

**From:**  
**To:**

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**Subject:**

**Date:**

**Attachments:**

Debrief mtg with Booking.com on sustainable tourism @EP TRAN

vendredi 3 juin 2022 13:19:34

[20220531\\_Booking.com Sustainability - Brussel presentation.pptx.pdf](#)

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Dear all,

This Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May, I participated in the meeting hosted by MEP Istvan Ujhelyi on

***“Sustainable tourism: green transition in accommodation sector”***.

Other participants were Booking.com, UNTWO, ETC, Dutch Travel Association and Dutch national DMO.

The discussion was based on **Booking.com study** “[\*Global accommodation sector. The road to net zero emissions\*](#)”, published Oct. 2021 for Glasgow COP, (see slides attached).

Booking.com has also launched an initiative to promote sustainable accommodations on their platform by introducing a **Travel Sustainable badge** (green luggage icon you find when searching with ‘Travel sustainable properties’). Travel Sustainable badge is part of Booking.com sustainability programme, which includes broader educational and information-sharing activities, including efforts to gather information from accommodations on what sustainable practices they have in place or where they face more difficulties in applying greener practices.

It is a great initiative, in particular considering the power of this player in the market. But we should push for more transparency towards consumer (better visibility, explaining consumer the difference between these labels), maybe consumer ratings could include sustainability criteria. As a second step, distinguish those accommodations that have invested more efforts in greening, that have a 3<sup>rd</sup> party recognised label /scheme in sustainable practice (e.g. EU Ecolabel). For now, it is self-declared by accommodation, based on criteria established with the help of **TRAVALYST** experts (they have done the same for google.com search on accommodations and also on flights). Sustainability certifications/labels, if accommodation has, are displayed: EU Ecolabel, Green Tourism, Green Seal, Nordic Swan Ecolabel, Green Hospitality Ecolabel, Ibex Fairstay, Fair Trade Tourism, LEED, Edge, all certifications accredited or recognised by the GSTC.

#### **Key points from the study and discussions:**

- Sustainable accommodations are considered a niche market with only 6.500 hotels globally qualifying for the sustainability (booking platform).
- Study maps global accommodation GHG emissions. The accommodation sector reflects **ca 10% of the total annual emissions of the tourism sector**. To achieve **net zero emissions until 2050**, global accommodations **will have to reduce emissions by 6 to 7% per year** (equivalent of eliminating the emissions from 2.3 million households annually).
- Many accommodations have implemented a range of emission reduction measures **achieving 47% of the potential for abatement in Europe**, and most are generally ready to be more ambitious in reducing GHG emissions.

- **For Europe, achieving the full potential of carbon emission reduction measures would require an investment of 68bn EUR.**
- While substantial investments are still needed, the **accommodation sector can be a frontrunner and lead the climate transition** of the tourism industry.  
Zero net emissions are **feasible with existing technologies. Most abatement measures are profitable to accommodations.** 76% of an accommodation's emission saving potential is associated with a positive business case: measures can cut both emissions and operating costs over a 15 year investment horizon. However, the change requires the contribution and cooperation of all stakeholders.
- Booking.com can play a role in bringing sustainability closer to accommodations and consumers. Travel Sustainable badge initiative allows accommodations to highlight the practices they have in place and build their confidence in applying more and more sustainable practices as they go. At the same time, customers can easily search for sustainable accommodations. Result: leverage the reach of our platform to drive up sustainable supply and demand and put sustainability firmly into the mainstream.
- **Key barriers and solutions:**  
**Urgency.** Define national roadmap for decarbonisation; Raise awareness on what the transition entails for the accommodation sector by launching national campaigns; Leverage and improve existing campaigns;  
**Knowledge gap.** Contribute to research into sustainability; Improve information availability by providing targeted information on technical and sustainability practices; Leverage and improve existing measures;  
**Financing.** Introduce sustainability related taxation; Offer grants and subsidies; Offer attractive financial structure:
- To make a change in sustainability, use frontrunners to inspire the change; close the gap between attitude and behaviour
- Costs of sustainability should be spread along tourism the value chain, mobility price should be included for the consumer (Dutch travel association)
- Measurement is key, need data and ideally EU wide, comparable set of indicators
- KPIs should be viable, meaningful and easily understandable also for consumer
- SMEs are in particular difficulty, hard to access funding, need guidance on actions

I have participated in the discussion, explaining briefly what we aim with TTP and how we are already facilitating greening of tourism. Above all, it was valuable to hear the findings and the very frank opinion of the industry (NL in this case).

To follow up, I think we should invite Booking for a discussion on how we can advance further with their initiatives on promoting sustainable accommodations, but also for destinations, mobility.

[REDACTED]

Finally, EP (Istvan) used the opportunity to stress the usual lines: more resources for tourism, both human in the Commission, as well as funding for the sector. Guide on funding was

positively mentioned, but still very difficult for SMEs to navigate (“you shouldn’t need a master degree to be able to apply for EU funding 😊”).

Wishing you all a nice upcoming weekend.

Regards,

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