

Issues that fall within the competence of the Ministry of Environment and Energy

(September 2019)

The –critical to the tourism sector– issues that need to be addressed were discussed at a meeting held on Thursday, 19 September, between the Board of Directors of the Greek Tourism Confederation (SETE) and the leadership of the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

It was agreed that it is **necessary to immediately create a flexible, attractive and sustainable investment environment** that will provide legal certainty while, at the same time, ensuring a high-quality natural and cultural environment as well as social cohesion.

It is to this end that SETE made concrete proposals that can contribute towards enhancing the resilience and attractiveness of the Greek tourism product in an increasingly competitive environment worldwide, invariably taking into account holistic sustainable development and destination management.

Specifically:

A. Spatial planning (Special Spatial Framework for Tourism, Regional Spatial Frameworks)

For decades, the majority of spatial planning procedures have proven to be ineffective –mainly due to time-consuming design and approval procedures, ambiguities, conflicts and overlaps between different levels of spatial plans– and, in the end, inevitably became outdated and obsolete. The study of the Special Spatial Framework for Tourism that is under way, along with updating and ensuring the coherence and compatibility of the Regional Spatial Frameworks which have already been delivered, will contribute to the resolution of this ongoing problem that hampers investments and environmental protection.

B. Urban Planning

B.1. Local Spatial Plans: Due to the diverse geographical nature of Greece, local spatial plans are especially important as they contribute to the delineation of urban planning boundaries and the more specific areas within them, the designation of land uses for each area, the introduction of terms and restrictions to deal with construction outside the urban planning zone, and the creation of a safe framework for investment growth, while protecting and enhancing natural and cultural resources.

B.2. Special Spatial Plans: They provide an extremely useful and flexible planning tool for specific areas with immediate growth prospects. For these areas, we suggest including the use of the **CLUSTERS** tools between companies and private parties, as well as the **land consolidation** tool.

B.3. Urban planning incentives to enhance the competitiveness of tourism superstructures in constructions outside the urban planning zone. Improving the legislation pertaining to the building terms for tourist facilities with a view to providing comfortable and more

comprehensive sites and services as required by the modern clientele without, however, increasing bed capacity might help enhance the competitiveness of Greek hotels from a quality perspective.

C. General space planning guidelines in relation to tourism development and other draft legislations

These include, inter alia, special comments and suggestions regarding: forecasts of the impact of climate change on public infrastructure and properties and contingency measures, the conditional implementation of the Barcelona Protocol on horizontal construction, land use, the placement of forest maps throughout the country, areas of archaeological interest, proposals to simplify the environmental procedure in order to accelerate investment licensing, etc.

Topics:

- Environmental licensing of coastal protection projects
- Barcelona Protocol – distances
- Compatibility of farmland with tourism development
- Environmental Impact Study (EIS) standardization
- Grassland areas and renewal of environmental licensing for existing tourism investments
- Addressing access to tourism investments via unrecognized roads
- Extension of the validity of building permits
- Single urban planning area divided by roads, etc.

D. Terms regarding the New Building Regulations and architecture boards

In many cases, the New Building Regulations introduce **horizontal terms** that do not reflect the needs of special buildings such as tourist facilities. SETE intends to submit comprehensive proposals for hotels as special buildings in order to facilitate the functionality and competitiveness of the tourism product, looking forward to a constructive collaboration.