

Article #02

RETHINKING TOURISM FROM THE GROUND UP:



Tourism's Crisis

Tourism employs millions across Europe. Yet beneath the postcards and peak seasons lies a sector under pressure — from the climate crisis it contributes to, and from a workforce unprepared for what comes next.

The green transition is not coming. It is already here. And the tourism industry is struggling to keep up.

The skills gap is real and widening.

Across Europe, tourism businesses are finding it increasingly difficult to fill roles that require environmental awareness, community sensitivity, or knowledge of sustainable practices. These are not niche competencies anymore. They are fast becoming baseline expectations — from guests, from regulators, and from the communities that host tourism itself.

Yet VET systems and training providers have been slow to respond. Curricula designed for a previous era of hospitality continue to prepare workers for jobs that are being redefined beneath their feet.

Overtourism has exposed the cracks.

Many of Europe's most-visited destinations are now grappling with the consequences of unchecked growth. Overcrowded heritage sites, stressed ecosystems, and local communities pushed to the margins of their own cities — these are not abstract problems. They are the direct result of a tourism model that prioritised volume over value.

A green transition means not just reducing carbon footprints, but fundamentally rethinking what success in tourism looks like.

The pressure is on businesses, too.

Small and medium enterprises — the backbone of the European tourism economy — face growing pressure to adapt: from sustainability reporting requirements to shifting consumer expectations. Many lack the resources, knowledge, or networks to make that shift alone. SEEDS & SKILLS is built on the understanding that the green transition is not a burden to be managed, but an opportunity to be seized — with the right tools, evidence, and training in place.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.