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# Steps towards measuring the environmental aspects of the sustainability of tourism

*Christophe Demunter – European Commission / EUROSTAT*

**EUROPEAN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY:**

**Shifting tourism towards circular economy models**

6 October 2022



# Quick intro to European statistics on tourism

## The legal basis:

**Regulation 692/2011** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2011 concerning European statistics on the tourism

↪ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:192:0017:0032:EN:PDF>

### • Supply side

- Accommodation statistics, data on capacity and occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments (NACE 55.1-55.2-55.3).
- Typically collected from businesses (or via local authorities, tourism board, ...)

### • Demand side

- Data on tourism trips made by EU residents: participation in tourism, tourism trips made, ...
- Typically collected via household surveys



# Quick intro to European statistics on tourism

## The legal basis:

### **Geographical breakdowns** for accommodation statistics (nights spent)

- **By region**

- NUTS 3 regional level – annual data
- NUTS 2 regional level – monthly data (sent to Eurostat once per year)
- *Further improving the granularity is under discussion with the Member States (voluntary)*

- **By type of locality**

- Degree of urbanisation
- Coastal areas vs. non-coastal areas
- Data for selected cities

# Quick intro to European statistics on tourism

## The legal basis:

### Impact on the environment of tourism

- **Not directly covered in the Regulation**
  - Article 5 : “[...]draw up a programme for **pilot studies** which may be carried out by Member States on a voluntary basis in order to develop a system for the compilation of data showing the effects of tourism on the environment”
- **Indirectly (but very partially!) covered**
  - Flows and volume indicators
  - ... but not covering all dimensions and not sufficiently granular

# Quick intro to European statistics on tourism

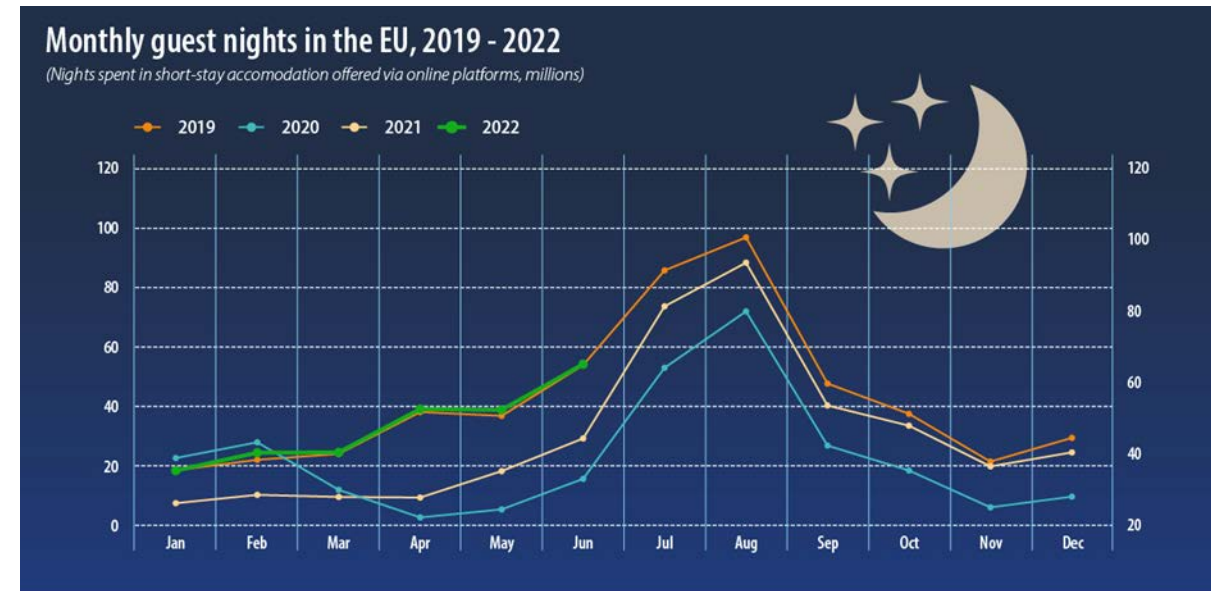
## Other output (≠ Regulation)

### Data on short-term rentals via online collaborative economy platforms

- Based on agreements with Airbnb, Booking.com, Expedia Group and Tripadvisor
- Data available since reference year 2018
- Quarterly release, monthly breakdown
- Output similar to the ‘traditional’ accommodation statistics

⇒ *Monitoring of a segment of the tourism industry that can be relevant in the context of sustainability*

⇒ *Timely and granular data*



# Quick intro to European statistics on tourism

## Other output (≠ Regulation)

### Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA)

- Methodological framework internationally agreed with UNWTO, OECD and UNSD
- Stage of implementation across Europe is very different and very fragmented
- Every 3 years, countries send TSA data to Eurostat on a voluntary basis (next release: December 2022)

⇒ *Focuses on the macro-economic importance of tourism*

⇒ *Linking to SEEA (environmental accounts) is a long term goal in measuring the sustainability in tourism*

# Constraints when measuring sustainability

## Coverage of accommodation statistics:

⇒ often a main source for tourism related indicators

- **By definition excludes same-day visitors**
  - *Can be adding to the peaks and pressure in tourism destinations*
- **Usually limited to rented accommodation**
  - *Not covering tourists staying at non-rented accommodation (e.g. second home, staying with relatives and friends)*
- **Usually limited to rented accommodation above a certain number of beds**
  - *Official statistics now complemented with data from four platforms*

# Constraints when measuring sustainability

## Temporal granularity of the existing data

- **The possible impact of tourism is variable throughout the year**
  - *e.g. seasonality in coastal destinations*
  - *e.g. peak moments in water and energy uses during the day*
  - Official data at annual level or even monthly level can average possible issues linked to sustainability
  - Limitations of traditional data collection methods such as (sample) surveys
  - ⇒ *Use of auxiliary information from non-traditional sources (e.g. big data) ?*



# Constraints when measuring sustainability

## Geographical granularity of the existing data:

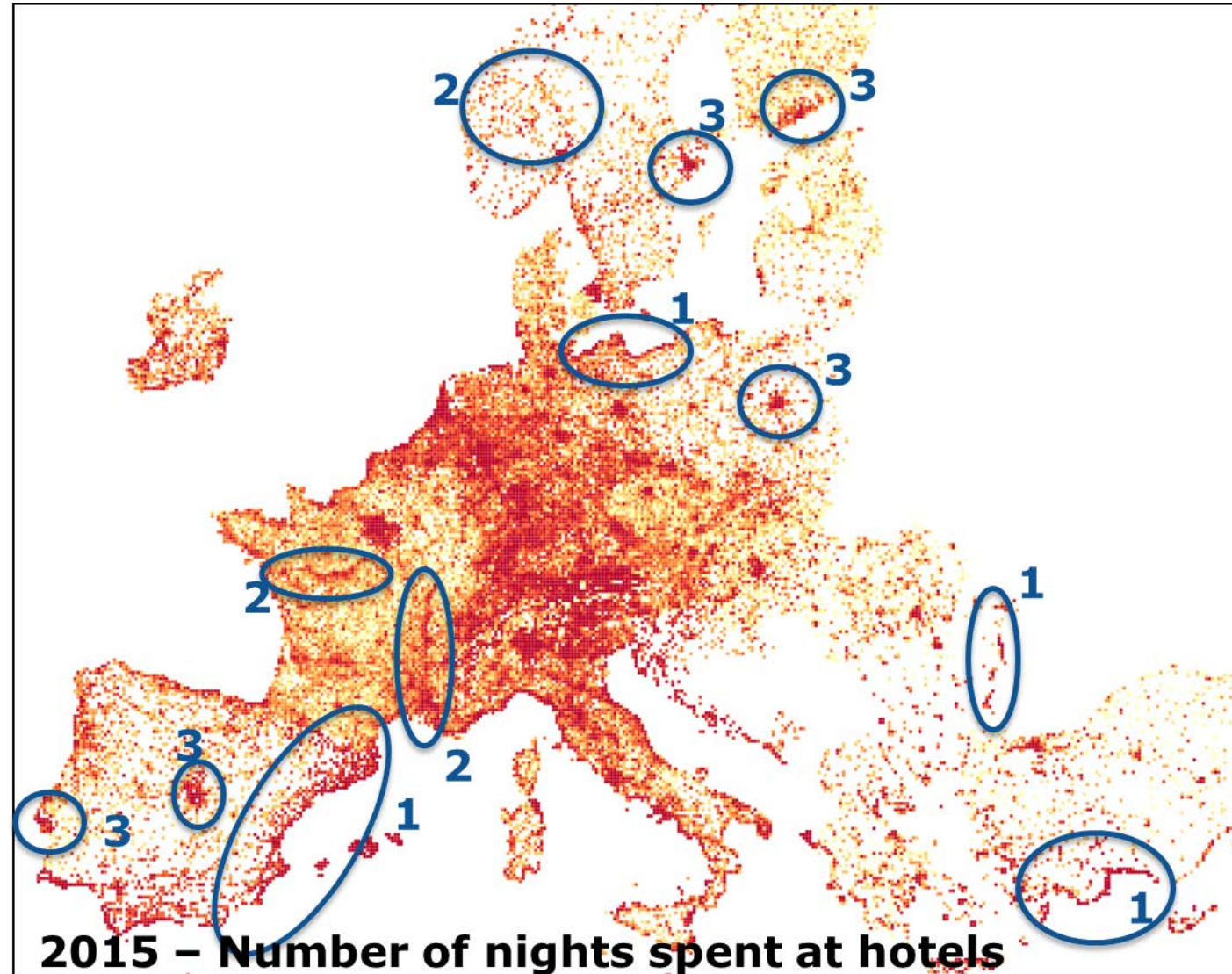
- **Tourism is a regional or even destination level phenomenon**
  - *e.g. coastal tourism seasonality in Mediterranean France ≠ Atlantic France*
  - *e.g. over-tourism is typically concentrated in only few areas*
  - Official data at national level or even
  - Regional level (= 'administrative areas') can't capture the possible issues linked to sustainability
  - Limitations of traditional data collection methods such as (sample) surveys
  - ⇒ *Use of auxiliary information from non-traditional sources (e.g. big data) ?*

# Constraints when measuring sustainability

## Geographical granularity

*Example:*

*Use of Points of Interest datasets as auxiliary information to refine occupancy data at hotels from NUTS level to 10km grids (Eurostat, 2015)*



# Recent international initiatives

## Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST)

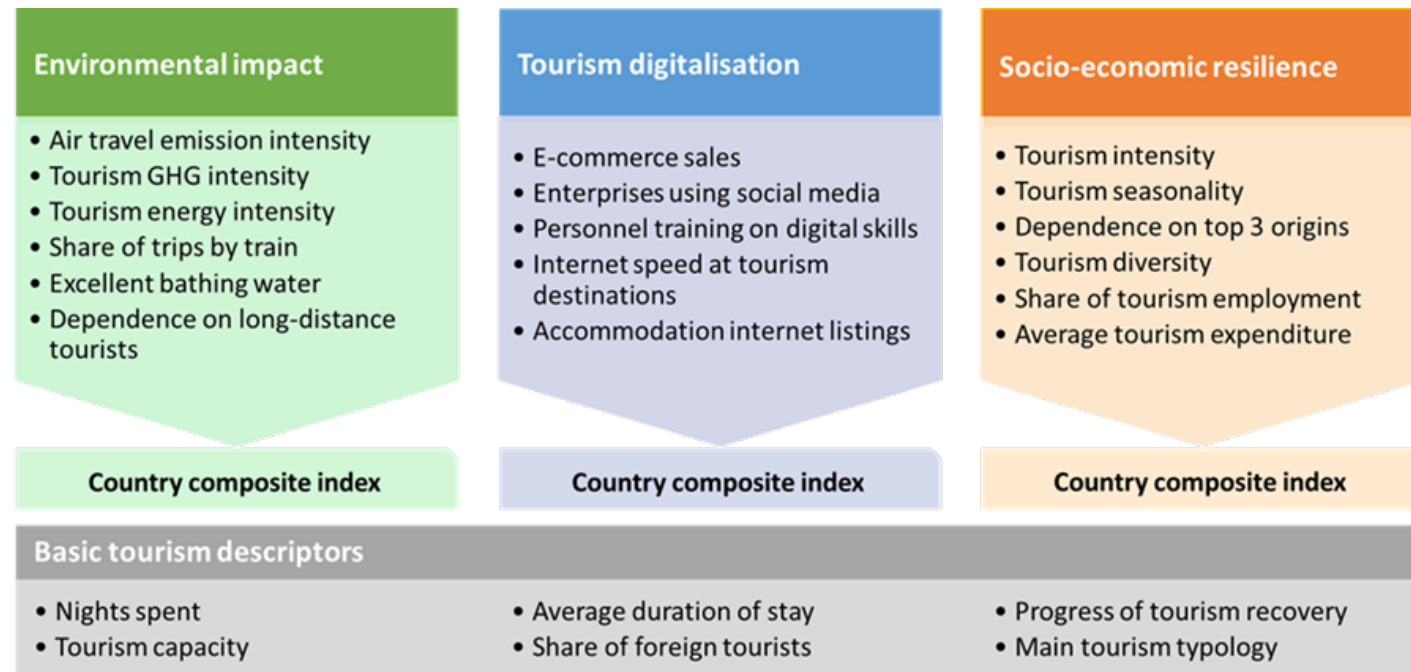
⇒ UN World Tourism Organisation, 2015-...

## European Tourism Indicators System for sustainable destination management (ETIS)

⇒ European Commission (DG GROW), 2013-2016

## EU Tourism Dashboard

⇒ European Commission (JRC, DG GROW), 2021-2022



# Current work by Eurostat

## Development of a system of indicators

- **Feasible, clear, comparable**
  - as much as possible based on existing, harmonised data
  - making better use of existing data or combining datasets.
- **Organic**
  - first phase: starting with a 'lowest common denominator'
  - next: widening (adding more indicators) and deepening (better granularity for the existing indicators).
  - combination of traditional data (1<sup>st</sup> phase) and innovative sources and methods (2<sup>nd</sup> phase)

# Current work by Eurostat

## Development of a system of indicators

- **Comprehensive, covering different dimensions of sustainability**
  - Economy (monetary, volumes)  
e.g. share in GDP, international position, international dependency
  - Labour market  
e.g. number of persons employed, share of lower educated workers, hourly earnings
  - Social and cultural impact  
e.g. participation in tourism, seasonality in demand
  - Environmental dimension  
e.g. share of trips by train, bathing water quality
  - Digitalisation  
e.g. growth of platform tourism, share of e-commerce sales in turnover

# Current work by Eurostat

## Development of a system of indicators

- **Work in progress**

- General supports by the NSIs for the approach, joint effort
- Discussions will continue at the forthcoming annual meeting with tourism statisticians from the NSIs in the European Statistical System (12-13 Oct 2022)

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Thank you