

**Codes of conduct, charters of ethics and international declarations for a sustainable development of tourism.
Ethical content and implementation of voluntary initiatives in the tourism sector¹.**

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Abstract : The 90's were marked by a growing number of voluntary initiatives in the tourism sector, taking various forms : codes of conduct, bills of rights, environmental plans, business schemes, check lists, international declarations. After a quick description of the place of ethics in politics and in policy designing, and some reminding of the ethical implications of sustainable development for tourism, this paper questions the diversity of ethical conceptions concerning tourism through the comparison of their content and the analysis of their implementation process. A content analysis of international declarations on tourism, adopted under the auspices of World Tourism Organisation (WTO) since 1980, shows a shift towards more social and environmental concerns, but also persisting contradictions. A comparison of various instruments reveals diverging points of views about "what tourism should be". The analysis of the implementation process of these instruments underlines a problematic attempt of self-regulation of the tourism sector, which led us to distinguish three levels of regulation of the tourism sector in a context of sustainable development : win-win strategies, partnerships between tourism operators and environmental or social actors, and finally more traditional regulation.

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INTRODUCTION

The 90's were marked by a growing number of voluntary initiatives in the tourism sector, with various forms : codes of conduct, bills of rights, environmental plans, business schemes, check lists, international declarations...

Whether they concern tour operators, the accommodation sector, host communities, overall destinations or tourist themselves, whether they deal with business relationships, impact of tourism on local and global environment or with its socio-cultural effect on host communities, these instruments have in common :

- to call consciously or unconsciously for an ethic different from the short term routine of "business as usual", i.e. a willingness to tackle external issues of the tourism business, beyond the casual activity of firms;
- to rely on a voluntary- commitment, and furthermore, to advocate a self-regulation of the tourism sector rather than a more traditional regulation.

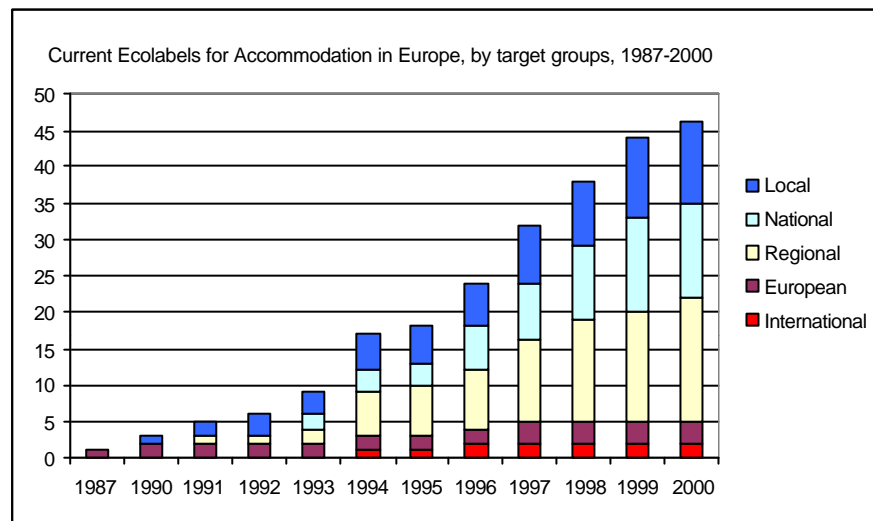


Figure 1: Current Ecolabels for accommodation in Europe, by target groups, 1987-2000
Source: ECOTRANS- ECO-TIP database

Meanwhile, tourism has to face the challenge of sustainability. Although tourism is neither mentioned in the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, nor in the Brundtland report, we identified, among the major issues raised by the idea of sustainable development, two main challenges : the growing contribution of tourism to greenhouse gas emissions, mainly through transports, and its problematic contribution to the development of Southern countries.

These ethical commitments of tourism operators, given the weakness of national policies for tourism, appear as the main response of this sector to the challenge of sustainable development. But beyond a formal compliance with a general recommendation of the Agenda 21- chapter 30, "*Business and Industry, including transnational corporations, [...] should be encouraged to adopt and report on the implementation of codes of conduct promoting best environmental practices*", what is the effective content of these codes of conduct ? Does a confrontation of these different documents point out a convergence towards a common idea of the future of the tourism sector ? Does this content comply with Agenda 21, or does it leave it aside ? What is the efficiency of codes of conduct for tourism ? What does the call for

a self-regulation of the tourism sector reveal about its governance ? One can guess that beyond the rhetorical excess, obvious in some discourse, this current debates reflects emerging issues which may determine the future regulatory context of tourist activity.

After a quick description of the place of ethics in politics and in policy designing, and some reminding of the ethical implications of sustainable development for tourism, this paper questions the diversity of ethical conceptions concerning tourism through the comparison of their content and the analysis of their implementation process.

METHODS

Ethics in Politics, Ethics as a Background for Public Policies

First, one might think that the issue of the ethical involvement of tourism operators only concern their own altruist practices, voluntary initiatives, and finally, charity (or charity business). But what is really at stake for the marketing of the tourism industry or the public management of tourism, in the current context of globalisation, could be somewhere else.

We actually chose to consider ethics in its broadest sense, i.e. a philosophical enquiry into values which is present in any policy or individual action. Therefore, ethics shouldn't be considered merely as the field of action of a few motivated tourism operators, or as an argument to reach a part of a segmented market, as for ecotourism operators², but as a discussion more or less conscious about the purpose of one's action, and as a search of its collective justification. Indeed, more or less consciously, the ethical debate is always present in the political argumentation or in market forces. Through the analysis of ethical instruments in the field of tourism, we seek the leading ethical foundations conducting current tourism development, and its private and public regulation.

Contrary to morals, which principally deals with individuals, values and principles, ethics is a more collective and pragmatic notion, which attempts to rationalize a collective action and its consequences. As Bowman thinks, quoted by (Hultsman 1995), “ [...] *ethics reside between, the 'is' and the 'ought'* ”. If ethics often calls for moral principles in its search of justice, we must keep in mind that a collective value can be based upon a moral vice, just like economic relationships between individuals are based upon egoism. Ethics is related to various philosophical foundations (be it relativism, the Kantian perspective or Rawls' theory of justice (Fennel and Malloy 1999, op.cit.)), but also to concrete contents and practices : *‘It also seems, however, that any code of ethical practices [...], needs to be grounded in a more paradigmatic footing. As Johnston suggested, while it is possible to develop ethical practices without such a paradigmatic footing, having a basic or foundational grounding for ethics can preclude problems caused by ‘zealous but ignorant moral reformers’. This grounding would serve as the basis, the foundation, or the underlying principle, for ‘widely accepted industry standards and practices’* (Hultsman 1995, op. cit.). This dissertation insists on the concrete contents and practices of ethics rather than on a search of this ethical foundation .

² A few works showed the difference of implications of tourism operators within the ethical debate, from an attitude of acceptance to the market forces regulation, to a more willing attitude. Fennel and Malloy (Fennel and Malloy 1999) studied the ethical commitment of operators among selected ecotourism, adventure, fishing, cruise line and golf courses.

Ethics is usually more or less stabilised, interiorised in a regulatory context, discussed for example when the parliament adopts a law, and more broadly contested by various social movements. Both ethical arguments and the confrontation of interests (either market, vote, negotiation or demonstration) take part in the evolution of this regulatory context. Wider ethical debates arise, when new problems and newly considered unfair situations occur, and when communities are unable to solve these new problems with previously defined responses. The reason why ethics progressively penetrated the debates about environmental problems, is that the environment and the sustainable development concept raised in an unprecedented way several questions involving either “nature”, future generations, or distant countries in a global perspective (equity in North/ South relationships).

Our hypothesis is that operators seldom act following an altruist maxim, but act within a regulatory context (law, market rules) which is impressed by ethics. New practices of tour operators, NGO’s or international organisations’ opinions about tourism, suggest the likely evolution of this regulatory context. Therefore, ethical practices of members of the Tourism industry are not interesting by themselves, but by their ability to push to the elaboration of a new political agenda for the tourism sector. By discussing the purpose of tourism, its undesired impacts and its inequity, they reveal the political debate about tourism. Therefore, they show the state of the current and future governance of the tourism sector.

The Ethical Implications of Sustainable Development

Don’t forget the Rio declaration ! The sources of a misunderstanding

“Sustainable development has survived almost a decade of rhetorical excess and academic scepticism” (Lafferty 1996). It remains, at least in discourses, the basic foundation of numerous public policies and initiatives in the field of tourism. However, even if we should not go so far as to say that most of current discourses on sustainable development have nothing to do with its initial inspiration, it seems that a more or less deliberate wrong perception, of the implication of Rio conference, of the global project and the global ethics it contains, is the source of a current confusion in debates.

Indeed, when one read official publications on sustainable development, it seems that the persisting reference to *“a development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*, (Brundtland report definition, WCED, 1987), should be considered as sufficient to prove that everyone shares a common concern. That is by no means obvious.

Before all, sustainable development is a concept driven by international concerns, which appeared to take into account environment and development global issues : the persisting poverty in Southern countries, the increase of inequality between developed and developing countries, the greenhouse effect, the depletion of non renewable resources. The international community answered these questions through a principle which is in fact less ambiguous than it seems. The lines following the famous definition quoted above state that *“ [...] It contains within it two keys concepts: the concept of ‘needs’, in particular needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priorities should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs”*

The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development is on the same line : priority to the development of Southern countries (articles 5 and 6), responsibility of developed countries to fight against pollution (article 7), and priority to long term and global issues. To summarize, there is no decent development without a healthy environment, and *‘In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have **common but differentiated responsibilities**. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit to sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command’* (article 7). In that conception, social relationships within and between States, between present and future generations should be controlled by an equity principle. Sustainable development appears as a more normative than analytic concept, with operational objectives gathered in the 40 chapters of Agenda 21. *«There is [in Agenda 21] a theoretical foundation describing the relationship between man and nature; there are limited number of integrated guiding principles; there is a clear identification of problems to be solved and the actors who must take responsibility for solving them; ant there is a multifaceted ant relatively specific agenda for change’* (Lafferty 1996, p. 190) .

In official documents concerning sustainable development (national strategies, local Agenda 21, sector-related programs), it is often surprising to note that specific issues, whether local or sector-oriented, often take the best over the basic principle of global equity and over global environmental constraints. The need to deal with global pollution is usually mentioned (but how high is its priority ranked?) whereas underdevelopment issues generally disappear, as well as the concern with future generations.

The main reason of that shortfall is that whereas sustainable development is primarily the affirmation of a global project, it is also a method for approaching environment and development relationships, the specificity of which lies in an assessment of environmental and social externalities, and in a stress put on long term prospects.

This attractive method can be implemented non only on a global scale, but also on local scales, or specific issues, sometimes seeming very distant from the general issues of the Rio Conference : i.e specific stakes of a community, or long term profitability of the tourism sector for instance. The divergence with initial objectives of sustainable development occurs when these *internal* concerns exceed *external* constraints and global concerns : tourism doesn't question anymore its contribution to global warming, or its ability to foster the development of Southern countries. This progressive divergence of point of views explains that stakeholders believe they share common concerns, while it is not the case. *Although sustainable development ultimately makes sense on a global scale it remains that currently each category of stakeholders assess it relatively to its own objectives and priorities.*

It is far from being sure that the Agenda 21 project is a shared preoccupation and priority, which may explain the former statements. However, given the apparent consensus about Brundtland report and Agenda 21 in all academic and operational production about the sustainable tourism development, we propose to clarify its implications for tourism.

Global ethics ?

“Rio was, as expected, a forum in which the reference to morals was broader than in other international conferences”³ (Antoine, Barrère et al. 1994, p.15)

³ Personal translation

William Lafferty sees within Agenda 21 a pragmatic and a realistic inspiration on the one hand, and a consensual inspiration on the other. The former comes from the growing scientific consensus about global threats, such as the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer depletion, biodiversity loss or desertification for instance⁴. The latter is a consequence of the democratic consensus expressed in Rio and extended to other levels (In the Maastricht treaty or the Action Program of the European Union for instance). The stronger the democratic consensus is, the stronger the call for ethics is. These two inspirations show once again the very pragmatic nature of ethics, as an attempt to rationalize a collective action in a specific context. « *A foundation has been laid which ideological purists may reject, and cynical politicians exploit, but which normative pragmatism can and should work with* » (Lafferty 1996, op. cit.). According to Lafferty, Scientists can take part in the translation of this project into local or sector-related objectives compatible with global constraints, but their task is also to point out the diverging points of views about sustainable development so as to clarify their implications.

Questioning tourism through sustainable development.

Although Agenda 21 doesn't refer to tourism, its recommendations and objectives question this activity.

The first global issue is the impact of tourism on energy consumption, atmospheric pollution, and the emission of greenhouse gas. Tourism managers have to consider the contribution of their activity to the growing mobility of modern societies, and consequently its contribution to the emissions of Greenhouse gas and global warming. In its recent publication "Tourisme, Environnement, Territoires : les indicateurs" (Rechatin, Dubois et al. 2000), the French Institute for the Environment estimated within a range from 7 to 8 percent the contribution of the transportation of domestic and international tourists visiting France to the total amount of French emissions, figure to which the emissions of accommodation, equipments as well as indirect emissions (merchandise delivery...) should be added. Forecasts show a growing contribution of tourism to these emissions, mainly due to the growth of international tourism. We must remind that France committed itself, according to the Kyoto protocol, to stabilise its emissions to their level in 1990. Therefore, transports could reveal a major gap between tourism and sustainability, given the numerous environmental problems linked to their development : greenhouse effect, use of non renewable fossil energy sources, air pollution, noise, fragmentation of natural habitats. According to a recent OECD report (OECD 2000), air transport is likely to exceed road transport in its contribution to global warming from 2010 to 2040. On the other hand, the consequences of global warming on tourism have been recently studied : modification of climatic amenities (lack or snow, excess heat in some sunny areas), beach erosion, coral bleaching or health risks (malaria) have been pointed out (Ceron 1999).

Secondly, we must question whether tourism can foster development in Southern countries, in the context of a global market dominated by northern operators, and in which tourists travel mainly between developed countries. Detailing in this paper the relationships between tourism and development would be off-topic. However, it is clear that the domination of the global market by Northern operators underlines their responsibility for pollution, and introduces questions about the measures which could bridge the gap between developed and developing countries. Transfer of technologies (article 9 of the Rio declaration) like Internet or Global distribution systems (GDS), the impact of transnational

⁴ All these issues are contained in corresponding international conventions.

corporations in the developing world, transfer of knowledge and know-how to SMEs, or deregulation and free trade (GATTs) consequences on the competitive conditions between destinations are at stake.

Analysing the Concrete Contents and the Effective Implementation of Ethical Instruments

The basic material of this study consists in various types of documents. The criteria for selection were the existence of an explicit ethical concern within operational measures, but also the expression of a global vision of “what tourism should be”, in international declarations for instance. An important part of these documents were partly reproduced and synthesised in two UNEP technical reports “Environmental Codes of conducts for tourism”(UNEP-IE 1993) and “Ecolabels in the tourism industry” (UNEP-IE 1995) ; electronic and conventional bibliographic sources were used to gather more recent ones.

We only used in this survey official documents: final declaration, charters, labels descriptions, recommendations, official programs of campaigns...Indeed, drafts, reports or research papers express rather their authors’ personal opinion about ethics and tourism than a consensus on a conception of ethics within an institution (WTO, national government, companies), in which we are interested. To enlarge this study, it would be necessary to undertake an analysis of scientific conceptions of the sustainability of tourism, and of their underlying ethical prerequisites. The purpose would be to analyse the “translation” of the concept of sustainable development in this particular activity.

More than 60 experiences (listed in the following exhibit) with an “ethical content” have been identified, which constitute only a sample of those existing. So, several potential sources have not been exploited (WCSD final report on tourism, or European Union action plan for tourism for instance).

The meaning and reality of an ethics of tourism have been explored through an analysis concerning:

1. their origin and philosophical background ;
2. their content ;
3. their projects, the stakeholders they rely on, and the follow up mechanism they introduce which appeared to be a key point of the research.

Point 1. is trying to provide an overview of all identified initiatives. In 2. and 3., we concentrated on a few representative examples.

A manual content analysis was conducted, through a literal reading of the documents, in order to provide a synoptic view of these instruments, and a comparative approach. Six categories (with subcategories) of ethical concerns have been defined, because they were often cited in codes of conducts, or because they could logically be considered as part of a sustainable development process (North/ South relationships for example). Many categorisations of ethical concerns can be defined (Hultsman 1995, op. cit.), in this paper the selected items refers as far as possible to sustainable development. These categories are: the right to rest and leisure, freedom to travel ; influence of tourism on host communities ; the

⁶ Personal translation

⁷ All these issues are contained in corresponding international conventions.

social rights of tourism workers ; the protection of the local and global environment, the management of tourism resources ; the recognition of the economic role of tourism ; North/South relationships and share of tourism benefits. A detailed analysis of subcategories made possible a more accurate approach, for example about environmental conceptions of stakeholders (see Figure 5).

The main difficulties encountered were :

- the various forms (size, content...) of the basic material. These documents sometimes give a quite brief overview of a definite theme, even in proportion to their size. We translated this by using a light to dark background for the items : light in the case of simple citation, medium if the document was more detailed, dark if the issue was often mentioned, or if the document proposed precise and complete recommendations.
- the opposition between the substantial and procedural approach of sustainability, which sometimes rendered the comparison difficult. The first approach provides detailed concrete measures, the second one is dealing with the decision process, like participation, monitoring and evaluation, education and research, integration of the environment, planning... This a classical dichotomy in sustainable development approaches (Levarlet 1999). A wide range of documents exist between these two conceptions.

Documents analysed in the survey

1. UNEP- IE, *Environmental Codes of Conduct for Tourism*, Technical report N° 29 1993.

1. International Chamber of Commerce: *Business Charter for Sustainable Development*
2. *The World Travel and Tourism Council's Environmental Guidelines*
3. The Ecotourism Society: *Ecotourism guidelines*
4. *Canada's code of Ethics and Guidelines*
5. The Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum: *Charter for Environmental Action in the International Hotel and Catering Industry*. (<http://www.ihei.org>)
6. *Sustainable Tourism: the challenge of the 1990s for Finnish tourism*
7. New Zealand, *Principles for the Tourism Industry*
8. Travel Industry Association of America : *Things business can do*
9. *Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) code for environmentally responsible tourism*
10. World Wildlife Fund (WWF): *Tourism Concern Principles for Sustainable Tourism*
11. *Australia Code of Environmental Practice*
12. Alliance internationale de tourisme/ Fédération internationale de l'automobile : *Charter of Ethics for tourism and the environment* <http://www.fia.com>
13. England: *Principles for Balanced Development*
14. The Africa Travel Association: *Ecotourism Manifesto*
15. *The International Youth Hostels Federation Environmental Charter*
16. *Guidance for those organizing and conducting tourism and non governmental activities in the Antarctic*
17. *The Mauritian code of Ethics for tourism: for Mauritians*
18. *We, the Responsible Host Association*
19. American Society of Travel Agents in Association with Club Med: *Ten commandments on ecotourism*
20. *The Himalayan Tourist Code*
21. Trinidad and Tobago: *guide for turtle watching*
22. *Welcome to Heidelberg*
23. English Tourism Board: *20 tips for visitors*
24. American Automobile Association: *Environmental tips for world trips*
25. *Guidance for visitors to the Antarctic*
26. European Tour Operators Association: *Guidelines for the visitor*
27. *Save our Planet's guidelines for low impact vacations*
28. *Credo of the peaceful traveller*
29. ICOMOS: *Charter of cultural tourism*

30. *Welcome to Australia*

2. International organisations

1. WTO/OMT, *Manila Declaration on World Tourism*, October, 10, 1980, <http://www.world-tourism.org/Sustainb/SustHom.htm>
2. WTO/OMT, *The World Tourist Meeting : Acapulco Document*, August, 27, 1982
3. WTO/OMT, *Tourism bill of rights and tourist code*, Sofia, September, 26, 1985
4. WTO/OMT, *The Hague Declaration on Tourism*, April, 14, 1989
5. WTO/OMT, *WTO statement on the prevention of organized sex tourism*, October 1995
6. World Conference on Sustainable tourism, *Charter for Sustainable tourism*, Lanzarote, April, 28, 1995
7. Conférence internationale sur le tourisme et le développement durable en Méditerranée, *Déclaration de Calvia*, April, 19, 1997
8. UNEP et AIIHA/ *Environmental Action Pack for Hotels*
9. Plan d'action pour la Méditerranée/ PNUE, *Tourisme et développement durable*, Malte 1999
10. WTO/OMT, *Global code of ethics for tourism*, October, 1, 1999
11. Nations Unies- Conseil Economique et Social- Commission du développement durable, septième session, avril 1999, *Tourisme et développement durable. Rapport du Secrétaire Général*.
12. Programme d'action pour la Méditerranée, Agenda Med21, Chapitre XXXXI, Gestion d'un tourisme compatible avec le développement durable

3. Outside Europe

1. Association des producteurs en tourisme d'aventure du Québec (APTAQ), *Code d'éthique*.
<http://www.aptaq.qc.ca>
2. Costa Rica Tourism Institute, *Certification in Sustainable Tourism Program*
3. *South Australian Design Guide for Sustainable Development*
4. *Agenda 21 for Baltic Sea Region Tourism*, August 1997, http://www.surfnet.fi/agenda21/tour_rep.html
5. Kiskeya Alternative certification program, <http://www.kiskeya-alternative.org/certif/>
6. Green Globe: The Worldwide Certification Programme for Sustainable Travel & Tourism,
<http://www.greenglobe.org/>
7. Tour operators initiative for sustainable tourism development, avec PNUE, Unesco, OMT,
<http://www.toinitiative.org/>

4. Europe

1. Travel Agents and Tour operators in Europe, *Déclaration d'Ectaa contre le tourisme sexuel impliquant des enfants* http://www.ectaa.org/sex_tourism_fr.html
2. Environmental Management Service (ministère fédéral allemand), *The Green Book of Tourism*
3. Grande Bretagne: The Green Tourism Business Scheme, <http://www.greentourism.org.uk/>
4. Eco-tip: répertoire de bonnes pratiques sur le tourisme et l'environnement, <http://www.eco-tip.org>
5. Calvia Agenda Local 21, <http://www.bitel.es/dir~calvia/kagenda.htm>
6. Conseil de l'Europe- Comité des ministres aux Etats membres, *Recommandation n°R 94 (7) relative à une politique générale de développement d'un tourisme durable et respectueux de l'environnement*.

5. France

1. Atalante : *Charte éthique du voyageur*, <http://www.atalante.fr>
2. Fédération des Parcs Naturels Régionaux: *Les gîtes Panda: une démarche partenariale pour un concept basé sur le développement durable*
3. Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France : *Charte d'adhésion des "Hôtels au Naturel"*
4. Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France/ Europarc : *Charte européenne du tourisme durable dans les espaces protégés, version définitive*, juin 1998, <http://www.parcs-naturels-régionaux.tm.fr>
5. Fédération pour l'éducation à l'environnement en Europe/ Fédération française de naturisme : Campagne Les clefs vertes, <http://clefsvertes.iffrance.com>
6. Fédération française des Stations Vertes et des Villages de Neige: *Charte des stations vertes de vacances*.
stations.vert@wanadoo.fr
7. Pavillon bleu d'Europe, *Questionnaire campagne 2000* , <http://www.blueflag.org>
8. Center Parcs, *Dossier de presse Automne Hiver 1999*, <http://www.centerparcs.com>
9. Accueil paysan: l'Ethique
10. Clévacances : *Charte de qualité*, infos@clevacances.com
11. Assemblée permanente des Chambres d'Agriculture. Label Bienvenue à la ferme,
<http://paris.apca.chambagri.fr/apca/default.htm>
12. Pays d'accueil touristiques: Le réseau du tourisme vert
13. Les plus beaux villages de France: Charte de qualité 1998
14. ACCOR: La charte environnement de l'hôtelier, <http://www.accor.com>

Ministère de l'Environnement, Réserves naturelles de France, *Code de bonne conduite du visiteur de réserve naturelle*.

FINDINGS

Philosophical Orientations and Role of Interest Groups in the Elaboration of Ethical Instruments

First, as expected, ethical instruments are quite diverse. The main explanation of this diversity arises from the evolution of the parties involved. After a period during which documents focused on the responsibility of States, more recent and current approaches aim at corporate business and local destinations, with a growing implication of NGO's (like *WWF*, *Tourism concern*, *Tourism for Development* or *Groupe Developpement* in France). On the contrary of what occurs in an economic sector like agriculture or energy, the particularity of the ethical debates in tourism is that they emerge principally from the business sector and the civil society. This situation can be explained by the very late recognition of tourism as the "first global industry" with huge associated impacts on communities and their environments.

The ethical inspiration of the documents is a mix between of a few driving forces, principally :

- Business operators, looking forward to internal rules for their activity, to market new products or to manage their corporate image. Another argument for a growing implications of the business sector, especially of the transnational corporations, is the environmental awareness of consumers and host communities, which led operators to adopt proactive instruments. These initiatives are obviously related to various pressures : as a Go and Haywood study reports (Go and Haywood 1990, quoted by Hultsman) a general growth of interest in tourism marketing has coincided with a commensurate expansion of concern about the negative effects - social, environmental, economic, cultural- and of attempts to generate tourist traffics through marketing.
- The ecological movement : this term refers to NGOs and associations involved in nature conservation, which were sometimes blamed for not paying attention enough to human communities. Raphaël and Catherine Larrere (Larrère 1997) relate their philosophy to north-American Puritanism (a moral imperative to preserve the remains of the original Nature). These groups carry a negative perception of tourism and usually show a strong scepticism about its positive impacts. However, their recent implication in the field of tourism is real (see, for instance, WWF's works about tourism and biodiversity), even if it's qualified with a lot of caution. These organisations often campaign for a nature-based tourism, or ecotourism, likely to provide funds and justification for nature conservation. Therefore, they are not interested in tourism for itself, but as a way of... protecting species as well as natural habitats. They certainly have a propensity to the management of tourism in protected areas.
- The environmentalist movement, is historically more related to the Third World movement⁸ than the latter, and more linked to international organisations. This movement, which is looking for a way of harmonizing environment and development, since the Stockholm conference (1971), clearly prepared, through the idea of "écodéveloppement"(Sachs 1981) the emergence of the concept of sustainable development (Godard 1994). Among the main ideas raised by

⁸ See for example the Third World Network, and its opinion on tourism : <http://www.twinside.org.sg/>

environmentalists, we can underline the search for an alternative to liberalism, and more broadly speaking for societal and environmental criteria or choices rather than economic criteria, a willingness to let local societies control their development (and their tourism development). Economic benefits of tourism in the Third World are generally regarded with a strong scepticism. Environmentalists share with anthropologists a denunciation of the destruction of host communities by tourism. Actually, most of the ethical implications of sustainable development are rooted in this movement (see *supra*), even if the most radical point of views can coexist with the most pragmatic ones.

- We can finally mention a less widespread movement, concerning countries the native people of which suffered from occidental colonisation. In New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the revival of indigenous people culture deeply impresses the ethical thinking of the tourism sector, all the more that under Agenda 21, Indigenous Peoples are considered a "Major Group"⁹.

Among these movements, a major differentiation rests on the scale of the various parties' actions. Among NGO's for instance, WWF or Tourism Concern have a world wide presence and action, whereas others are much more local, and will insist on themes such as tourist behaviour towards host communities, share of tourist benefits with local population. The environment will also be approached from a local perspective: tourism shouldn't threaten the resources upon which everyday life of the host population is based. In the competition for resources, the first settlers should come first. That's why tourism in developing countries will be often considered in a very negative way, owing to its disturbance of a traditional order and despite positive impacts on regional or national economies. Many examples of these very highly localised tourism studies can be found in academic research, sometimes pushing the argument too far (Place 1998). These local associations occasionally stand apart from Northern environmentalists, denying the right of Northern countries to impose their environmental norms on Southern countries, since the major contributors to global pollution are developed countries.

In practice, recent initiatives like eco labelling or certification often show a partnership between these different movements. Thanks to this partnership, a business operator is supposed to gain an environmental legitimacy, and a NGO some efficiency for its campaign, through the marketing and promotional abilities of the operator. In France, such a cooperation between WWF and the *Fédération of Gîtes de France* (which organises self-catering accommodation and B&B in rural areas) led to the implementation of "Gîtes Panda" in protected areas. On the contrary, independent hotels found it advantageous to join the brand "Hôtels au naturel", and benefited from the promotion and selling forces of the French Federation of Regional Natural Parks (the brand "natural parks" is very attractive for tourists). The environmental code of conduct for tourist of the *Guide du Routard* was also elaborated with WWF.

Towards a Common Future for the Tourism Sector ?

The assertion according to which "*As theses [ethical] discourses continue and nourish one another, it is natural to anticipate the emergence of a common ground of ethics for tourism*

⁹ See for example : *New Zealand principles for the tourism industry*; *Australian Tourism Industry Association: Code of environmental practices*; *Africa Travel Association : Manifesto*

services” (Hultsman 1995, op.cit.) needs to be confronted to empirical research. Indeed, the hypothesis that discourses are powerful enough to conciliate or to relegate interests conflicts can be questioned.

The evolution of the ethics of tourism in a global forum: WTO

The evolution of WTO declarations was first analysed (Figure 2), from the Manila Declaration in 1980, to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism in 1999 (the selected declarations are exposed in the WTO Web site in a “Sustainable Development” chapter: <http://www.world-tourism.org>).

	WTO, Manila Declaration on World Tourism, October, 10, 1980	WTO, The World Tourist Meeting : Acapulco Document, August, 27, 1982	WTO, Tourism bill of rights and tourist code, Sofia, September, 26, 1985	WTO, The Hague Declaration on Tourism, April, 14, 1989	WTO, Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, October, 1, 1999
Right to rest and leisure, freedom to travel					
Influence of tourism on host communities					
Social rights of tourism workers					
Protection of the local and global environment, management of tourism resources					
Recognition of the economic role of tourism					
North/ South relationships and share of tourism benefits					

Figure 2 : Evolution of international declarations on tourism since 1980
From no citation in the declaration (white), to strong citation (black)

Although the 90’s obviously showed an evolution of the ethical debate -from a persisting claim for a recognition of the economic role of tourism and of the right to rest and leisure, to recent approaches more devoted to the social and environmental impacts of tourism- a more detailed analysis will point out contradictions within these ambitious objectives.

The affirmation of a right to rest and leisure as a factor of personal accomplishment (which implies, according to the authors of the Declarations themselves, that the development of transports should be encouraged) is constant since the Manila Declaration on World Tourism, as well as the recognition of the role of tourism in the World economy. The statement of a liberal base to tourism development is more recent, and culminates in the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, with numerous quotation : “[...] *the world tourism industry as a whole has much to gain by operating in an environment that favours the market economy, private enterprise and free trade [...]*”, “[...] *sustainable tourism is by no means incompatible with the growing liberalization of the conditions governing trade in services [...]*”. The objective is “*to promote an equitable, responsible and sustainable world tourism order, whose benefits will be shared by all sectors of society in the context of an open and liberalized international economy*”.

Concerning the social dimension, only social tourism is mentioned in the *Manila Declaration*. The *Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourist Code* adopted in Sofia in 1985 marked a

turning point in taking into account host communities interests, especially through the denunciation of sex tourism and drug tourism. The reference to environmental concerns remained very allusive until the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*. We noted an inclination to denounce rather threats for tourism (wars, terrorism...), than negative impacts of tourism, except the most obvious ones (the only admitted limitations to the development of tourism concern protected areas, the impact of tourists transportation on the environment are never mentioned...).

The more significant example is that the contribution of tourism to global warming through transports (as explained before), or the role of tourism in developing countries are never approached in WTO declarations, which is surprising, given the role of global forum of WTO. Concerning greenhouse effect, we noted contradictions: is the claim for a continuous growth of the tourism sector, in a free barrier freedom of travel, compatible with the limitations of greenhouse gas caused by transports ? Neither limits to tourism activity (except in protected areas, and with allusions to carrying capacity of destinations), nor promotion of environmentally friendly means of transportation¹⁰ are introduced. Generally speaking, WTO seems reluctant to consider most of the issues that may threaten the liberal growth of tourism, which is somehow logical for an institution whose activity is primarily dedicated to the promotion of tourism. In that perspective, we wonder whether WTO is the most credible to discuss the implications of sustainable development for tourism.

To conclude, WTO *Global Code of Ethics* is a considerable attempt to synthesise most of ethical concerns raised by tourism development. However, the synthesis conceals major contradictions : how to conciliate the promotion of transports and the limitation of global warming, free trade and liberalism with a more efficient regulation ? What about the developing world ? This attitude is very symptomatic of an internal sector-related attitude. WTO contributed to the recognition of the right to leisure and the place of tourism in the modern world, it will be just as indispensable in the future to tackle sustainable development problems insofar as they don't question tourism development (eco management of hotels...). However, will it be able to discuss of collective issues, external issues, that might question its expansion ? Some of the most important issues seem finally revealed by these internal contradictions or meaningful silences.

Diverging point of views about the future of tourism

We used in the second analysis the same methods to compare various instruments (the ethical charter for travellers of a small tour operator, an ethical charter for tourism in protected areas, a green label for accommodation, the environmental plan of an international corporation, international declarations on sustainable tourism). The comparison underlines the diversity of projects, contents and stakeholders, and puts the stress on the diverging conceptions about the future of tourism.

Explanations of the divergences of contents can be found firstly in differences of projects and aims (see *supra*), but also in what Colin Hunter (Hunter 1997) calls the “adaptive nature” of sustainable tourism : “[...] *different interpretations of sustainable development are appropriate under different circumstances*”, even if it is clear that the sustainability of tourism ultimately makes sense on a global scale. For example, insisting on economic aspects of sustainability rather than on environmental or social concerns, or the opposite, depends *in*

¹⁰ A preference given to train rather than plane for regional trip, to long holidays rather than to short trip, for instance

fine, of the kind of natural habitats or societies concerned. In protected areas, tourism will have to be “*Environment-led Tourism*”, related to a strong interpretation of sustainability, whereas in a mature urban destination, it might be a “*Tourism Imperative*”, or “*Product-led Tourism*”. For definite territories, with particular types of critical natural capital, tourism development might be excluded (McKercher 1993). In our present study, it is somehow normal that the *European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas* insist more on nature protection and biodiversity than others. The difference would be the same between a fragile host society and its desire to prevent the negative effects of tourism, and a society used to tourism.

However, these differences of approaches also show latent contradictions about the “what tourism should be”. The question of global equity between destination and the existence of differentiated responsibilities of developed and developing countries towards sustainable development, is only raised by the *Calvia Declaration on Tourism and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean*. It argues that “*During the thirty past years, 80% of tourism development, concentrated in the North-West of the Mediterranean, which induces two different situations : the most developed areas have to renounce the unlimited growth and to restore human-made and natural heritage. In emerging areas, the development of sustainable initiatives, will enable to avoid the deterioration of their resources and will guarantee the viability of their future*”¹¹. Neither the *Charter on Sustainable Tourism* nor the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* refers to this issue. In the same way, the contribution of tourism to greenhouse effect is only raised by the *The Environment Charter of the Hotelier* (but merely about accommodation), and by the *Charter of Adhesion to the "Hôtels au Naturel" Group*, though global warming is a global concern which could challenge each category of stakeholders. We think that these omissions reveal potential conflicts about the key issues of sustainable development applied to tourism.

	Atalante TO : Charter of Ethics for the Traveller	European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, definitive version, June 1998	WTO, Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, October, 1, 1999	ACCOR: The Environment Charter of the Hotelier	Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France : Charter of Adhesion to the "Hôtels au Naturel" Group	Calvia Declaration on Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, April, 19, 1997	Charter on Sustainable Tourism, Lanzarote, April, 28, 1995
Right to rest and leisure, freedom to travel							
Influence of tourism on host communities							
Social rights of tourism workers							
Protection of the local and global environment, management of tourism resources							
Recognition of the economic role of tourism							
North/ South relationships and share of tourism benefits							

Figure 3 : comparison of main ethical categories for various instruments

¹¹ Personal translation from French version of the Charter

Detailed approach of “Protection of the local and global environment, management of tourism resources” category	Atalante TO : Charter of Ethics for the Traveller	European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, definitive version, June 1998	WTO, Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, October, 1, 1999	ACCOR: The Environment Charter of the Hotelier	Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France : Charter of Adhesion to the "Hôtels au Naturel" Group	Calvia Declaration on Tourism and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, April, 19, 1997	Charter on Sustainable Tourism, Lanzarote, April, 28, 1995
Waste management							
Water management							
Energy consumption							
Contribution to greenhouse effect							
Nature protection and biodiversity							
Landscapes							
Cultural heritage							
Impacts of transports on the environment							
Limitation of air or road traffic							
Limitation of construction							
Action on spatial and temporal concentration							
Limitation of tourism development when appropriate							

Figure 4 : detailed comparison of subcategories of the “Protection of the local and global environment, management of tourism resources” for various instruments. The same kind of analysis (unpublished) exists for other categories.

The Implementation Gap: which Future Governance for the Tourism Sector ?

The type of regulation needed in the tourism sector depends on :

- the kind of issue tourism has to face: for instance, greenhouse effect raises very complex questions with a numerous stakeholders involved in various time-space scales, whereas water management of resorts appears more local and supply-oriented;
- the regulatory context, deeply impressed by the current globalisation ;
- an organisational perspective : if the tourism supply is dominated by Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), major hierarchical corporations, or networks of independent operators based on voluntary agreements, the implementation process won't be the same.

Communication, raising the social or environmental awareness of stakeholders are targets by themselves. However, it seems necessary now to settle efficient instruments, without which sustainable development will remain a simple catchword.

Identification of projects and stakeholders

One of the main reasons explaining the differences in the content of the documents studied is the wide variety of projects. A tour operator or a hotel chain who wants to provide

environmental guidelines with concrete targets and actions to its members will be necessary less ambitious in its objectives than an international organisation (like the Council of Europe, the Commission of Sustainable Development or WTO), whose purpose is to disseminate its vision of “what tourism should be”. Indeed, the latter do not have to report their performance or the degree of achievement of their objectives. Usually, the more ambitious the objectives are, the less detailed are the concrete measures to adopt.

Particularly, one can discern two attitudes towards ethics of tourism, which induce two attitudes towards the implementation process. On one hand, operators, or groups of operators, are trying to rule their own activity (*Environment Plan of Accor Group, Environmental certification ISO 14001 of Center Parcs, International Tour Operators Initiative*), which suppose, in theory, a strong commitment, and possibly a fast implementation. On the other hand, other groups, like NGO's or actors of civil society, relying on various legitimacies, pretend to regulate other actors' activity, sometimes without questioning their own. The International Federation of Automobile, for instance, claims a better integration of tourism development, without taking into account the contribution of automobile to greenhouse effects or others environmental issues.

Most of the projects can be divided among a few categories :

- Codes of conduct within a particular profession. The logic is sector-oriented, and the environment often a secondary priority. The prior assumptions of the *Business Charter for Sustainable Development* of the International Chamber of Commerce are economic growth and profits, which aren't supposed to be questioned because of environmental issues¹². The main objectives are relationships with consumers, innovation, the environment. Internal rules (proper to the activity concerned) usually surpass external rules.
- Environmental codes of conduct for operators, which insist on particular aspects of the environment : water or air quality management, waste¹³, or biodiversity¹⁴.
- Integrated instruments for a sustainable tourism¹⁵, trying in an unique document to combine social, economic and environmental concerns.
- Codes of conduct and Charters aiming at the behaviour of tourists in the destinations. The selected themes concern the attitude of tourists towards local environment and host communities, with a strong concern for sex tourism¹⁶.
- A more anecdotic category tends to inform and educate the resident population about the adequate attitude towards tourists. Host communities are supposed to smile, not to exploit the visitors, to keep their house clean...¹⁷

Moreover, beyond projects, recent years showed an evolution of the kind of stakeholder involved, or supposed to be involved, in the sustainable development of tourism. Since 1980, host communities, tourists, the civil society (NGO's, trade unions) and, more surprisingly

¹² On this particular point, the *Global Code of Ethics* of WTO, or *The Canadian Code of Ethics* adopt the same perspective.

¹³ *The World Travel & Tourism Council's Environmental Guideline ; Charter for Environmental Action in the International Hotel and Catering Industry*

¹⁴ *Ecotourism Guidelines*

¹⁵ *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* of WTO, *Finnish Tourist Board Charter*, *WWF Tourism Concern Principles for Sustainable Tourism*, the *Code for Environmentally Responsible Tourism* of the Pacific Asia Travel Association.

¹⁶ *Ten Commandments on Ecotourism* of the American Society of Travel Agents, *20 Tips for Visitors* of the English Tourist Board, *Environmental Tips World Trips* of the American Automobile Association, *Charte éthique du Voyageur* of the tour-operator Atalante.

¹⁷ *Mauritian Code of Ethics for Tourism : for Mauritians*, Government of Mauritius.

(because one could think it was the same before), tourist operators, were progressively recognised as major actors on the international scene.

Trade unions are identified as a major group under Agenda 21; their recognition testifies that more attention is paid to human resources in the current tourism development, in a sector characterized by low skill and low paid labour force. After mass-tourism marketing and the apparition of a more flexible and autonomous “new tourist” (Vanhove 1996), the tourism sector admitted it was time to take into consideration the needs of tourists, but also their rights and duties. The context of globalisation, and the emergence of transnational corporations (Go 1996), among tour operators, accommodation suppliers and travel agencies trying to avoid national legislation, implied that the appropriate solutions couldn’t be found without these major stakeholders.

	WTO, Manila Declaration on World Tourism, October, 10, 1980	WTO, The World Tourist Meeting : Acapulco Document, August, 27, 1982	WTO, Tourism bill of rights and tourist code, Sofia, September, 26, 1985	WTO, The Hague Declaration on Tourism, April, 14, 1989	WTO, Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, October, 1, 1999
Governments					
Local communities					
Host communities					
Tourist operators					
Tourists					
Civil society					

Figure 5 : stakeholders pointed out in the international declarations on tourism since 1980

The implementation process

In our study of ethical instruments in the tourism sector, the key point appeared to be their implementation processes and their efficiency, which often needs to be improved, and gives good indications of the future governance of the tourism sector. The common characteristic of ethical initiatives is to be free of legal constraints.

Our last analysis (Figure 6) is a comparison between ambition in objectives¹⁸, the content of the implementation process, and the degree of the constraint exerted towards recipients.

We observed a wide range of follow up mechanisms, from the Accor Group, which can easily convince hoteliers members of the company to implement its Environment Action Plan¹⁹, to WTO, which has limited means to implement its Global Code of Ethics, in spite of the creation of a World Committee on Tourism Ethics, of a Protocol for implementing the

¹⁸ deduced from the previous content analysis: the more numerous are the ethical items fulfilled by the instrument, the more ambitious it is considered

¹⁹ Probably conscious that the implementation of the Charter will be controlled by consumers, the group recommends its members not to communicate on it unless 10 out of 15 key actions of the Charter are implemented.

Code, and of a complicated Conciliation mechanism for the settlement of disputes. Between these extreme positions, partnership seems more efficient as an encouragement to go further in environmental actions. The French Federation of Nature Parks provides for example expertise, promotion campaigns and authorize the use of its trademark to hotels getting involved in the charter of “Hôtels au Naturel”, which content is very ambitious. Controls and sanctions are eventualities. The implementation of an environmentally friendly tourism is made possible by the existence of a common interest between the Natural Park and the private entrepreneurs.

	Atalante TO Charter of Ethics for the Traveller	European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, definitive version, June 1998	WTO, Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, October, 1, 1999	ACCOR: The Environment Charter of the Hotelier	Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France : Charter of Adhesion to the "Hôtels au Naturel" Group	Calvia Declaration on Tourism and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, April, 19, 1997	Charter on Sustainable Tourism, Lanzarote, April, 28, 1995
Ambition in objectives							
Implementation process	Diffusion of the Charter to 80 000 copies. Partnerships (Lonely planet...)	Adhesion of pilot parks, reporting	Protocol of implementation, World Committee on Tourism Ethics, Conciliation mechanism on a voluntary agreement	Progressive in hotels (2600 hotels in 200). Annual reporting for the group	Voluntary adhesion to the charter. Voluntary group (11 hotels in 2000)	No process	No process
Degree of constraint	Very weak	Medium (the park places its competence and resources to the disposal of operators). Operators commit themselves by signing the Charter	Weak (voluntary agreement with low incentive)	Strong (hotel chain, with command and control decision process)	Medium. No compulsory adhesion. In case of adhesion, annual control, satisfaction inquiries of customers. Commercial argument : hotels promotion compensate environmental commitment.	Very weak	Very weak

Figure 6: Implementation process of various instruments

The ambition in objectives is deduced from the content analysis, as explained before.

Self regulation versus traditional regulation ?

Agenda 21 advocates for an enforcement of self-regulation²⁰, alongside more traditional regulation forms. This claim is confirmed both in practices and in academic researches on sustainable tourism. For instance, tourism expert Victor Middleton's approach (Middleton

²⁰ “Business and industry, including transnational corporations, should ensure responsible and ethical management of products and processes from the point of view of health, safety and environmental aspects. Towards this end, business and industry should **increase self-regulation**, guided by appropriate codes, charters and initiatives integrated into all elements of business planning and decision-making, and fostering openness and dialogue with employees and the public”. Agenda 21, chapter 30.26

1998), explicitly calls for self-regulation of the tourist sector: *“Although local authorities are the chosen institutions for the exercise of statutory and regulatory powers, there is an increasing recognition that forms of self regulation through voluntary initiatives by commercial enterprises will be a vital element of any successful development and implementation of more sustainable practice. Public sector/ private sector collaboration at local level provides the essential forum for the effective development of self-regulation alongside regulatory powers ”* (Middleton and Sieber 1999).

In the existing bulk of publications about sustainable tourism, however, one can hardly discern a shift of these regulatory powers towards sustainability. And indeed, at this time, the tourism sector’s response to Sustainable Development is principally made up of self-regulation initiatives.

This situation raises several questions:

- As we have seen before, one can fear that issues which are not relevant or perceptible at the level of the firm or at the local level (which are privileged levels of self-regulation initiatives), might be forgotten. Among these issues, one can point out to the assessment of spatial and seasonal tourist concentrations, which must also be seen and dealt with at a national level since they are both determined by the localisation policies of the larger operators and also determine public transport policies and their impacts on the environment: focusing exclusively on the local level does not allow to see these major trends of tourism and their impacts on a national scale. The implementation of the "right to holidays" and social tourism also call for national solidarity mechanisms (aids to building popular resorts or to the departure of individuals) which are quite distant from the concerns of the tourist managers in resorts. The same applies to taking into account the impact of tourism on the global warming.

- On the other hand, once the stakes are clearly identified, it is clear that approaches focusing on stakeholders and the territories are fully legitimate. But identifying the stakes requires an evaluation process (Ceron and Dubois 2001, to be published), and probably an ethical debate about the future of tourism at national level.

The adoption of Kyoto Protocol on reduction of greenhouse gas shows that emerging issues already began to influence tourism development. For instance, the eventuality of a future taxation of kerosene for Airplanes might change the competitive conditions between destinations. However, tourism industry and national governments didn’t really tackle this issue yet. Many of the documents we analysed are often far away from the initial objectives of sustainability, as defined in Rio. They deal, sometimes very precisely, with specific problems, without paying attention to global concerns, which seems to be a minimum requirement for Sustainable Development.

So, who could be the main participants of future sustainable development policies for tourism ? Linking the problem of implementation with sustainability, we finally discussed three level of regulation of the tourism sector :

- Win-win strategies, in which companies, thanks to monitoring, evaluation and a better organisation, can find short term advantages in acting for environmental or social purposes, i.e. for cost savings in energy, water consumption, sewage disposal, staff motivation.... Actually, major operators appeared as the most efficient actors in the implementation process, but are unwilling to question their own activity. Will Accor or Club Med question their global strategy, will they

move away from the most saturated areas, though the most profitable, to diminish spatial concentrations of tourism, harmful to the environment ? Will they willingly move away from the coastline, to avoid coastal erosion or coral bleaching (Furley, Hughes et al. 1996), given the powerful attractiveness of the sea for tourists ? Will European hoteliers stop settling in suburban areas, and get near of collective means of transportation without incentives ? Will TUI (the first European TO) question its spatial settlement to limit greenhouse gas emissions or to contribute more to development of Southern Countries, despite the concurrence it has to face ?

- To go further, we underlined the growing success of partnerships between the business sector and credible environmental or social groups (like NGO's: WWF for biodiversity or EPCAT for Child Sex Tourism), based upon a deal between a marketing advantage and an environmental or social action. These mixed solutions seems to favour networks, voluntary chains of suppliers, which have the capacity to combine diversity of approaches (especially in marketing), and collective force, for partnerships and the dissemination of knowledge. However, these partnerships won't be a very strong movement unless environmental partners have enough arguments : communication and denunciation power, public opinion, marketing force through their trademarks, existence of legally binding instruments if no voluntary agreements are established...
- More controversial issues don't seem to be solved by a self-regulation of the tourism sector and should be part of a wider political debate on tourism and its consequences. Global warming, impacts of free trade and liberalisation of services on the environment and on the developing countries, technology transfers for Southern countries (Internet, GDS) are some of these issues. This debate, as well as specific national policies and regulation, are often missing. Even if self-regulation will provide improvements towards sustainability, national government should have a more important role alongside these instruments. In France, the State often gave the impulse at decisive crossroads of the tourism policy (Merlin and Spizzichino 1982) : will it be the same for sustainable development, though the context is much more uncertain ? Anyway, the only way to have ethical concerns widely accepted and implemented is to have them discussed in political forums (Godard 1999).

CONCLUSION

Sustainable Tourism Development: Consensual or Conflicting Process ?

The purpose of this survey was to do a first critical overview of this recent ethical debate. It revealed divergent opinions often overwhelmed by the number of initiatives, and therefore the need for comparative studies. Looking for conscious or unconscious omissions, exploring the contradictions in the content of codes of conducts was sometimes more revealing than praising their apparent consensus.

We hope this work will help tourism operators find their own way in these numerous ethical approaches, will provide criteria to evaluate their compliance with sustainable development, and will contribute to settle more efficient instruments in the field of eco-labelling and certification. All the more that beyond the raise of environmental and social awareness these instruments made possible, the efficiency appeared quite low

Rather than a way of obtaining consensus, shouldn't sustainable development be considered as a way to explore the contradictions between different visions of tourism (Theys 1999) ? The implementation of sustainable development depends on the awareness of the issues, on the settlement of an appropriate organisations to solve these problems, but also on the priority our societies will grant to global constraints, to future generations, and to the development of Southern countries. What is really at stake is a democratic debate and a political fight to spread the global ethics initiated by the Rio conference, and to translate in into actions.

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