

MARINE TOURISM, A WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS FOR COASTAL REGIONS



Historically, the sea has been a great economic provider for the people living in coastal regions through many different activities. Today, marine tourism may help the fishing industry get out of its crisis.

Fishing has been the main economic activity for the coastal regions, providing food for the population and a source of income through its commercialization. Currently fishing in Europe is not at its best.

The reasons for its crisis include the increase in diesel prices, European Union aid for ship dismantling, and aging fishermen.

The problem is that there is no generational replacement in the fishing sector. Young people prefer other jobs with less workload and no wage uncertainty since fishermen get their earnings based on the value of their catches.

Crisis and Sustainability

The political measures imposed by the European Union on fishing are not usually well received by fishermen, as they generally imply fewer working days and ever greater reductions in the fishing quotas of certain products.

Nevertheless, these measures are necessary to make the exploitation of fish sustainable, as there has been a decline in the numbers of some species (hake, for example).

The socio-economic and environmental crisis that the fishing sector is experiencing on the Mediterranean coast means that the different administrations (local, regional, state and European) are seeking to promote sustainable fishing in order to guarantee its existence over time.

Lighthouses, Fish Markets and Ports: Marine Tourism

Marine tourism fits well into this perspective. It is a type of tourism that encompasses a wide variety of activities including fishing tourism, visits to lighthouses, fish markets and port facilities, fish auctions, sailor's knots workshops, culinary activities and tastings.

These activities are environmentally friendly, offer an alternative to the traditional sun and beach tourism and, with the exception of fishing-tourism, are designed for all ages.

In addition, they are an opportunity to de-seasonalize the tourist activity, which until now has been mainly concentrated in the months of July and August.

Fishermen for a Day

In fishing tourism, visitors accompany the fishermen during their working days. This activity has become an opportunity for the boat owners to receive extra-economic income and to value and

promote their work, which is often unknown to those who live far from the coast.

Its implementation in several European countries, has forced them to adopt some legal regulations to allow tourists to embark and see how fishermen work.

Future in Sustainable Marine Tourism

As there is a tourist market that demands more experiential and unique activities, marine tourism occupies a privileged position as a business opportunity.

Many coastal areas are beginning to see this type of tourism as an opportunity to innovate their offer and increase their competitiveness compared to other destinations. It also contributes to the preservation of natural resources and heritage elements, both tangible and intangible, linked to fishing.

Finally, marine tourism is a very specific niche, with limited and not massive participation.

For this reason, it can be assumed that the need to ensure physical distance in the wake of the pandemic will increase the demand for alternative tourism products such as marine tourism.

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