

Preface

This book contains the proceedings pertaining to the first International Conference on “Cultural Tourism in a Digital Era,” held in Athens, Greece, 30th May–1st June 2014, which focused on cultural tourism as it is developing in the second decade of the new millennium. The conference intended to offer not only academic research presentations but also to promote mutual dialog, interaction, and understanding between various stakeholders of hospitality and tourism research outputs, including academic researchers and scholars, industry professionals, and government/quasi-government officials and other key industry practitioners who will share and highlight tourism industry trends and research gaps from a pragmatic and applied perspective. Athens, with its long history of democratic debate, was an ideal setting for this conference, and we really think that it provided a fitting opportunity for an open and productive discussion. In a globalized, digital era, nations seek to retain a sense of identity through their very unique cultures and history.

The International Association of Cultural and Digital Tourism (IACuDiT) is a global network of people, projects, and events that bear on a wide range of issues of concern and interest in cultural and digital tourism, in an era of major global changes. IACuDiT is a nonprofit international association which values creative, ethical, and progressive action aimed at the improvement of global hospitality and tourism research on cultural and digital issues.

IACuDiT brings together a wide range of academics and industry practitioners from cultural, heritage, communication, and innovational tourism backgrounds and interests. It mainly promotes and sponsors discussion, knowledge sharing, and close cooperation among scholars, researchers, policy makers, and tourism professionals. It is based on the notion that: “Technological changes do not influence the missions of cultural tourism actors in the areas of promotion and product development, but rather the manner of carrying them out.” It provides its members with a timely,

interactive, and international platform to meet, discuss, and debate cultural, heritage, and other tourism issues that will affect the future direction of hospitality and tourism research and practice in a digital and innovational era.

We want to be a friendly and easily accessible community for the discussion, exchange, and development of knowledge about the cultural issues in the travel and tourism industry in a digital era. We believe that tolerance and respect between culturally different communities is an essential ideal in tourism and travel. Judging from the warm welcome, the lively discussions, the friendly, unofficial, and warm atmosphere, both inside and outside Conference rooms, we believe we succeeded in our goals.

It is real pleasure to express our sincere gratitude to the people and organizations for their contributions, help, and support for this Conference. We express our sincere appreciation to all our Keynote speakers, that is to Prof. (FH) Mag. Christian Maurer, Professor in Tourism and Leisure Management at the University of Applied Sciences in Krems, Austria; to Prof. Dr. Marina Sheresheva, Head of master's program in marketing and Director of research center for networking economy at Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia; and to Doz. Mag. Dr. Doris DIALER, European Parliament, MEP Policy and Media Advisor Committee on Transport and Tourism, professor at the University of Innsbruck Department of Political Science and Founding Board Member of IGER—Group on European Research.

It would not be possible to organize this symposium without the support of the Greek Ministry of Tourism and the Hellenic Republic Ministry of Culture and Sports; their full support, understanding, and encouragement made the life easy for us. Special acknowledgement also goes to the following Universities for their support: University of Greenwich, UK; Technological Educational Institute (TEI) of Athens, Greece; National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), Greece; Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia; Malopolska School of Economics, Poland; Industrial Management Institute Azerbaijan; Çağ University; Department of Tourism of ISCE; European University Cyprus; European College of Economics and Management; Yaşar University, Turkey. We would like to express our deep gratitude to the members of The International Scientific Committee for their valuable and vitalizing ideas, comments, suggestions, and criticism on the scientific program of the Conference.

The Future is a subject of enduring fascination—impossible to predict, yet necessary to anticipate. We want to help in the process of meeting the needs and travel demands of world populations if we are to swiftly move towards a sustainable

travel culture in the years to come. For that purpose, we undertake the commitment to our members by listening to their needs and by putting and keeping them in contact.



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V. Katsoni



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