ACTIVITY REPORT
2018/2019
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Since the last General Assembly held in Lyon in conjunction with the ISTO World Congress, the new Executive Committee, over which I have the honour to preside, has worked to implement the Strategic Framework and the priority actions that were adopted for 2018-2020, which in turn were based on a broad consultation with members in the summer of 2018.

In practice, this has resulted in considerable work not only within the Secretariat but also in the working groups and regional sections. Their actions over the past twelve months are also presented in this report.

Among the various achievements, it is worth mentioning the strategic definition of ISTO’s DNA in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), within the framework of the United Nations strategy 2030. But also the communication actions which mobilized a large part of ISTO’s resources this year and to which I was happy to be able to contribute personally. It should also be noted that a new international committee on social policies for tourism was launched.

As for the working groups and regional sections, it is also worth highlighting the successful completion of the European PROFIT project on innovation in tourism, which can be inspiring for several of our members, the highly successful organisation of the Meeting of the Americas on Social Tourism in Costa Rica and the publication of a handbook of best practices on responsible and solidarity tourism.

“More than ever, our humanist and social vision of tourism is in line with the expectations of a growing number of citizens”

However, beyond all these actions that will be discussed later in this report, we cannot ignore the major challenges we face and to which we must provide answers. In terms of outreach, the subject of equal access to tourism and holidays for the greatest number of people must remain at the heart of our concerns. Indeed, we have barely overcome the crises of 2008 when we are alerted to the risk of a new global crisis. This access to tourism for all must also be linked to the various issues related to over-tourism and to all that relates to climate change and the protection of the environment.

Internally, although this is nothing new, more work is needed to ensure that ISTO has sufficient resources to meet its ambitions. This is a responsibility that we must all share with our members and partners and that must be a top priority for us in the coming months.

As we meet for our General Assembly in Paris, I am convinced that the roadmap we are working on and the new communication tools in which we have invested will help us to meet the important challenges ahead. More than ever, our humanist and social vision of tourism is in line with the expectations of a growing number of citizens around the world. Let’s make sure we are up to this great challenge!
159 Members

39 Countries represented

3 Regional sections

23 Members of the Alliance for Training and Research

3 European projects carried out in 8 countries

28 Board members from 12 countries
Secretariat

Under the supervision of the Secretary General, Yves Godin, the Brussels-based international secretariat of ISTO is composed of the following stall:

• ISTO Director Charles-E. Bélanger
• The Director of the Europe Section, Luc Gobin
• A project and administration officer, Jacques Rayet
• A communication officer, Marine Delacroix (who joined in April)
• A European project manager, Alexander Simoen (until August)
• A university graduate intern, Leyre Aguilar (from May to August)

Membership fees, which have risen slightly this year, are the association’s main source of revenue. They are supplemented by projects co-financed by the European institutions (Interreg and Erasmus+ projects), by employment subsidies (Brussels Regional Employment Office – ACTIRIS) and the secondment of an employee (Visit Flanders), as well as by the significant support of the General Federation of Belgian Labour (FGTB-ABVV) and the FLOREAL Group for the provision of offices, IT equipment and several additional services.

In addition to the Belgian organisations, the French Ministry of Economy and Finance in charge of tourism (DGE) also makes an additional contribution which, in 2018, was significantly increased as part of the preparations to the World Congress in Lyon.

ISTO’s budget and finances are monitored by a Finance Committee chaired by ISTO Treasurer Eric Wolters (Kaleo), which meets on a quarterly basis. On 11 September 2019, the Statutory Auditors, Louis Basdevant (Ethic Etapes) and Dirk Van der Maelen (Volkstoerisme) audited and approved the financial statements for the year 2018.
Executive Committee

The Executive Committee first met on 18-19 January 2019 at the FLOREAL Group Holiday Centre in Mont Saint Aubert on the occasion of its annual discussion seminar, which focused on ISTO’s strategic positioning, a communications plan and the launch of the Committee on Social Policies for Tourism. The Executive Committee also met in Brussels on 21 June and 13 September 2019.

It was during the Discussion Seminar that the Executive Committee agreed that the new strategic positioning of ISTO could be developed around the concept of the DNA of social tourism in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), initially as part of the PROFIT project. This initiative was presented to the Board of Directors and a questionnaire on the implementation of the DNA/SDGs was distributed to all members.

Board of Directors

For the first time in several years, the ISTO Board of Directors met in Brussels on 4-5 April on the premises of the Floreal Group/ISTO. Several members of the Board, particularly from the Americas, attended the meeting, which was held just after the meeting on 3 April to launch the Committee on Social Policies for Tourism. Among the topics that were discussed were the question of ISTO’s new strategic positioning, the presentation of a communication plan, the activities of the regional sections and new developments for the 2020 Congress. The Board was also pleased to welcome the High Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda of Spain, Ms Cristina Gallach. The Board is scheduled to meet again on 15 October in Paris on the eve of the General Assembly.
General Assembly and World Congress 2018

The most recent ISTO General Assembly was held in Lyon on 17 October 2018, just before the start of the World Congress. The presentation and adoption of the activity and financial reports as well as the adoption of a Strategic Framework & Priority Actions for 2018-2020 and the renewal of half of the Board of Directors were on the agenda of this meeting. It was on this occasion that Ms. Inés Ayala Sender was elected President of ISTO, succeeding Jean-Marc Mignon, who held the presidency of the organisation for two terms (2010-2018). Yves Godin, Secretary General of ISTO, was also re-elected for a new term.

For the record, the 27th ISTO World Congress was held on 16-19 October 2018 in Lyon and was attended by 280 delegates from 26 countries on the theme “Tourism in actions: Innovate, Develop and Share”. Held in partnership and with the support of the French Ministry of Tourism (DGE), the Auvergne Rhône-Alpes Region and Auvergne Rhône-Alpes Tourisme, this congress focused on innovation, youth tourism and integrated local and regional development.
Communication activities

The communication component was one of ISTO’s top priorities for 2019.

This first resulted in the implementation of a communication strategy and a communication plan with the help of an independent agency, the Luna company. This communication plan highlighted the ISTO target groups, identified areas for improvement in existing communication tools (newsletter, website, logo) and prioritised a set of new actions to be carried out. A number of submissions were made to the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee.

The recommendations in this plan led, among other things, to the formulation of specifications for the construction of a new website for ISTO, which is a high priority considering the age and limitations of the current website. Through a competitive bidding process, Stereo was selected to design a new website that should be completed by the end of 2019.

Other recommendations included the ISTO logo, which has been extensively redesigned to incorporate ISTO’s new strategic positioning around its DNA and to improve ISTO’s readability. It is through the Pure Brand agency that a new logo was created where only the name “ISTO” appears.

Finally, it is worth noting the publication of a new ISTO presentation brochure in French, English and Spanish, which incorporates the association’s new approach and, of course, its new logo. In addition, and mainly thanks to the newly appointed communications officer, the Newsletter, exclusively sent to members and partners, has resumed its monthly publication frequency since May and is also published in Spanish, in addition to English and French.

ISTO communication and visibility has also increased significantly in recent months on social media thanks to the new actions undertaken by the Communications Officer. In this regard, it is interesting to note the progress of the situation on Facebook (from 1970 followers to 2311 in one year, meaning +17.31%) and Twitter (from 306 followers to 439 in one year, meaning +43.46%) and LinkedIn (from 275 to 375 followers in one year, meaning +36.36%)

Last but not least, the publication of the ISTO 2017–2018 Activity Report, printed in French and English, serves as a valuable tool for promoting ISTO’s work with partners, institutions and governments.
Representation activities

Every year, ISTO is invited to participate in various events organised by members or partners at the national or international level. These advocacy actions are part of the organisation’s mission, both to promote the social and humanistic vision of tourism and to present the best practices. The following is a non-comprehensive list of events where ISTO was present in addition to actions directly related to the regional sections:

- **European Tourism Day** - “The Renewed EU Industrial Policy Strategy: Making EU Tourism stronger in a new industrial era” hosted by the European Commission on 7 November 2018 in Brussels;
- World Congress of the Fédération Internationale de Camping, Caravanning et Autocaravaning (FICC) on 22-23 November 2018 in Lisbon;
- Final conference of the Erasmus + All Tourist project on the development of training modules in social tourism on 21 March 2019 in Jaén (Spain);
- Inter-University Seminar on “Tourism & Ethics” held in Paris (France) on 27 March 2019;
- The second edition of the DEFISMED Forum on the subject of “Tourism in the Mediterranean area, a new driving force for sustainable regional development” was held on 2-3 April 2019 in Puyloubier (France);
- 10th Edition of “Les Rendez-Vous de l’UNAT” on the issue of “The collective value of tourism and the social value of holidays” held in Carqueiranne (France) from 22 to 24 May 2019;
- Presentation on “Tourism and Holidays for All” on 6 June 2019 in Paris as part of the preparations for the French Inter-ministerial Committee on Tourism (CIT);
- Workshop on social tourism in Wallonia organised by the Technical Committee on Social Tourism in collaboration with the Commissariat général au tourisme (CGT) on 26 June 2019 in Namur (Belgium);
- Panel event organised by Hostelling International as part of the “Sleep for Peace” campaign on 6 August 2019 in Brussels;
- An educational event organised in Charleroi on 12 September 2019 by Lab-Réseau Ulysse, which brings together tourism professors from 8 higher education institutions in French-speaking Belgium;
- Opening ceremony of the Mozaik – KALEO Gîte in Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve on 4 September 2019;
- Travel to Tomorrow, Summit on the future of tourism organised by Visit Flanders in Bruges on 12-13 September 2019;
- 3rd National Forum of Social Tourism in Peru, Lima, 16-17 September 2019 and a meeting with the authorities to prepare for the World Congress in 2020.
Committee on Responsible and Fair Tourism

The Committee on Responsible and Fair Tourism, chaired by Maurizio Davolio, President of the Italian Association for Responsible Tourism (AITR), met in Brussels on 4 April in conjunction with the ISTO Board meeting.

The most notable achievement of the Committee was the preparation of a handbook of best practices of the Responsible and Fair Tourism industry. The whole process was initiated by a call for contributions distributed within the networks active in the Responsible and Fair Tourism industry and, as a result, 20 best practices from various regions of the world were selected.

It should be pointed out that the selection of best practices was made on the basis of the following criteria: inclusion of local communities and stakeholders, benefits of the project for the local community, viability and sustainability of the project, environmental commitments and practices, self-reliance and sustainability in management and employment, and the participation of women, young people and/or people with disabilities.

The project was carried out in partnership with ATES for the content and with the support of Fundação INATEL for the design of the handbook.
Committee on social policies for tourism

This international committee on social policies for tourism was launched at the European Parliament in Brussels and was attended by some thirty representatives from European countries but also from Africa, the Americas and Asia.

The purpose of this committee, chaired by Marie-Odile Beau (French Ministry of Tourism), is to provide a forum for debate, interaction and proposals to help public authorities and other relevant bodies to better understand existing mechanisms, assess their strengths and weaknesses and promote them to those who wish to set up such mechanisms so as to improve access to tourism for all and develop a more responsible tourism approach. The work conducted by this committee should also allow the analysis of social policies in the tourism sector and the study of data on the evolution of holiday departure trends.

The first activities carried out within the ISTO Secretariat, in partnership with the Alliance, as part of an internship funded by Eurodyssey, focused on the review of policies and programmes in the 28 EU Member States.
Alliance for Training and Research

The Alliance for Training and Research now has 23 members, 17 individual members and 6 institutional members in 12 countries.

Under the coordination of Anya Diekmann of the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), the Alliance has been providing advice and support in the initial work carried out within the Committee on Social Policies for Tourism, particularly with regard to the definition of a matrix to analyse social policies and holiday support programmes.
The Alliance has also been involved in training tourism professionals and students as part of the Erasmus + All Tourist project. This training session, which was held in Brussels on 19-20 February 2019, aimed to present a sample of training modules on social tourism designed for this project. Four main topics were covered during this training:
- Background, concepts and definitions of social tourism
- Evolution of social tourism and new challenges
- Characteristics of the demand
- Characteristics of the supply

Finally, it should be noted that data sheets presenting each member of the Alliance have been prepared. In addition to the general contact information for each research professor, there is a brief biography with the fields of research as well as the main publications in tourism and social tourism.

Trade Union Taskforce

Led by Alain Clauwaert (FGTB-ABVV/Floreal Group), the Task Force met on 2 April and 8 October 2019 in Brussels with representatives of the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations (IUF).

The main achievement of the Task Force was the preparation of a European Memorandum to raise awareness among the new Members of the European Parliament and officials of the European Commission. This text contains various proposals from the previous ISTO memorandum (2013) which are still relevant, a number of proposals related to the European Pillar of Social Rights approved by the EU in 2017 and proposals from the European Tourism Manifesto for Growth and Employment co-signed by several organisations including EFFAT and ISTO.
New members

The Membership Committee composed of Patrick Brault (Vacances Ouvertes), Valeria Gherardini (AICS) and Filip Delmotte (Volkstoerisme) recommended the admission of 17 new members to the ISTO Board of Directors.

During the meeting of the Board of Directors in Brussels, 10 new members were approved:

- AMT Concept (BELGIUM)
- Valoshki Solnechnyj Krug (BELARUS)
- Red boliviana de turismo solidario comunitario – RED TUSOCO (BOLIVIA)
- BoaPaz Cooperative (COSTA RICA)
- Association Européenne de la Route d’Artagnan – AERA (FRANCE)
- Adunatours (GUINEA BISSAU)
- I Viaggi del GOEL (ITALY)
- H. Ayuntamiento de Puebla (MEXICO)
- H. Ayuntamiento de Xalapa (MEXICO)
- Red Nicaraguense de Turismo Rural Comunitario – RENITURAL (NICARAGUA)

For the Paris Board of Directors meeting, 7 new membership applications should be approved:

- Instituto Hondureño de Turismo (HONDURAS)
- Secretaria de Turismo del Estado de Tamaulipas (MEXICO)
- Alfa Viajes – Turismo Vivencial (PERU)
- Funcavida (COSTA RICA)
- CIDES (MEXICO)
- Les Oiseaux de Passage (FRANCE)
- UNPLI (ITALY)

Termination

During its meeting in Paris, the Board of Directors should approve the termination of membership of 14 organisations that had either not paid their fees for at least two years, asked to withdraw from ISTO, or ceased their operations. The organisations affected are as follows:

- Gîte 1515 CCHM Joliette (CANADA)
- Tourisme Montréal (CANADA)
- Asociación Comunitaria Conservacionista de Turismo Alternativo y Rural – ACTUAR (COSTA RICA)
- Consorcio Cooprena Red Ecoturistica Nacional (COSTA RICA)
- Secretaria de Turismo y Cultura del Estado de Veracruz (MEXICO)
- Liberaal Ondersteuningspunt (BELGIUM)
- CAITD (BENIN)
- AVPDTA (CAMEROON)
- Conseil régional Provence Alpes Côte d’Azur (FRANCE)
- Ploigos (GREECE)
- Coop Services (MALTA)
- Aoufous (MAROCCO)
- ADETOP (TOGO)
- Ministerio de Industria, Comercio y Turismo (SAN MARINO)
Global picture

Taking into account these new admissions and terminations, ISTO now has 159 organisations across 39 countries as follows:

- 44 organisations in 15 countries of the Americas
- 97 organisations in 13 European countries
- 12 organisations in 9 African countries
- 1 organisation in 1 Asian country
- 1 organisation in 1 Oceania country
- 4 international organisations

In addition, there is one new individual member of the Alliance for Training and Research in Social and Fair Tourism, which now has 17 members, to which must be added the institutional members.
The ISTO Americas Section, under the direction of Veronica Gomez, is governed by a Board of Directors composed of the following member organisations that were elected at the last ISTO Americas General Assembly on 14 December 2018:

- Sergio Rodríguez Abitia, President, CCC Consultores, Mexico
- Francisca Retamal, Vice-President, Subsecretaría de Turismo de Chile et Servicio Nacional de Turismo – SERNATUR, Chile
- Alberto d’Aurea Sobral Pereira Filho, Vice-President, Serviço Social do Comércio Departamento Nacional – SESC DN, Brazil.
- Vincent Bérubé, Treasurer, Auberges de Jeunesse du St-Laurent, Canada.
- Flavia Roberta Cortez, Board Member, Serviço Social do Comércio Sao Paulo – Sesc SP, Brazil.
- Gerardo Pérez, Board Member, AltaMex, Mexico.
- Oscar León Trujillo, Board Member, Secretaría de Turismo de Morelos – SECTUR Morelos, Mexico.

First and foremost, it is important to highlight the “AireLibre Acknowledgement for the Commitment to Sustainable Tourism” award that was presented to ISTO Americas President Sergio Rodríguez Abitia in January 2019 at FITUR in Madrid. ISTO as a whole is delighted to include all its members in this prestigious award.

While ISTO Americas continued throughout the year to support its members in their social tourism initiatives and programmes, it is worth emphasising the important actions carried out in Central America with the hosting of the “Meeting of the Americas on Social Tourism – Costa Rica 2019” and the signing of a partnership agreement with the Central American Tourism Integration Secretariat (SITCA) to support and encourage the development of social tourism in Central America.
Meeting of the Americas on Social Tourism

The leading event on social tourism in the Americas was held on 12-15 June 2019. Specifically designed for ISTO members, it covered best practices as well as the challenges and future of social tourism on this continent. Hosted by ISTO Americas with the support of the Costa Rican Institute of Tourism (ICT), an ISTO member, the event was widely publicised, particularly at the FITUR in January 2019.

Under the theme “Tourism and sustainability: rights, access and current challenges for Social Tourism”, the encounter, which was attended by 300 delegates - including 60 representatives of ISTO Americas members from 14 countries - showcased several best practices from ISTO members in the Americas and Costa Rican organisations (all presentations can be found on the ISTO website).

This event was also an opportunity for ISTO Americas to hold its General Assembly, followed by the joint drafting of the ISTO Americas Action Plan for 2019-2021, a set of workshops for members, which were then shared in a plenary session around four main themes: membership; training; ISTO events; and social, economic, cultural and environmental indicators.
For the third consecutive year, ISTO Americas participated in the co-hosting of the **Sustainable and Social Tourism Summit** in Cancun, Mexico, from 23 to 26 June 2019, which featured 30 speakers and 400 delegates. This forum brought together the Tourism Secretaries of most Mexican states, tourism entrepreneurs and tour operators, executives responsible for sustainability in the tourism industry, and ISTO members from the Americas.

The Director of ISTO Americas, gave a keynote address at the conference, “Employment and Tourism: State of play and future prospects”, in line with the main theme of World Tourism Day 2019. The president of the Americas section, in turn, hosted the closing conference “The role of entrepreneurs and social stakeholders in the construction of transformative tourism” presented by French philosopher Gilles Lipovestky.

**Meetings of ISTO**

ISTO Americas also participated in a number of ad hoc meetings and/or working groups of ISTO, such as the Discussion Seminar, Executive Committee meetings, the preparations for the launch of the International Committee on Social Policies for Tourism and the follow-up with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru, to officially confirm the hosting of the World Congress on Social Tourism - Peru 2020.
Here is a brief overview of other actions carried out by the Americas section during this period:

- **Support to the South American Seminar on Associative Experiences in Rural Tourism, Chile** - The Chilean Association of Rural Tourism - ACHITUR (ISTO member) and the University of San Sebastián, with the support of ISTO, co-hosted the “South American Seminar on Associative Experiences in Rural Tourism”, on 17 and 18 October 2018, in Santiago, Chile.

- **Active participation in the Sustainable Tourism Forum: Challenges and Opportunities, Mexico** - In November 2018, the President of ISTO Americas delivered the conference “Gathering Efforts for Socially Responsible Tourism” as part of the Sustainable Tourism Forum: Challenges and Opportunities, which was organised by the Chihuahua State Tourism Department in Chihuahua, Mexico.

- **Meeting with the Secretary of Tourism of Mexico** - The President of the chapter met Miguel Torruco Marqués, Secretary of Tourism of Mexico, who took office on 1 December 2018. The focus of this meeting was the future and development of social tourism in a country where access to tourism for all is still far from being achieved.

- **International Tourism Fair – FITUR 2019 in Madrid, Spain** - The President and Director of the ISTO Americas chapter, participated in this event in Madrid, Spain, which provides an opportunity to meet the highest tourism representatives from several member countries of the Americas and to establish new contacts.

- **Working lunch with ISTO Member Tourism Ministers in the Americas, Spain** - On the occasion of FITUR 2019 and at the invitation of the Minister of Tourism of Costa Rica and ISTO Americas, the Tourism Ministers of Guatemala, Peru and Chile met for a working lunch which was attended by Inés Ayala Sender for ISTO and Sergio Rodrigue and Veronica Gomez for ISTO Americas.

- **Official launch of the Meeting of the Americas on Social Tourism - Costa Rica 2019, Spain** - In conjunction with FITUR 2019, the Costa Rican Institute of Tourism and ISTO Americas convened the members and partners of both organisations as well as the national (Costa Rican) and international press to officially launch the Meeting of the Americas on Social Tourism - Costa Rica 2019. The Minister of Tourism of Costa Rica and the President of ISTO invited the 50+ people gathered at the Costa Rican booth to attend the Meeting.

- **Conference and field visit to the city of Xalapa, Mexico** - In April 2019, the Director of ISTO Americas was invited to give a conference to tourism operators and city officials in Xalapa following the municipality’s recent accession to ISTO.
• **Tianguis Turístico México 2019 - Acapulco, Mexico** - From 7 to 10 April 2019, the country’s largest tourism fair, the 44th edition of the “Tianguis Turístico México 2019”, was held in Acapulco (Mexico). The ISTO Americas chapter seized the opportunity of this fair to meet its Mexican members and hand out membership certificates to new members.

• **Active participation in the Sustainable Tourism Forum: Challenges and Opportunities, Mexico** - On 8 May 2019, the President of ISTO Americas gave a presentation on the theme “Sustainable Tourism: Issues and Challenges for Socially Responsible Tourism” at the Sustainable Tourism Forum hosted by the Chihuahua State Tourism Department in Mexico.

• **Participation in the 64th meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for the Americas, Guatemala** - From 15 to 17 May 2019, the 64th meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for the Americas was held in Guatemala City and Antigua, Guatemala, which is the annual meeting of the Ministers of Tourism in the Americas. This event was held in partnership with the Guatemalan Institute of Tourism - INGUAT, which is also a member of ISTO.

• **Conferences on social tourism, Guatemala** - While the director of ISTO Americas was in Guatemala City, the representatives of INGUAT approached her to give a conference on 14 May for government officials on the “Landscape of Social Tourism in the Americas”. On 17 May, in Antigua, she gave the conference “Social Tourism of the 21st Century” to public authorities and members of the private sector.

• **Meeting of Mexican ISTO Members, Mexico** - On 20 May 2019, the President and Director of ISTO Americas met with Mexican ISTO Members, including representatives of the Tourism Secretariats of Mexico City, of the states of Guanajuato, Morelos, Tamaulipas, of the city of Puebla and of Mexico’s National Tourism Secretariat. The attending members were able to learn about the ongoing and upcoming initiatives of ISTO and ISTO Americas and discuss their respective actions.

• **Participation in the Social Tourism Seminar, Brazil** - On 3 and 4 July 2019, the Social Tourism Seminar was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Co-organised by the SESC- Departamento Nacional, this event was a forum for debate for several Brazilian tourism operators and public authorities, who were able to gain a deeper understanding of the situation and to interact through a series of presentations by the ISTO Americas President.

• **Participation in the 5th Conference on Accessible Tourism, Latin America and the Caribbean, Guatemala** - The Director of ISTO Americas was invited to lead a workshop on the best practices in Latin America and to give a presentation on “Social Tourism, Tourism for All” at this event held from 20 to 22 August 2019 in Panajachel, Sololá in Guatemala.
• **Participation in the launch of the Senior Social Tourism Programme, Guatemala** - While in Guatemala, the Director of ISTO Americas also had the opportunity to support the launch of the social tourism programme for seniors set up by INGUAT.

• **Virtual Conference on Decent Work in Tourism, Mexico** - As part of a series of webinars provided by the University of the Environment (UMA) in Mexico, entitled “Challenges and Opportunities of Sustainable Tourism”, Veronica Gomez gave a virtual lecture on “What does decent work mean in tourism?” on 9 September 2019.

• **Participation in the 4th National Forum on Social Tourism, Peru** - On 17 and 18 September, the Director of ISTO and the Director of ISTO Americas actively participated in the 4th National Forum on Social Tourism, which took place in Lima, Peru. With the support of ISTO Americas for the 4th consecutive year, this Forum was an excellent opportunity for MINCETUR to showcase its activities and develop new initiatives aimed at helping senior citizens and people with disabilities to go on holiday. The Director of ISTO Americas presented the conclusions and outcomes of the Forum. This event was also an opportunity for ISTO to make progress on the logistics and organisation of the next World Congress on Social Tourism, to be held in 2020 in this country.

• **Conference and field visit to the Ucayali region, Peru** - While in Peru, Veronica Gomez travelled to the city of Pucallpa, where she delivered the conference “Towards development tourism in the Ucayali region” to tourism operators and local tourism authorities. She also made some technical field visits to explore the potential for the effective development of social tourism in the city and this Peruvian region.

### Key figures on our actions

- **17 missions** in the Americas (+ 2 missions in Europe)
- **6 different countries** in the Americas: Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru (+ Spain and Belgium)
- **14 cities** in the Americas (Acapulco, Cancún, Guatemala City, Lima, Mexico City, Panajachel, Pucallpa, Rio de Janeiro, San José, etc.) (+ 2 European cities)
- **2700 delegates** attending the congresses where ISTO Americas was present
- **13 keynote lectures** or panel discussions, 6 different countries
- **2 tourism fairs**, 2 different countries (1 national in Mexico, 1 international in Spain)
Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020 in São Paulo, the Coordination Committee of ISTO Europe, co-chaired by Fabrizio Pozzoli as President and Luc Gobin as Director, has initiated several actions in order to implement this strategy. The activities carried out in recent months have mainly focused on participation in European Commission and European Parliament initiatives and actions in the fields of innovation, youth tourism and tourism for all.

**Coordination committee**

The European Coordination committee (CC Europe) held its annual meeting in October 2018 in conjunction with the General Assembly in Lyon, France. Through a new format, members were able to present their initiatives and seek the support of the network at the meeting. A proposal was made to upgrade the DNA of social tourism in relation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), an idea that was subsequently taken up as a global initiative by ISTO.

The newly elected Coordination Committee of ISTO Europe is composed of the following members:

- Benoît César, KALEO, Belgium
- Michel Vandendriessche, PASAR, Belgium
- Gianluca Pastoreli, Diesis, Belgium
- Marc Pili, Vacances Ouvertes, France
- Muriel Antoniotti, Tourisme Auvergne Rhône-Alpes, France
- Corinne Makowski, Secours Populaire, France
- Nathalie Nouel, Secours Catholique, France
- Andrea Pintér, Hungarian National Foundation of Recreation, Hungary
- Fabrizio Pozzoli, Federcultura Turismo, Italy
- Valeria Gherardini, FICTUS, Italy
- Pierpaolo Chiurnera, Endas, Italy
- Francisco Madelino, Fundação INATEL, Portugal

The Committee met on 19-20 March 2019 in Brussels on the occasion of the “Showcase Conference on Tourism, Tourism SMEs are connecting Europe”. During these meetings, in addition to the activities described subsequently in this report, the Committee expressed its views on the communication plan for ISTO and on a first draft memorandum in relation to the 2019 European elections. It also supported the efforts of the team that produced the European Tourism Manifesto for Jobs and Growth. A presentation and exchange on mobility also took place with a representative of the Interrail group. Finally, the Committee reiterated its support for the ISTO initiative on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the DNA of social tourism.
Participation in European institutions’ initiatives

- **Conference of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on Sustainable Development Strategies, 30 November 2018 in Brussels**

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the joint responsibility of civil society, EU and Member State authorities and the private sector. Therefore, coordinated approaches, involving a wide range of stakeholders, have been introduced and are of paramount importance. The main purpose of the conference was to raise awareness across the European Union of how different types of initiatives, actions, policies and regulations can foster and ensure responsible business conduct and promote the achievement of sustainable development goals. It also aimed to identify key success factors for the development of follow-up actions at EU level. The conference was also intended to contribute to and complement the work of the European Commission’s multi-stakeholder platform on efforts to implement the SDGs.

- **EESC public hearings on “Civil society and the transition to a carbon-neutral Europe by 2050”, 28 February 2019 in Brussels**

The European Commission has published its long-term strategy “A Clean Planet for All” setting out its objective of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 through a socially fair and cost-effective transition. By focusing on a long-term perspective and highlighting the cross-sector, complex and fundamental transformation of European societies needed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, the strategy opens an extensive debate involving European decision-makers and citizens on how Europe should prepare for 2050 and the subsequent submission of the European strategy to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by 2020. Views were exchanged with experts, stakeholders and decision-makers on the strategy.

- **European Commission (DG Growth) “Showcase Conference on Tourism, Tourism SMEs are connecting Europe”, 19 March 2019 in Brussels**

The main purpose of this conference was to show the benefits of EU support for tourism projects under the European Programme for Competitiveness of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (COSME). It also aimed to foster greater cooperation and participation of the tourism industry in EU projects and spur reflection on future EU support for tourism projects. 15 examples of best practices implemented through the COSME programme were presented. Members of the ISTO Europe Coordination Committee participated in the event.

- **High Level EU Conference on “Sustainable Europe 2030: from goals to delivery”, 8 April 2019 in Brussels**

The conference, which was attended by around 1000 participants, followed the publication of the recent European Commission reflection paper entitled “Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030” and brought together leading experts from all over the world to discuss how to best translate the United Nations’ sustainable development goals at European level.
Innovation

- **PROFIT**

Professional Framework for Innovation in Tourism. 2018 was the 3rd year of the project which ends in 2019. After the DNA of social tourism in 2018, the design of new services and the co-creation of 8 innovative actions have been completed. In 2019, two field trips on best practices and four seminars on the following topics were successfully organised: digitalisation; storytelling; the DNA of social tourism as a “USP” for communication; and the ability for people to work together. Two innovative actions have been created: an open weekend to promote Tourism for All in several holiday centres on the Belgian coast in 2020 (Zeeje mee) and a knowledge and exchange centre for the development of the SDGs. The results were presented on 20 June 2019 during a network event organised by ISTO and its partners.

- **Strengthen the DNA of sustainable social tourism.**

The DNA can be translated into strategic and operational activities related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The subject prompted interest from the whole organisation, so a proposal for its further development was accepted for ISTO as a whole.

- **ISTO Connect.**

This is an exchange platform project that was developed with the support of Visit Flanders in 2018. In August 2019, a pilot version was presented. However, this project was not finalized, as ISTO opted for a platform integrated with the new website.
Youth tourism

- **Backpacker Europe**

  this Erasmus + project, which has been endorsed by the EU, started on 1 March 2018 and ends on 31 December 2019. Two meetings were held in 2018 during which the Backpacker project was defined on the basis of the Sac Ados programme developed by the Vacances Ouvertes association in France. In 2019, all partners explored and identified opportunities in their countries and regions (Belgium, France, Italy, Germany). A quick start guide will be released by the end of the project.

  Identifying opportunities for experience sharing between organisations working in the field of youth tourism within ISTO remains a daunting challenge, which has yet to be addressed.

- **Génération montagne**

  Génération montagne is an initiative of the Auvergne Rhône-Alpes region. A highly successful meeting was held on 6 November 2018 in Chambéry with 300 participants. ISTO participated by presenting some examples of best practices.
2019 European elections

Together with other European tourism stakeholders, ISTO Europe is involved in the “Tourism Manifesto” group in an effort to make tourism a more prominent part of Europe’s agenda. In the context of the European Union’s preparations for the post-2020 period, the Tourism Manifesto Group has launched a campaign to increase the tourism budget entitled “Towards direct investment in tourism in the EU MFF after 2020”. ISTO supported this campaign: the 10.3% contribution of tourism and travel to EU GDP requires an investment of €20 billion in the post-2020 MFF, which would correspond to 1.3% of the total contribution of tourism and travel to GDP in 2017.

Miscellaneous activities

- Meetings with members and support for the development of initiatives at European and international level

- Assessment, advice and hearings

Owing to the experience of the organisation in many countries, ISTO may be asked to attend meetings to assess the relevance of specific policies. This was the case with regard to the subject of youth tourism in Flanders, where ISTO was part of a steering group, as well as with regard to the evaluation of tourism-related regulations in Wallonia and Flanders.

- Relations with European networks

ISTO maintains close relationships with various European networks such as the European Network of Accessible Tourism (ENAT), EFFAT as part of the Trade Union Task Force and the Network of European Regions for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism (NECSTOUR).
The Africa chapter of ISTO, led by Gautier Amoussou (Eco-Bénin / Beninese Federation of Responsible and Solidarity Tourism Organisations) and based in Benin, pursued the following activities during the year 2019:

**Communication activities**

They mainly consist of promoting the exchange of information between African members of ISTO through a “WhatsApp” group. This application is also used to disseminate information produced by ISTO at an international level.

**“Village monde” certification**

The chapter provides support to member organisations with accommodation facilities so that they can obtain the “Village Monde” certification awarded by the eponymous organisation. Its aim is to foster the development of village tourism by promoting accommodations in remote villages and off traditional tours, while respecting the environment and local communities. The certification process takes into account a series of criteria related to the following aspects:

- The quality of accommodation and infrastructure
- Respect, protection and quality of the environment
- The quality of the hospitality, the authenticity and the experience of village life
- Exceptional scenery, accessibility and isolation
- Possible activities
- Socio-economic benefits for the community
- The autonomy, pride and equity index
- The management of the accommodation

**Representation activities**

Representatives of the chapter also participated in a number of events where they were able to talk about ISTO and the value of developing social, responsible and fair tourism on the continent. In this regard, a meeting of Ministers of Tourism of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and experts on the adoption of a regional tourism policy for ECOWAS and the Ecotour 18–28 Action Plan was held in Bamako, Mali, in November 2018.
In addition to the chapter’s collective actions, it is worth acknowledging some of the achievements of members of the section:

**Survey on social tourism in Benin**

In order to develop social tourism in Benin in partnership with Altévoyages asbl as part of a project financed by Wallonie Bruxelles International (WBI), a survey was conducted among private tourism promoters, government bodies, trade unions, employers and employees from the public and private sectors. The purpose of this survey is to assess not only the current and future holiday needs of employees of private organisations and government bodies in Benin, but also the incentive mechanisms put in place by entrepreneurs to boost their employees’ performance.

In a nutshell, this survey shows that Beninese workers are interested in holidays but would like to receive financial guidance and support from their employers as well as government support. The proposal for a holiday voucher was unanimously accepted by the respondents.

**Creation of the Nonvignon training centre in Benin**

Through a new partnership with the association Tourism For Help (TFH), a project to establish a vocational training centre in Benin called “Centre Nonvignon” has been submitted to the Fédération Genévoise de Coopération (FGC) and has been approved. The aim of the project is to set up a vocational training centre with a curriculum and educational tools focused on the needs of the sustainable tourism market in Benin, and generating income for its self-financing, as well as to provide training and professional integration for 160 people (women and young people) in tourism and hotel careers over three years, 75 of them fully supported by the project, and 85 benefiting from reduced tuition fees.

**Tigri Slow Fish Festival in Morocco**

One of the many activities developed by the Amoud association in Morocco is the organisation of the Tigri Slow Fish Festival in the village of Sidi Bou Bounour, in the Tiznit province, which is dedicated to one of the region’s main food resources, traditional shellfish fishing as its name implies. In Amazigh (Berber), the word “tigri” refers both to seafood and the period of the lunar month in which people are fishing. The aim of the event is to promote seafood products to enhance the future of the population. Women play a key role: some thirty female chefs enter the competition for the best seafood dish, based on criteria of tradition, innovation and the use of local resources.
Among the many activities carried out in 2019, some contributed to laying the foundations that should enable ISTO to better position itself, modernise its public profile and attract new public and private stakeholders who share our vision of tourism for the benefit of individuals, communities and local areas to join the organisation.

The implementation of the DNA/SDG within ISTO and among its members, the effective use of new communication tools and the continuation of the ongoing work on social policies for tourism are some of the actions that should be pursued in order to enhance ISTO’s outreach both in countries with a long-standing “Tourism for All” tradition and in those interested in embracing this field.