact on climate change by contributing to **8 % of global CO2 emissions**

In 2018, **51,7 % of EU tourist accommodation** establishments were in **coastal and maritime areas**, which are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change, while **32,9 % of them were in rural areas**

Tourism ... **should contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, social welfare, and the economic security of local communities**;

Tourism sector is committed ... to meeting the aims of the European Green Deal, notably **climate neutrality** by 2050 at the latest;

... **soft mobility** is a response to European **consumers' desire** for **greener and closer to nature** tourism opportunities;

The EP highlights the need to develop **policies** for **preserving natural heritage and biodiversity**, respecting the **sociocultural authenticity** of host communities, delivering **socio-economic benefits** to all stakeholders;

... calls on the Commission to develop a **roadmap for sustainable tourism** with innovative measures to reduce the climate and environmental footprint. Calls Member States to make full **use of the Next Generation EU funds to finance the tourism transition action plans**

... highlights that the **COVID-19** pandemic has led to **travellers' demands** towards safe, clean and more sustainable tourism

Local craft activities, **agrotourism, rural tourism and ecotourism** are an *integral part of sustainable tourism*, with an emphasis on **discovering nature and the countryside** in Europe

Cooperation and coordination between stakeholders, greater involvement of **local authorities** and **marketing strategies** are necessary to develop this tourism.

… Notes that tourism is closely linked to **mobility** and that **Member States must, with financial support from the EU**, **increase investment in the transition** to cleaner fuels, in low and zero-emission vehicles

… recalls the necessity for all Member States to have modern, safe and sustainable transport infrastructure in order to facilitate travel across the EU and to **make the outermost regions, peripheral and remote areas and islands more accessible**

... Call on the Commission to pay particular **attention to mountainous regions, islands and insular regions and rural areas**

Tourism as part of **rural development** (connection with agriculture and CAP) and of **costal and marine development** (connection with fishery)

Tourism and **culture, gastronomy, sport, health**.

Accessibility for all

Guide on EU funding for tourism

This online guide highlights the wide range of funding programmes financed by the new budget, multiannual financial framework 2021-2027, and Next Generation EU. With these resources and this guide, we're supporting the move towards a more digital, sustainable and inclusive EU.

The guide will help you find appropriate funding. It contains links to relevant EU programme websites with the latest developments (such as annual work programmes or calls for proposals) and further details per programme. For inspiration, you can also see concrete project examples funded by previous EU programmes.
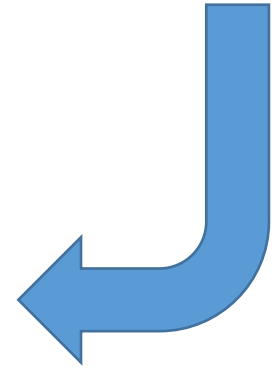
Can conservation and tourism...

... be

MAKE GREEN TOURISM REAL !!!

allies ?