R7 Touristification: their holidays, our misery.

Proposer: Joves Ecosocialistes and Neoi Prasinoi

Agenda item: 1. Resolutions

Motion text

1 The current economic system puts profit before people, everything and anything
2 on this earth can be commercialised beyond its limits, from labour to natural
3 resources, with gain and economic growth as a pretext. Our cities and
4 communities are being transformed due to aggressive and unsustainable tourism.
5 Our home towns and cities are crowded, the public transportation is often
6 designed to accommodate the demands of seasonal visitors instead of the needs of
7 the local community and traditional local long-life businesses are being
8 replaced by 24h supermarkets or souvenirs shops. These are some of the
9 consequences of touristification, a process by which a place changes as it
10 becomes an object of tourist consumption. This process affects both rural and
11 urban areas with the same principle and carrying very similar repercussions: the
12 locals are expelled from their neighbourhoods as the tourism industry damages
13 the labour market and the environment. Touristification affects particularly the
14 mediterranean countries, where low-cost flights and the rise of peer-to-peer
15 online platforms are thriving on the lack of courage of decision-makers, but the
16 main European cities and some rural areas are no strangers to this phenomenon.

17 Touristification turns local cultures to commodities, driving a loss of
18 traditional livelihoods, and creating tourism enclaves within our cities which
19 are completely disconnected from local communities. The economy of many Southern
20 European cities relies on mass tourism, a sector which is characterized by
21 having precarious jobs with low wages and suffering from seasonality. Overmore,
22 it has a negative effect on the housing sector, increasing the prices of rent
23 for the neighours of the city, who are generally poorer than most of the
24 tourists. People who work in the touristic sector, many of them young, report
25 cramped living conditions and barely earning a living wage.

26 Touristification also has a negative impact on the environment, increasing the
27 levels of pollution and damaging local ecosystems. Mass tourism generates a huge
28 amount of waste and water and energy consumption over the replacement rate,
29 which is critical in the planetary crises we are facing. Ecosystems in the South
30 of Europe are one of the most vulnerable to climate change. Besides that, the
31 lack of control of the number of seasonal visitors puts at risk both the locals
32 and the tourists in case of an eventual emergency, whether natural or

industrial, as the evacuation and emergency plans are often not designed taking
into account the enormous amount of tourists in the area.

Touristification is shaping the urban landscape, where tourists and their needs
are prioritized above local people's necessities. For instance, public space and
public transport networks are saturated with tourists. Moreover, gentrification
is another consequence of the touristification, since long-term residents and
businesses are displaced due to the increasing property value led by
implementation of touristic accommodations (hotels, apartments, Airbnbs…). In
fact, the social, economic and environmental changes caused by this model of
tourism have also had a negative effect on our health. Touristification
intersects with other social injustices, such as racism, sexism, and ableism,
and certain groups may be excluded from tourism opportunities or may face
discrimination in tourism settings.

A special reference needs to be made to the rupture of social bonds provoked by
the touristically-induced gentrification. In the case of the short-term rentals,
as a result of the high popularity of such digital platforms, the traditional
neighborly relations have been disrupted. The constant replacement of renters,
who do not give the impression of becoming integrated in the local culture,
provoke the suspicion of the rest of the inhabitants and even fear by the
elderly as the latter ones feel they lack stability. Therefore, many values of
the once-established notion of the «community» have been lost

Mass tourism practices such as the all-inclusive packages also have strong
negative impacts in local economies and societies. This type of vacation -
offered by big companies such as Thomas Cook or Tuir- includes all of the
expenses associated with a holiday, from the flight to accommodation, meals and
activities. However, they do not benefit local economies. The type of work that
this model of business creates, often for young people, women and migrants, is
an archetype of precariousness. One of the groups affected the most by this
model is the hotel housekeepers. During the past years, these workers, who are
mostly women from migrant and working backgrounds, reported that they are forced
to work at an inhumane pace. They are overworked with horrible consequences for
their health: muscular pain due to the repetition of movements, irritation of
the respiratory tracts due to the exposure to chemical products, and
neurological and mental health problems caused by the stress and anxiety as they
worry they can be fired in case they are not able to deliver.

Overall, touristification and mass tourism are potential generators of social
inequalities, and imply growth models that promote social injustice through the
exploitation of people and nature. Decision-makers have the power to take
control of this situation by tackling the main consequences in the market like
the rising price of housing, by limiting the number of visitors and pushing for
a change of model, and also by ensuring that the workers of this sector are

treated in line with labour rights and human dignity.

For all that, the Federation of Young European Greens calls on:

● Local, regional and national governments to design and implement policies that promote a different model of tourism, based on sustainability and the well-being of the local communities, while mitigating the negative impacts of touristification that we are already experiencing.

● Local governments to cap on licenses for tourist apartments, hotels and resorts in tensioned areas, due to ecological and social reasons, and include tourist taxations and limiting the number of tourists to mitigate the effects of this sector.

● To apply strict labour controls in the tourism sector to avoid job insecurity, which is not allowing youth to live decent lives.

● The European Union to enforce legally binding environmental protection from tourism, and include the destruction of our natural areas (forests, coastal areas, water bodies) due to tourism in the list of environmental crimes.

● To make sure affordable housing options are available for people in touristified areas, implementing rent control and implementing inclusionary zoning method, that is to determine which neighborhoods are compatible with short-term rentals for tourists so as to limit the consequences of this phenomenon's overspreading and gentrification.

● The European Union and state members' to stop subsidizing massive tourism activities and fossil-fuel activities and prioritizing alternative modes of travel, like cycling or public transportation.

● To promote other less-known sustainable areas which have the capacity to withstand the impact of tourism and thus to redirect the crowds of visitors whose stereotypic holiday choices contribute to the degradation of classic destinations.

● To promote the diversification of Southern economies, to make them more resilient to planetary crisis, such as the climate emergency or the war in Ukraine.