

## Book Reviews

# Tourism in the New Europe

**Edited by Hall, D., Smith, M. and Marciszweska, B.  
(CAB International, Wallingford; 2006)**

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*Tourism in the New Europe* is a welcome addition to the literature on European tourism. Most books have examined particular topic areas in a European context such as sustainability, rural, coastal or city-based tourism. Few books which I can recall (Pompl and Lavery, 1993; Davidson, 1998) have got to grips with complex issues of European Tourism public policy and attempted to analyse these in the context of increasing complexities both within and outside the European Union (EU).

The first part of the book provides an overview of the implications for tourism arising from the widening of the EU boundaries and four other sections are devoted to the issues and challenges for specific countries in East Central Europe, the Baltics, the Mediterranean countries and the next enlargement, before the concluding section is reached. The book emphasises the similarities and disparities between the individual member states, where some countries such as Malta are grappling with the problems of mass tourism, while others offer wilderness areas and opportunities for nature-based tourism. The negative image that exists in respect to the pollution of former countries in the Soviet bloc is explained and there is a challenge for countries to communicate their products and attractions more vigorously.

Despite 85 per cent of international arrivals being intraregional and tourism accounting for 5.5 per cent of GDP, tourism in the EU is not given the priority or resources that it deserves,

although the authors acknowledge that there are other significant policy areas that impact directly on tourism. The reasons behind this are complex and the authors do well to articulate these. The process of tourism policy making in individual states is fiercely competitive and has gradually been devolved from central to local and regional bodies. However, these do not have representation or influence at EU policy level. Although the authors lean towards raising the profile of tourism in the EU, I personally feel that there is not a sufficiently convincing case put forward beyond a joint group to consider the implications of legislative proposals on tourism and doing more to promote Europe as a destination to non-European countries.

An interesting point in respect to the Central and Eastern countries is that although some destinations have seen an influx of new tourists on low-cost airlines with doubtful benefits, outbound leisure travel is still beyond the means of most of the population of these states. Many of these countries face challenges from poor infrastructure for tourism development, a need to raise standards of education and training and low levels of service quality. The obligations imposed on the new accession countries for tighter border controls and imposition of visa requirements have restricted previous forms of tourism with neighbouring states, not in the EU, such as shopping visits, small-scale business and the VFR market. Most tourism is city based or in the case of Bulgaria concentrated along the Black Sea coast, although there is potential



to exploit niche markets such as spa and health tourism and river cruising.

The approach and style of the individual contributions varies, but the reader is given an insight into the challenges the new accession countries face from a national perspective. Malta, for example, is trying to reposition its tourism product beyond the three S's while Cyprus is coming to terms with the relaxation of border controls which enable greater flexibility to visit the northern part under Turkish control. The book also looks ahead to the challenges posed by the future accession of Croatia and Turkey to the EU. Turkey has a considerable opportunity to diversify its tourism product with an emphasis on culture and heritage.

Overall the book provides an insight into policy areas affecting European tourism. The issues are complex and it would be helpful if students had some prior knowledge of

European institutions and the legislative framework. The book is probably best aimed at more specialised European tourism and policy modules for final year and master's students. However, the case studies provided by the individual country chapters will be of more general interest to a range of tourism modules. The book will also be of interest to practitioners of tourism in the EU as well as policy makers.

#### REFERENCES

- Davidson, R. (1998). *Travel and Tourism in Europe*, 2nd edn, Addison Wesley Longman, Harlow, UK.
- Pompl, W. and Lavery, P., (eds.) (1993). *Tourism in Europe Structures and Developments*. CAB International, Wallingford.

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