

4.4.4 Conclusion

These various initiatives reflect a consensus among organizations active in rural tourism which demonstrate the will and the need to organize the supply and marketing of rural tourism.

It is clear that the operators and the public authorities in the Member States, fully aware of the importance of rural tourism in the development of European tourism, are striving towards increased professionalism in order to respond fully to the demands of the clientele. These deliberations and initiatives are consistent with the objective set by the Commission in its communication on "Community Action to promote Rural Tourism".

4.5 Tourism and Environment

There is no doubt that the theme "Tourism and the Environment" has been attracting increasing attention, both at the national and international level over the past year.

The European Year of Tourism has seen several developments in this area - the production by the World Tourism Organisation of a basic document on "Tourism and the Environment", the setting up of an "International Ethical Committee on Tourism and the Environment" by the Alliance Internationale de Tourisme, a report by the European Parliament on the problems of mass tourism. In the UK, a government Task Force on Tourism and Environment has been established, several conferences and seminars have taken up the debate and numerous Tourist Codes of Behaviour or Charters have been formulated by the tourism industry and pressure groups.

The tourism industry itself is also aware that, since tourism depends upon the natural and cultural environment for its livelihood, the industry has to be actively involved in the debate to find solutions to the problems caused by tourism.

4.5.1 The Environmental aims of EYT

The Council Decision on an action programme for EYT points out that "the most serious problem confronting tourism in Europe is its over-concentration in the high season, the congestion of transport and accommodation services as well as deterioration of the natural and man-made environment and under-utilization of capital and human resources in the low season". It emphasises the importance of encouraging a better utilisation of the existing tourism infrastructure and equipment.



The objectives of EYT therefore include “to promote a better distribution of tourism over time and location while respecting the quality of the environment, particularly by encouraging the staggering of holidays and the development of alternatives to mass tourism and of new destinations and new forms of tourism”.

4.5.2 Classification

The difficulty of accurate classification of “environmental” projects must be mentioned since this category overlaps to a large degree with other actions which promote alternative, environmentally-friendly forms of tourism e.g. brochures on rural tourism or “soft tourism”, cultural routes, cross-frontier green routes and cycle paths; also several youth activities, conferences, and promotional campaigns which also include “environmental considerations” as one of the major motivating factors. Several of these activities are described under the evaluation of the relevant categories, but could also be considered as “environment” projects.

Some forms of cultural tourism (which promote new areas and destinations away from the overcrowded and endangered cultural honeypots) and the development of cultural routes can, in many cases, also be considered as an environmentally-friendly form of tourism. Major conferences on urban tourism and conservation issues have also been discussed under the section on culture, although these must also be mentioned in the context of the evaluation of environmental projects, since their recommendations deal with the main problems caused by mass tourism on the built environment.

4.5.3 EYT Projects

An estimated ECU 500,000 was allocated to co-finance some 50 projects directly related to tourism and the environment during EYT.

The Management Unit of EYT has taken all possible care to ensure that the major environmental issues were fully addressed during the European Year, and that the range of projects co-financed was broad and comprehensive, contributing to the exchange of ideas and the finding of common solutions in this area.

At the same time the findings and conclusions from many of these projects, seminars and events are sufficiently important to be taken into account in the formulation of any future Community programme in the area of tourism and the environment.

4.5.4 Short-term actions

The varied selection of small-scale “environmental” projects cover a range from: youth exchanges in conservation work; the designation of a cross-border national park between Hungary and Austria; the promotion of hiking holidays; a youth bicycle tour from Norway to “Ecotopia” in Hungary as a campaign for an environmentally responsible traffic policy and non-destructive ways of tourism; a Conference to create an association of European Walled Towns as a forum to discuss common problems and find common solutions to environmental issues affecting walled towns; protection of the environment through tourism in the Ionian, Greece; a project for protection of natural areas in Spain; travelling exhibitions on themes relating to the problems of tourism and environment; and a Green Exchange Conference in the UK.

Many of the projects listed in this category, although they are primarily local or national and have a short-term impact in terms of tourism policy, may nevertheless have significant longer-term consequences for the organisers, establishing a basis for future action in these areas.

4.5.5 Pilot actions

This category includes many interesting exemplary projects which could have significant long-term implications for the tourism industry at a European level.

Amongst the most interesting of these is a German pilot project conducted by DSG, the catering services of German Federal Railways and the fourth largest catering concern in Germany.

During a test period of two months, plastic crockery in the railway buffets was replaced by “edible” plates and containers (from a cereal base), which are suitable for human consumption. This not only helps reduce the huge amounts of plastic waste produced, but is also suitable for animal feed (as opposed to plastic waste which is not biodegradable).

Public and media reaction to the pilot scheme in Germany was almost totally positive. On the basis of this successful pilot scheme DSG is introducing a second generation of edible containers as part of the development of a broader, ecologically-friendly management policy for the catering sector. The success of such an ecologically-friendly management scheme for the service sector could have important repercussions Europe-wide.



German Federal Railways' ecologically - friendly catering.

Pilot projects in the transportation area include a European Transit Route Guide (Reisewege Nord / Süd) produced by the Austrian working group "Besser Reisen" (Better Travelling). This project aims to help reduce accidents and reduce traffic on Europe's transit stretches by providing more resting and stopping places, better public information on how to travel safely through Europe and encouraging travellers (particularly families) to explore locations off the main motorways and reduce the stress of such

long road journeys which often leads to unnecessary accidents. It forms part of a longer-term strategy to tackle this growing problem which is particularly significant for "transit" countries such as Austria.

Another significant pilot project in Germany's famous Black Forest area aims to reduce the environmental damage to tourism beauty spots caused by the pressure of visitor masses in summer and skiing in winter. This is being achieved through the introduction of shuttle buses from car parking areas to the summit of the Belchen mountain and severe restriction of car traffic in the high season and at weekends. The neighbouring Vosges area in France is also participating in this pilot scheme, which may ultimately be applied to other endangered areas in Germany.

During EYT, "Friends of the Earth Baleares" conducted a series of successful campaigns on tourism/ environment issues and municipal solid waste disposal in the Balearic Islands.

BESSER REISEN

Reisewege Nord/Süd

Kuratorium für Verkehrssicherheit (Österreich)
 Deutscher Verkehrssicherheitsrat (Bundesrepublik Deutschland)
 Beratungsstelle für Unfallverhütung (Schweiz)

Servus in Österreich

Actions included recycling and beach cleaning operations and awareness-raising campaigns in schools and with the tourist industry. Literature in English, German and Spanish was distributed and presentations on the state of the islands' beaches were made to hotel managers, tour operators etc. Local authorities were successfully persuaded to take positive action to remove 115 "Black Spots" of illegal rubbish. During EYT, FOE Balears, working on these campaigns with partners from the tourism industry and local authorities, have developed a constructive and active relationship to take positive action on local environmental problems. Actions have also gained the active support of tour operators, the Touristic Union International and Thompson Group of Companies.

Several interesting pilot schemes involve tourism training programmes on ecological issues, notably including cooperation with Eastern European countries. An Eco-camping training programme with Hungary, was held in Budapest in December 1990. Its aims were to encourage the development of camping and other friendly forms of tourism, and to increase the awareness of cultural operators in Hungary of the opportunities offered by camping activities to promote cultural exchanges and interaction.

EYT Pilot seminars, such as The First European Training Seminar for Managers of Protected Areas, contributed towards improved exchange of information and the establishment of a European dialogue on how to tackle environmental problems caused by visitors.

The seminar enabled managers of protected areas to obtain a concentrated view of the different approaches used across Europe in very different cultural, social and ecological systems, and to help identify long-term strategies and concepts for

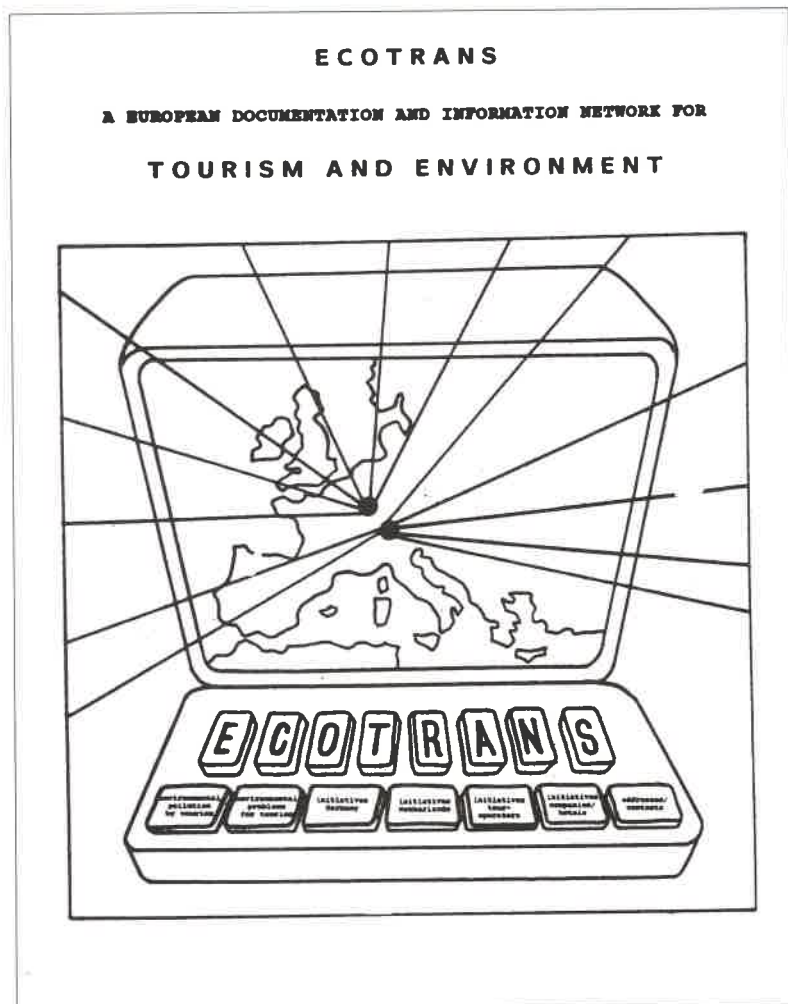
FIRST EUROPEAN TRAINING SEMINAR for MANAGERS OF PROTECTED AREAS

to be held in
**ENGLAND, FRANCE
AND W. GERMANY**
9 - 30 September, 1990

with the support and cooperation of
Commission des Communautés Européennes and UNESCO
In co-operation with
National Park and Regional Park Agencies in England,
France and West Germany
Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe

Organised by
the Countryside Management Centre
Wye College (University of London)
and University College Dublin





the management, development and protection of these areas.

Other important pilot projects include a Dutch/German cooperation to set up a European Documentation and Information Network on Tourism and the Environment (ECOTRANS). The network will collect and process data which will be publicly available including information on environmental problems caused by tourism, concrete solutions for decision makers, examples of environmentally sound and socially responsible forms of tourism and contact addresses for tour operators, travel agents, study tours, educational group organisers etc. wishing to organise “soft tourism” holidays. The ECOTRANS project was presented at ITB Berlin.

4.5.6 Conferences and Seminars

The number of international conferences held during EYT include three major conferences dealing with the impact of tourism on the urban environment. These events - the ICOMOS Conference on Heritage and Tourism (Canterbury, UK), the III. International Symposium on the Conservation of Ancient Monuments (Trier, Germany) and the First European Conference on Urban Tourism (Rennes, France) - all gave rise to important lists of recommendations with implications for future policy-making in the field of urban tourism. These events are evaluated under the “cultural” heading, but are also relevant with reference to the particular problems involved in the development of urban tourism.

These conclusions must also be analysed within the broader framework of tourism in urban areas, and related to the further development of the Commission’s “Green Paper on the Urban Environment”.

Other smaller seminars held during EYT included a forum on "Soft Tourism", Todtmoos, Germany where local environmental problems and pilot projects associated with tourism in Germany's famous Schwarzwald (Black Forest) were presented and evaluated. The Forum also provided an opportunity to exchange practical experiences and discuss problems in the realisation of environmentally-friendly forms of tourism by groups actively involved in implementing similar pilot projects in other German Federal States.

Other international conferences on Tourism and the Environment include: "Conference on the Interplay between Tourism and Environment", Aalborg, Denmark 1991 and "TURAL '90 - Diseno Turistico y Proteccion de Espacios Naturales", Valencia, Spain.

4.5.7 Conclusion

National projects financed under EYT have contributed towards the establishment and marketing of "soft" or green tourism concepts, often in cross-border areas, and in raising awareness of the importance of preserving the environment while developing tourist facilities.

Regarding the pan-European projects, it can be concluded that the majority have helped provide an important basis for the exchange of information between governments, local authorities, the tourism industry and pressure groups on environmentally acceptable forms of tourism. They have attempted to promote solutions to problems and have provided an important opportunity for people working on such issues throughout Europe to establish cooperation, new contacts and networks at the European level.

Inevitably, a proportion of the national projects financed during EYT in this sphere may enjoy a limited scope, but at local level they may have had a significant awareness-raising impact, as outlined above.

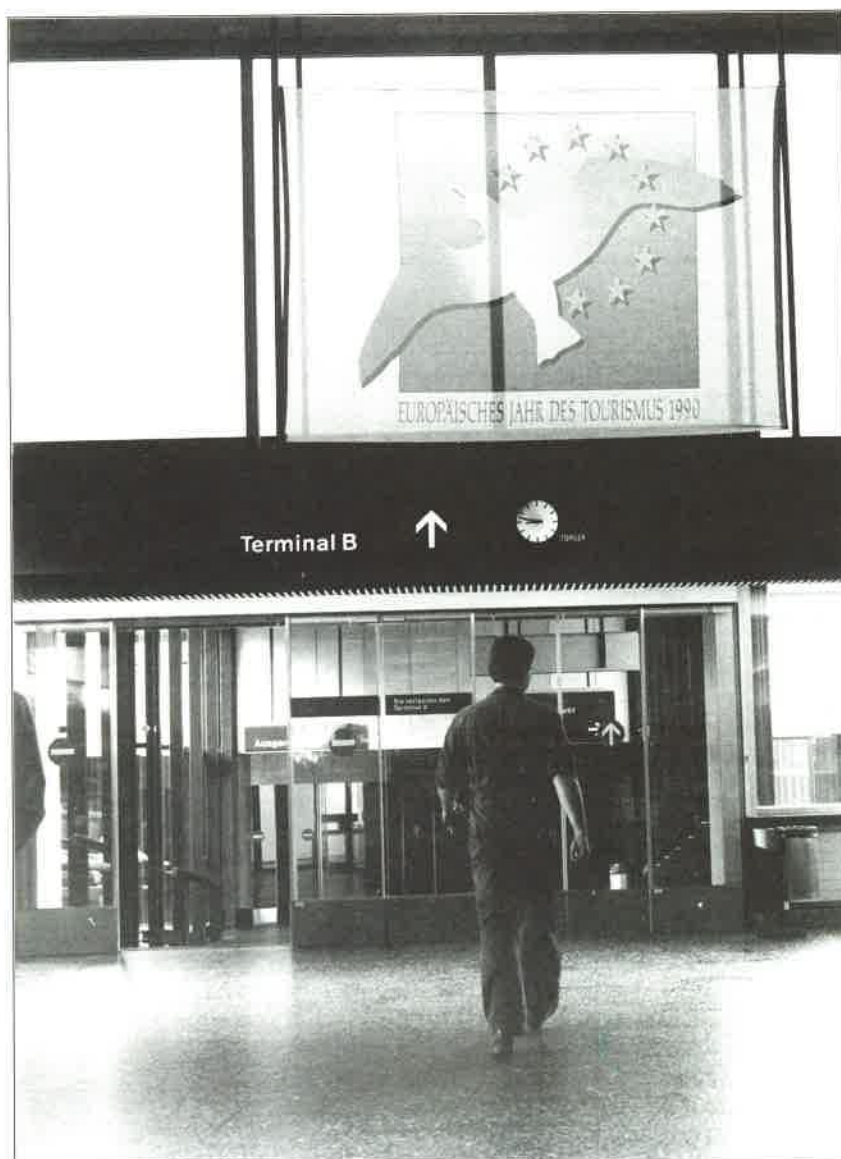
The Commission should build on the experience gained through innovative projects. For example, the success of public response to the German Federal Railways' ecologically friendly catering policy could well prove a model for the providers of hotel or transportation services throughout Europe. Information on successful exemplary schemes should be widely disseminated in order to stimulate hotels and the catering and travel industry to examine or find alternatives to material-intensive packaging and wastage.

Regrettably there was no specific EYT Competition to encourage environmental consciousness within the tourism industry. Such a scheme could stimulate actions in this



area. The competition could be carried out within the broader framework of a future Community action plan for Tourism and the Environment, either by the encouragement of good practice through Community "European" Awards or by financing pilot schemes in this field.

Despite the importance of international conferences and seminars, there is no substitute for direct action, at national or European level. The Commission should only continue to co-finance important conferences and seminars which have as their aim positive resolutions or recommendations, the setting up of networks, or exchanges of staff and information, particularly at the European level. This would help to attain a proper balance between purely academic debate and exemplary actions.



Smaller scale, direct, national actions should be supported in areas which experience a concentration of environmental problems caused specifically by tourism, for example, the Mediterranean. Such projects, which should involve co-operation between border regions, would complement actions under the MedSPA or ENVIREG programmes.

Staff exchanges, particularly with regard to the development of "soft tourism" should be further encouraged, in particular those involving the emerging economies of Eastern Europe who may find such forms of tourism not only more economically accessible but also set an

example in raising the environmental awareness of tourists. The International Youth Hostels Association schemes to train staff e.g. “ecocamps” and other “grass roots” exchanges with regard to training, particularly those involving Eastern Europe, should be encouraged and further supported.

5. EC AND EFTA CO-OPERATION DURING EYT

The six EFTA countries have participated fully in the European Year of Tourism on an equal footing with the 12 Member States. It is the first time that EFTA and the EC have co-operated on an equal basis in this way. The experiences from this Year have demonstrated that joint ventures in the field of tourism are in the interest of both parties, and can serve as a basis for joint action in the future.

Within the framework of the European Year of Tourism, the EFTA countries have taken part in pan-European tourism projects involving two or more participating countries.

There was also close co-operation with the EFTA countries in the field of social tourism, with the organisation of a European conference on tourism for the disabled in London. Cultural tourism and tourism in harmony with the environment are major priorities for the majority of countries involved in EYT. The EFTA countries have also been active in both fields, particularly in the organisation of pan-European projects with the Member States on pan-European cultural routes and environmentally-friendly tourism products. Moreover, joint promotion of our common European cultural heritage and its diverse landscape are also important elements in our campaigns to attract visitors from overseas.

The EFTA countries participated in all the competitions with the exception of the Vineyard Competition. The final of "Europe's Best Kept Village" was held in Norway.

At the national level the competitions received extensive media coverage in the countries concerned. The media also showed great interest in the EYT Grand Balloon Tour, as well as in the programme of monthly activities in which the EFTA countries have been particularly energetic, arranging national events which also ensured good PR coverage for the European Year.

Amongst the numerous tourism fairs attended by the Commission during EYT, TUR in Sweden was opened by the Director of DG XXIII. The Round Table discussion during ITB Berlin, involving the Commission, EFTA, the tourism industry and professional organisations, was also organised to mark the end of EYT and to discuss future co-operation with the EC's neighbouring countries.

The co-operation during EYT between the Community and EFTA countries was very satisfactory. The tourism industry and the EFTA countries expressed their wish to participate in the creation of a Community policy in the field of tourism, in particular within the framework of the negotiations on the European Economic Space and the Europe of 1992.

Within the framework of the Council of Europe complementary actions have been pursued during the European Year of Tourism with these countries which are also members of the Council.

The next step will be to ensure that this co-operation continues beyond the European Year of Tourism. Discussions have already succeeded in setting up an organisational structure to allow the exchange of information and opinions on a future European tourism policy.

This subject will be a matter for discussion at the closing ceremony of the European Year of Tourism in Luxembourg on 29 April 1991, for which a meeting of ministers of the EC and EFTA countries has been arranged.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Although the European Year of Tourism has not yet ended, the great majority of activities have already been carried out and are sufficiently representative to allow for a significant evaluation to be made.

During the meeting of 11 February 1991 in Brussels, the Steering Committee of EYT declared their unanimous satisfaction with the results obtained during the course of the Year.

This global evaluation applies to the two main themes of the Year which were: to underline the economic and social importance of the tourism sector, and to contribute to preparing for the establishment of the large area without frontiers, turning the integrating role of tourism to account in the creation of a people's Europe.

The Year contributed, on the one hand, to reinforce links between national, regional and local administrations, the professional organisations and the representatives of the industry on the one hand and, on the other, to carry out specific actions in accordance with the objectives defined by the Council Decision.

Furthermore, taking into account the multi-disciplinary nature of this sector, a broad cooperation was instituted between the various Commission services in terms of information and communication (notably by means of the network of correspondents in the offices of the Community), environment, social and regional policy. Besides this, joint actions were conducted in the organisation of conferences, tourism fairs, seminars and working meetings.

With regard to specific actions carried out on the themes indicated in the Council decision, these were studied with particular attention during the course of the Year on the basis of concrete projects on youth tourism, cultural tourism, social tourism, rural tourism, tourism and the environment. The real substance of the Year is reflected in the projects with more long-term effects.

In the field of **youth tourism** numerous projects and initiatives demonstrate the interest of this sector of the population, which is geared towards increasing their knowledge of the different cultures and lifestyles throughout Europe, and towards activity holidays. The Eurotrain project, the most important of this Year, united young people under the slogan "One Train, one Europe, one Youth", which aptly sums up the spirit of youth tourism in Europe. The facilitation of travel for young people and their access to European culture, which is essential for the construction of a Europe without frontiers, was encouraged.



Youth hostel projects consisted in establishing an information programme for young people from Eastern European countries travelling to the West for the first time, and also consisted of organising exchanges between youth hostel personnel from the various countries. A meeting of youth from East and West brought together more than 350 young people from 25 different countries within the framework of a seminar which studied travel by young people and its repercussions on the European tourism market.

Cultural tourism was likewise the object of a great mobilisation of efforts, notably in the development and promotion of European cultural itineraries such as the Route of St. James of Compostella, the Baroque Routes, and the Celts in Europe. Cooperation between the various different European regions also achieved through the production of a guide of the cultural itineraries of the European regions. The projects which were co-financed contributed towards increasing the awareness of Europeans of their common roots and ancient cultures as well as their current day lifestyles. They also permitted the identification of a number of areas in which action is necessary: more effective information policy, the institution of cooperation and setting up of networks at the European level, exchanges of experience, and improvement of the reception of tourists by museums. The cooperation of the EFTA countries in this context was greatly appreciated by the Member States.

Initiatives in the field of **social tourism**, whilst limited in number, proved to be of high quality, notably those in favour of single-parent families, disabled and elderly people. The Conference "Tourism for All in Europe" will have positive repercussions for the improvement of access to tourism facilities by disabled people and for cooperation in this field at the European level.

With reference to **rural tourism**, likewise great activity by the organisations in charge of its development was evident during the course of the Year, both at the level of national and pan-European projects as well as conferences organised to improve the quality of products an offer in rural areas and their promotion. The operators in this sector showed their willingness to increase their professionalism and to give a new dimension to rural tourism in Europe which, if it is not already well known, is becoming the object of increased interest. The Year gave rise to a regrouping of organisations at the European level in the creation of the "Fédération Européenne du Logement chez l'Habitant, à la Ferme et au Village". A European competition was also organised to reward the best activities carried out in this sphere by local authorities. Spain, Italy and France were particularly active in this field.

Consideration of environmental issues in the development of tourism met with lively interest. Numerous pilot projects contributed towards the development and promotion of "soft" or ecologically-friendly forms of tourism, and to increased awareness by those

CONCLUSION

involved in tourism of the necessity for the preservation of the environment in the development of tourism infrastructure and services. Information networks were supported with the aim of stimulating the exchange of experience in this field, which is fast becoming a priority area for numerous Member States.

Besides these specific activities, numerous promotional activities were carried out in order to respond to the *raison d'être* of the Year, which was to draw attention to tourism, its growth and the need to make this more apparent. The logo proved to be an excellent media tool for promotion of EYT, allowing for the visual association of the Community with the activities taking place within the framework of the Year. In view of its success, this logo will be registered.

The horizontal character of the activities was evident in the context of the projects involving pan-European cooperation, for example in the field of exchange of tourism information office personnel and exchanges of experience.

Without any doubt, the Year has allowed the Commission to establish and maintain a large number of contacts with the responsible bodies, both public and private, at local, regional and national level as well as at the European level. These contacts form the pre-conditions needed to establish a network for information exchange, which is necessary for all coordinated actions in the field of tourism.

It must also be noted that EYT fulfilled a pioneer role in including the participation of the EFTA countries, thereby increasing the number of countries involved from 12 to 18. The Commission also sustained excellent relations with the Council of Europe which carried out parallel activities, particularly successful in the field of European cultural itineraries.

Certain inherent difficulties in an operation of such dimensions were observed at the start of the Year. However, these vanished as the Year progressed.

The Year, whilst increasing awareness by the general public as well as operators to the economic and social interests of the sector, has provided a basis for new cooperation and has created a fertile soil, indispensable for the development of measures in the field of tourism. Also, in the light of the success enjoyed by some initiatives, a follow-up to the most significant and deserving projects will be made, in order to gain maximum benefit from this irreplaceable experience.

The evaluation of the activities carried out during the European Year of Tourism will be taken into account in the development of the Community action plan in the field of tourism which the Commission will present very shortly.

THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF TOURISM TEAM



left to right, top row: Lisa Davies, Georges Tzoanos, head of EYT Team, Anne-Marie Fiquet, Corinne Fourdinier, Katerina Zikmundova, Michael Tscherny; bottom row: Arturo Monforte, Inga-Lill Sandal, Peter Kraewinkels, Heleni Carapiperi, Pascal Chatillon, Liliane Volozinskis, Harvey Rouse, Godia Mina.



left to right: Gerard van Woudenberg, Inga-Lill Sandal, Anne-Marie Fiquet, Brigid Roden, Finian Judge, Jaime Lopez Carrión, Georgia Triantafyllidi, Lesley Abbiss, Giovanni Bastianini, Lisa Davies.

Other EYT Team members: Michèle Carroll, Yvette Chrissantonis, Yvonne De Ridder, Vincent De Rijcke, Regina Figl, Paulo Löff, Marjorie McCartney, Véronique Peers, Gil Peeters, Volker Pellet, Karl Seeber, Anne-Michèle van der Elst.



