



Brussels, October 2012

**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE CONSULTATION ON
THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Commission has launched the stakeholders' consultation on the first draft of the European Charter for sustainable and responsible tourism, the initiative being proposed in the framework of Action 15 of the 2010 Commission Communication on Tourism "*Europe, the world's N°1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe*"¹.

The consultation took place between 10 February and 20 April 2012, but many responses were received also later, till mid of May. The questionnaire of 16 questions and a first draft text of the European Charter for sustainable and responsible tourism were submitted for stakeholders' comments. The present report summarises and makes a general analysis of the responses received to the consultation and serves as a basis for discussion on the next steps of the initiative

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE INITIATIVE

The overall objective of the "European Charter for sustainable and responsible tourism" (thereafter referred as the Charter) is to contribute to sustainable and responsible tourism development. The Charter should reflect the commitment of stakeholders to develop tourism in the EU following a set of agreed objectives and principles. The purpose of the Charter is to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism policies and actions across Europe, by providing a common reference point for all stakeholders in tourism.

The Charter should streamline existing charter initiatives into one single document setting the broad principles of sustainable and responsible tourism in relation with destinations, tourism enterprises and their services but also in relation to tourists.

3. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE RESPONSES PROVIDED TO THE CONSULTATION

In total, the Commission received 102 responses to this consultation. 94 of the respondents sent back the filled in questionnaire which could be analysed in detail. Other replies received in the form of open comments or the position papers were taken, as far as possible, also into account in this analysis. Apart, these mentioned above, the Commission has received in total 11 contributions proposing changes directly to the text

¹ COM(2010)352 final

of the charter; most of these comments will be taken into account at the next step – during the revision of the text of the Charter.

18 responses (17 questionnaires and 1 general position paper) **were received from the EU Member States or the candidate countries Ministries responsible for Tourism** (Tourism Advisory Committee members). 70 responses (64 questionnaires + 6 general position papers or only comments directly to the text of the Charter) **came from organised stakeholders** (organisations, associations, industry representatives, regions...) and finally **14 responses** (12 questionnaires + 1 general position paper + comments to the text of the charter) **were received from individuals** (including also Tourism Sustainability Group members and 1 MEP).

3.1. General findings of the consultation (from responses to the questionnaire):

The proposed structure of the Charter is adequate (73% of respondents agreed).

The charter in length should be as long as the proposed draft (63% of respondents), but considerable support for a simple and short document was expressed or to have two versions: short one easy to read with principles only and second more detailed with guidelines.

75% of respondents agreed with identified target groups.

70% of respondents agreed with the list of principles as proposed in the point IV of the Charter.

68% of respondents agreed with the lines of action proposed (point V).

The concepts and language used in the Charter are sufficiently clear (83% of respondents agreed).

Even if the majority of respondents (55%) considered the Charter as currently presented to be an inspirational tool for the sector 43% of respondents disagreed and did not think that it would motivate stakeholders to be involved in the initiative. It is worth to underline that this question gathered the highest percentage of negative responses in the whole questionnaire.

The public and private stakeholders endorsing the Charter should express their endorsement and commitment by signing and publishing the Charter (e.g. on the stakeholders' websites/publications).

The majority of respondents (73%) agreed that the implementation of the Charter by the stakeholders who endorse it and committed to follow its principles and lines of actions should be monitored.

The Commission, a specially appointed multi-stakeholders group/body as well as National/regional Public Authorities should be responsible for it / be involved in it.

Both verification by a responsible monitoring body (the highest score) as well as periodic reporting were indicated as the general elements that the monitoring of the Charter should comprise.

It was also highlighted that monitoring process would certainly involve costs.

The majority of respondents (81%) are in favour of a European platform of stakeholders which would exchange /share practices on the implementation of the Charter.

76% of respondents agreed with the idea to introduce periodic award schemes for stakeholders for exemplary practices of the Charter's implementation.

The highest support was expressed for an award for destinations, an award for businesses and finally an award for National/regional Public Authorities. However, the concerns were expressed that many awards exist already and the Commission should rather try to coordinate existing awarding schemes in the field of sustainable tourism than introducing the new ones. It was also highlighted that this would involve costs.

According to the respondents to the consultation, the Charter should be disseminated first of all by web/online publication, conferences/public events as well as paper publications leaflets easily accessible for any type of stakeholders.

Concerning the form of the Charter, the respondents were quite divided but showing however a preference (48%) for adopting the Charter as an EU legal but not binding act e.g. a Recommendation of the Commission. Nevertheless, 32% of respondents would see the Charter as a Working Document of the Services with mainly a communication/promotion purpose. 12% of responders expressed their support for adoption of the Charter via a legislative act e.g. a Regulation.

3.2. Overview of the general comments provided to the consultation (apart responses to the questionnaire)

A significant number of general comments were submitted by respondents independently from the responses provided to the questionnaire.

Comments concerned such issues as: avoiding overlapping, competition with other existing initiatives as e.g. the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. A new European Charter - set of principles should provide added value to those that already exist and should keep codex – declaratory approach to avoid confusion with existing well established systems as e.g. EUROPARC Federation "European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas".

This Charter needs to relate more closely to others charters and sustainable tourism programmes that exist, as many of these already target destination local business and individual tourists.

Many respondents expressed the opinion that the Charter should be short, simple and practical. It was advised to **exclusively speak of "sustainable tourism" without responsible** as concept of sustainability comprises all three dimensions including corporate social responsibility (CSR). It was also highlighted that "sustainable tourism" approach should refer to the definition and concept of the UNWTO. There is a need to emphasis **social aspects** and **accessibility** references, (making holidays available to all) as well **as safety aspect** in tourism.

It was underlined numerous times that the Charter should remain a declaration or a voluntary commitment. In case the Charter is to be monitored, which would involve necessary resources and costs, stakeholders **need specific implementation methodology and financial resources to implement the charter,**

communicate about it and measure it. The European Commission will also need human and financial resources to monitor the implementation at European level.

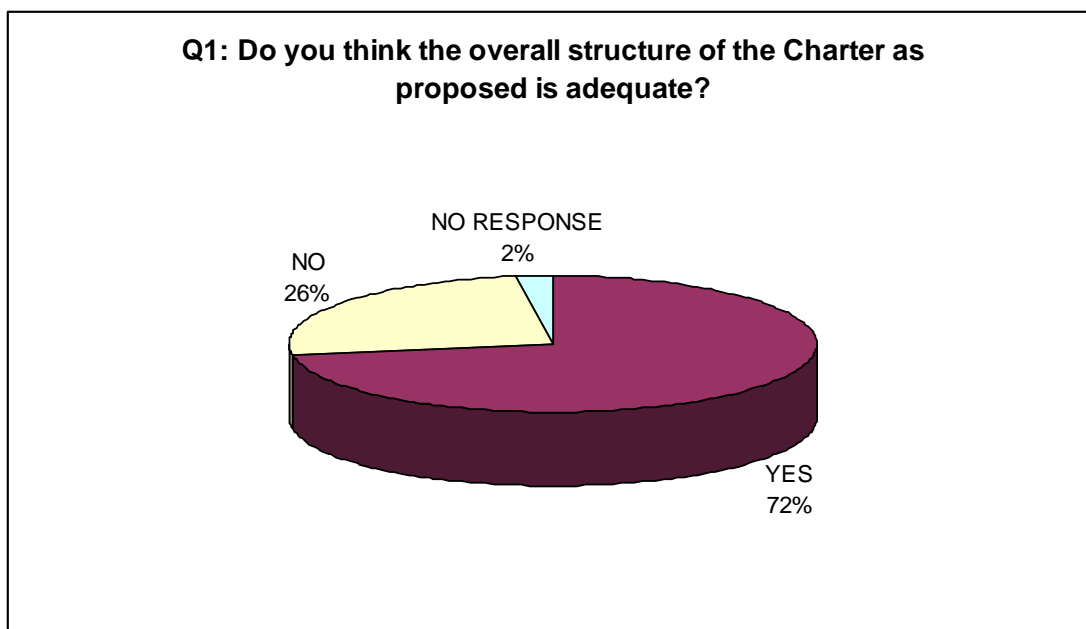
Many stakeholders mentioned that the Charter should be used as a guide rather than enshrined in EU law. Others advocated that the Charter needs to be robustly endorsed and resourced by the EU as a cohesive force for sustainable and responsible tourism in the EU. The Charter should not be an end in itself but a means to lever more support for its objectives and to be an integral part of a much wider process. It was underlined that the Charter can play a crucial role in defining the responsibilities of each actor to transform/mainstream sustainability in the European tourism. Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires the constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.

It was recommended to **avoid proliferation of labels and initiatives.** The European Charter for small enterprises is a good example, guided by the open method of coordination as an important tool, effective indicators and benchmarks to assess progress over time and in relation to the best to enhance learning and innovation seems to be realistic. The Charter for responsible and sustainable tourism also needs such a tool to provide a platform for exchange of better practice in all fields that affects responsible and sustainable tourism to continuously improve its performance.

Finally, it was highlighted that the implementation of the Charter should be more strongly linked to other initiatives such as: Virtual Tourism Observatory (VTO), European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN), European Tourism Quality Label (ETQL), Calypso.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES SUBMITTED TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE CHARTER

Q1: Do you think the overall structure of the Charter as proposed is adequate?



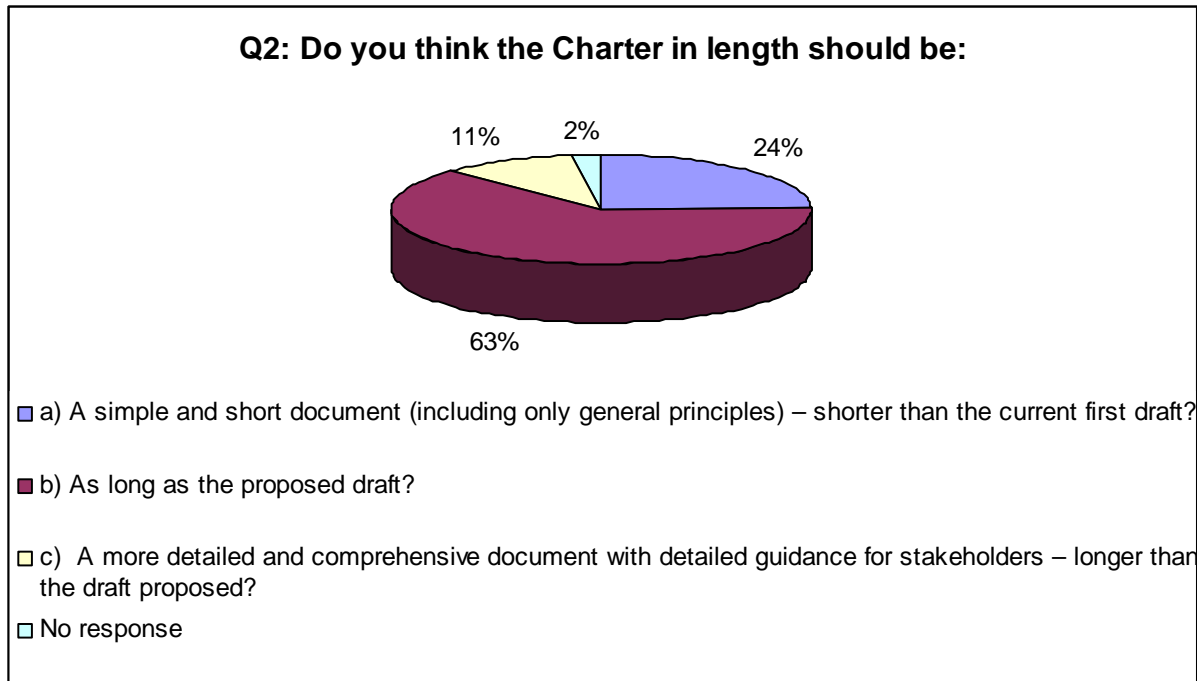
The vast majority of respondents (72%) agreed with the proposed structure of the Charter.

26% responded negatively and 2% did not provide the response to this question.

Those who did not agree with the proposed structure commented on the fact that the Charter should be kept short, simple and practical. Some also stressed the need to include some most important definitions and to keep coherence between Target Groups, Principles and Lines of Actions.

In case the Charter should be implemented, the need for a practical guide (annex) was underlined to guide stakeholders in the implementation of the principles.

Q2: Do you think the Charter in length should be:



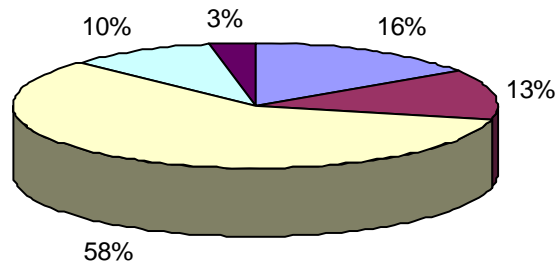
The majority of responders (63%) replied that the Charter in length should be as long as the proposed draft. However, almost one third (24%) of respondents would see a Charter as a simple and short document (including only general principles) and recommend shortening the current draft text. Only 11% of respondents indicated the wish to have a more detailed and comprehensive document with detailed guidance for stakeholders. 2% did not provide the response to this question.

Some comments submitted to this question focused on underlying that since the Charter addresses very different target groups, it should be short, simple and practical with universal principles. It was advised to have two documents – a shorter version (only with principles), which would be more public friendly summary document and the second one - longer, more detailed version giving guidelines and/or presenting good practices for implementation.

Q3: How general/ or specific-detailed the content of the Charter should be?

Do you think that the Charter should provide:

Q3: How general or specific -detailed the content of the Charter should be? The Charter should provide:



a) A set of general principles

b) a) + general guidelines as lines of actions but without specific recommendations for actions for the different target groups (without bullet points in "lines of actions" as currently presented)

c) a) + general guidelines as lines of actions with specific recommendations for actions for the different target groups (as in the current first draft of the Charter)

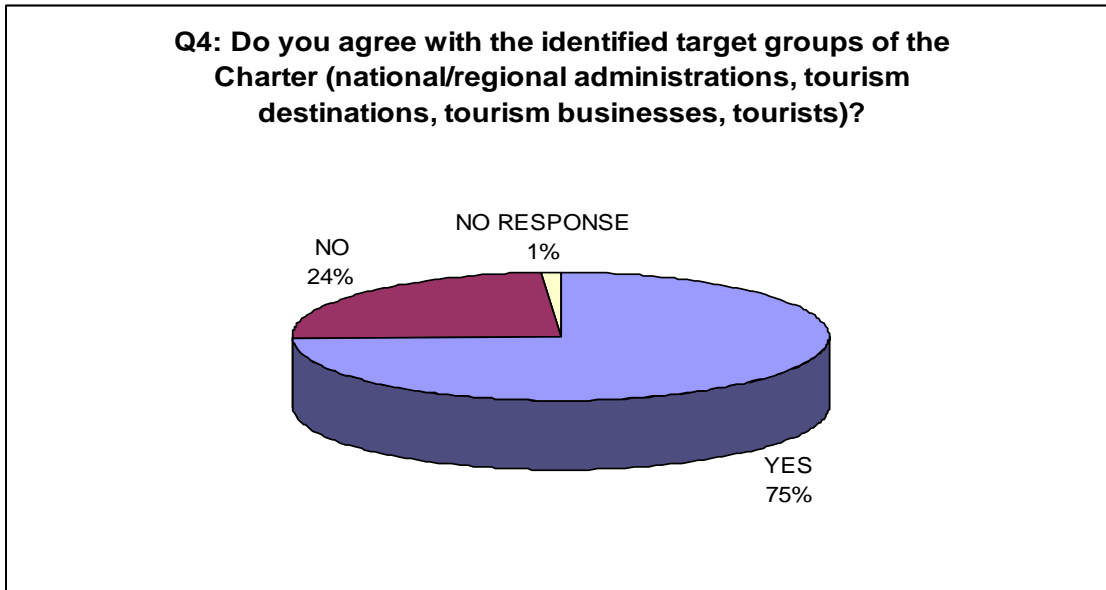
d) c) + more developed guidelines/lines of actions than in the current draft of the Charter

No response

A similar and consistent proportion (58%) of responders, comparing to those who agreed with the current length of the Charter's text, agreed also with the current content of the Charter (a set of general principles + general guidelines as lines of actions with specific recommendations for actions for the different target groups). Nevertheless, 29% of respondents were in favour of less detailed content of the Charter (responses a) 16% and b) 13%). Only 10% of respondents would like to see the content of the Charter more detailed (more developed guidelines/lines of action) than in the current draft.

Some comments were also expressed that the Charter's content should be general, and provide guidance on where to start and what the core elements are that key stakeholders need to address and plan into the development of sustainable tourism. It was advised to propose short – declarative document which could be for signing up to the Charter's principles and more detailed supportive information should be given in Guidelines, which could be a kind of complementary good practise information for the specific target groups on the methods of implementation (including also financial means supporting implementation).

Q4: Do you agree with the identified target groups of the Charter (national/regional administrations, tourism destinations, tourism businesses, tourists)?



A big majority (75%) of respondents agreed with the identified target groups. 24% did not agree and 1% of respondents to the questionnaire did not respond to this question.

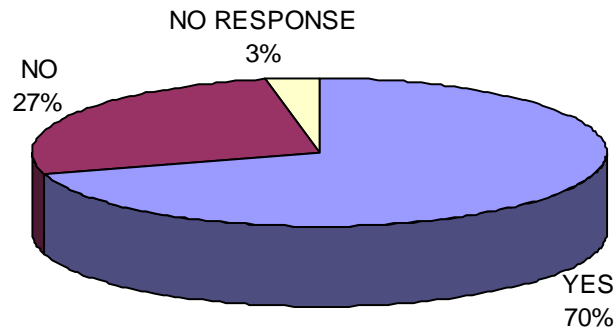
Those who did not agree with the target groups proposed reformulating the target groups into 3: public authorities/destinations, businesses (private sector) and visitors together with local residents.

Other respondents suggested to add some more target groups as e.g local communities, residents, the non-profit structures (associations, national/international NGOs), international organisations, international umbrella organisations for natural and cultural heritage, social organisations involved in economic entrepreneurship, educational/training establishments, any tourism related organisations such as: parks, heritage sites, Local Development Agencies, Networks, Tourism Boards, Local Action Groups as well as any types of businesses which provide services to the tourism industry like car rental companies, companies that provide technology to tourism etc.

It was judged by several respondents as unrealistic for this kind of Charter to be targeted directly to tourists or individual businesses. However, it was considered as right to keep the references to tourists in the document as in the current draft. It was also highlighted that the Commission Charter initiative is better placed to target the member state public authorities, member state tourism agencies and pan European business and would have probably little relevance at businesses which operate at local destination level and even less so to individual tourists.

Q5: Do you agree with the list of "Principles for a sustainable and responsible Tourism" as presented in the current draft of the Charter? (point IV of the current draft Charter)

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In total, 70% of respondents agreed with the proposed list of principles. 27% did not agree (the biggest proportion of those who did not agree with the list of principles were among organised stakeholders (organisations, associations, businesses representatives, regions...)). 3% did not provide any response to this question.

The comments of those who did not agree with the principles proposed indicated that the Charter should focus more on sustainability than on ethics, the presentation of the principles should be more concise and presented in line with 3 pillars of sustainability; equal weight should be given to different (economic/socio-cultural and environmental) aspects/pillars.

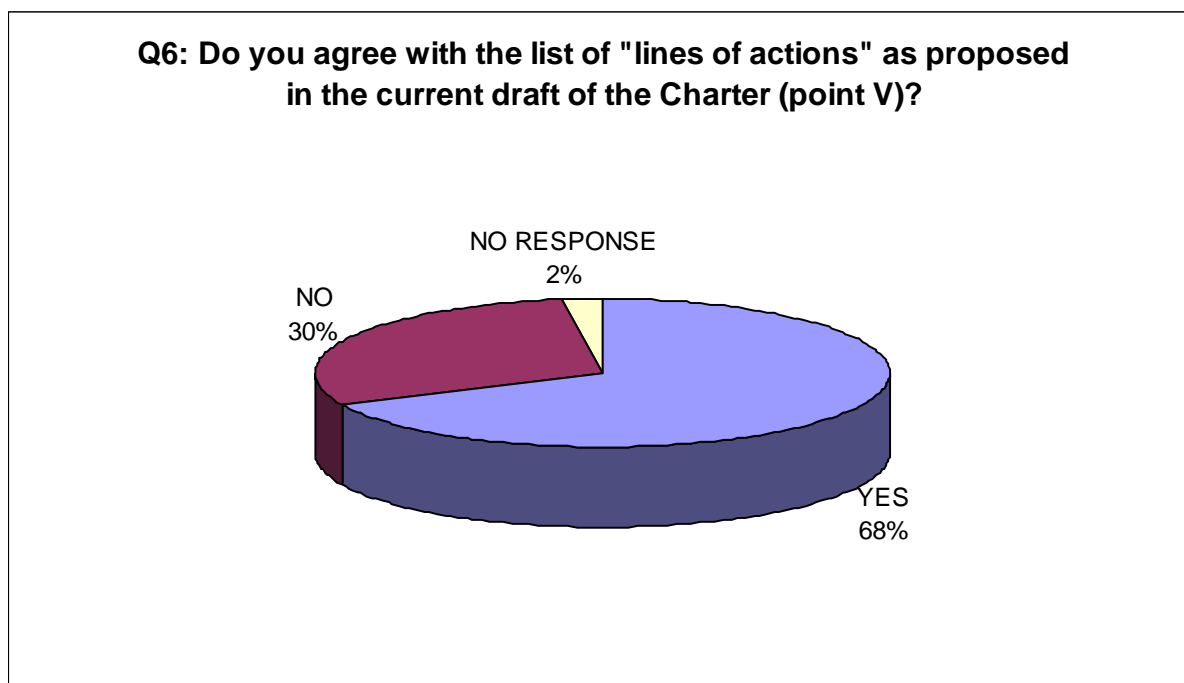
Some other principles were proposed to be included as: coordination, cooperation, participation (including gender) and transparency as well as highlighting "accessibility" of tourism services as a crucial component for the sustainability of the tourism industry and preserving the biodiversity.

Some respondents remarked that the principles proposed have some overlap with other existing already principles as the UNEP/UNWTO 12 principles for sustainable tourism, and questioned the added value to develop new ones.

It was underlined that the principles should be general and should not focus on particular target groups, they could be also stronger formulated, as the objectives. On the other hand, some respondents expressed the wish to make reference to the central role of civil society – the citizens/resident in the tourism destinations; they are one of the principal recipients of tourism activity and at the same time, one of the active agents in its development.

Finally, it was suggested that the principles should also recognise the impact of other policies, industries and activities on tourism.

Q6: Do you agree with the list of "lines of actions" as proposed in the current draft of the Charter? (point V of the current draft Charter)



68% of respondents agreed with the proposed in the first draft of the Charter lines of actions. 30% did not agree and 2 % did not reply to the question.

Numerous comments by those who did not agree with the proposed lines of actions were submitted. First of all, it was highlighted that the lines of actions should follow 3 pillars of sustainability as well as should comply with the 3 priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy (smart, sustainable and inclusive growth).

It was suggested emphasising social tourism and accessibility of tourism services for less mobile or disabled people should be added.

Secondly, some statements were regarded as controversial: ("travel is a right", "all facilities should meet a consistent service quality level", "working conditions" – which the Charter should avoid or not deal with.

The stakeholders pointed out that the current lines of action are very aspirational and not easy to be monitored or verifiable. It is also difficult to identify responsibilities for each key target group in the current draft. Sometimes the lines of actions are too demanding, not all businesses can be persuaded to be more sustainable; destinations should have mechanisms to support businesses which want to be more sustainable. It could be worth considering the obligation for national, regional public authorities to engage themselves and supervise the respect of the principles of sustainable tourism.

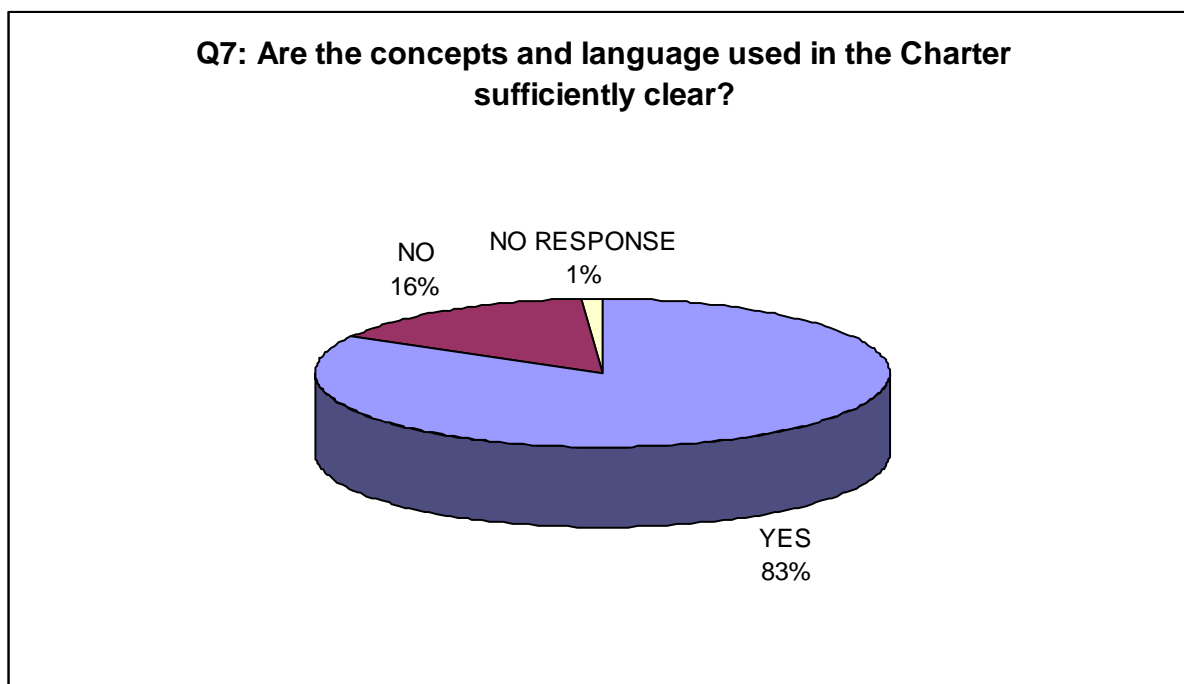
By some respondents it was suggested to rename 'Lines of actions' into Guidelines. The lines of action could be supported by concrete good practices, as some of the actions seem to be objectives rather than lines of actions;

Moreover, by some respondents it was judged as confusing that the lines of actions do not reflect directly the principles and as they are set out, the lines of actions offer a second set of principles. Furthermore, as they try to address all target groups it becomes unclear as to who should take action in each area. It was suggested that these lines of actions are better used as examples of how to approach the principles, as a means of demonstrating what kinds of action need to be taken.

Some stakeholders underlined that if the Charter should be implemented and verifiable, it would be necessary to identify suitable standards, indicators, data, and verification system to ensure compliance. Any new monitoring system however will be hugely difficult and costly. That is why it was strongly suggested that the European Charter is clearly linked to other recognised and well developed systems in place, rather than to create a new one. On the other hand, it was also mentioned that one Europe-wide recognised certification system (based on the European or Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria [GSTC] for example) would be far more effective than the many small schemes which exist currently, often with questionable credibility which degrades the credibility of the concept in general.

Finally, it was highlighted that the lines of action should be voluntary, not mandatory and they should reflect international principles such as Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria supported by UNWTO.

Q7: Are the concepts and language used in the Charter sufficiently clear?



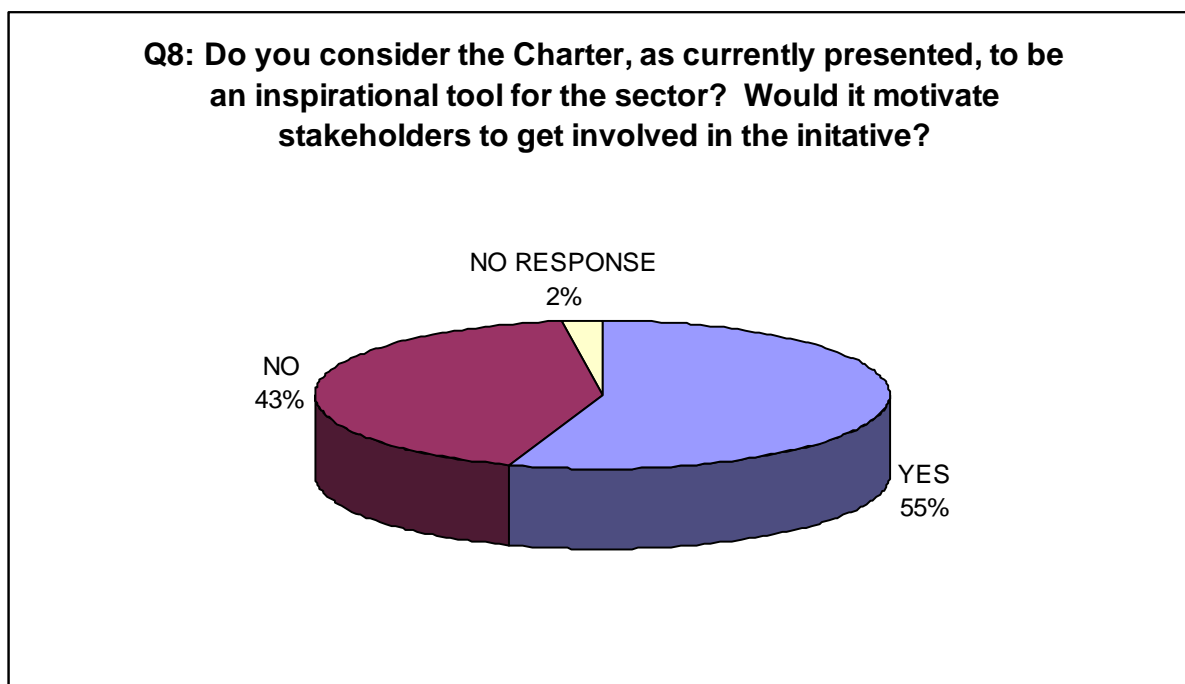
A big majority of respondents (83%) responded that the concepts and language used in the Charter are sufficiently clear. Only 16% responded negatively, and 1% did not respond to this question.

The comments expressed by those who responded negatively to this question suggested to use simpler language especially for the short version of the Charter, which should be available in all national languages, as a risk of misinterpretation of some statements exists. As the document should be understood by all players involved, also by tourists, it was also suggested to keep the Charter short, simple in affirmative positive language.

It was highlighted that there is no need to differentiate between responsible and sustainable tourism. It would be enough targeting on sustainable tourism. Moreover, some concepts have been identified as needing a definition. The wording could be more inspiring for all target groups.

An idea to provide a single commitment label (logo) to signify endorsement and commitment to the Charter was also expressed.

Q8: Do you consider the Charter, as currently presented, to be an inspirational tool for the sector? Would it motivate stakeholders to get involved in the initiative?



Even if the majority of respondents (55%) considered the Charter as currently presented to be an inspirational tool for the sector 43% of respondents disagreed and did not think that it would motivate stakeholders to be involved in the initiative. It is worth to underline that this question gathered the highest percentage of negative responses in the whole questionnaire.

Some respondents expressed the opinion that the document provides a useful reference point, is clear, informative, pragmatic which is what it needs to be but it is not inspirational – inspiring tourism organisations and businesses to follow sustainable principles needs to be done by targeted communications using people with passion for the subject and helpful case studies;

The comments expressed by those who responded negatively to this question suggested that the Charter to be more inspirational should put more emphasis on the benefits for the

stakeholders and the need for responsible tourism, mention awarding measures, motivational message in the introduction, coaching of the stakeholders as well as include examples of concrete actions, share the knowledge about good practices. It is necessary also to clarify the areas of responsibility of each level stakeholder/target group and how the effort should be organised and possibly monitored. The charter should benefit also of a marketing and communication campaign.

Again, it was highlighted that the Charter should allow the use and the recognition of other voluntary sustainability certification systems that already exist to collect the work already done by destinations and businesses (as e.g: The Travelife Sustainability System).

Some respondents underlined that the Charter as currently presented is not inspirational as it is aiming at the wrong target group (too broad and unfocused). The principal target groups should be Member States, national tourism agencies and pan European corporate tourism businesses. It is through the work that they then do at a strategic and planning level with more regional and local stakeholders that the aims of this charter could be realised. It would be rather a role of government agencies and professional organisations to channel the inspiration out of the business through adaptation and by making it practical.

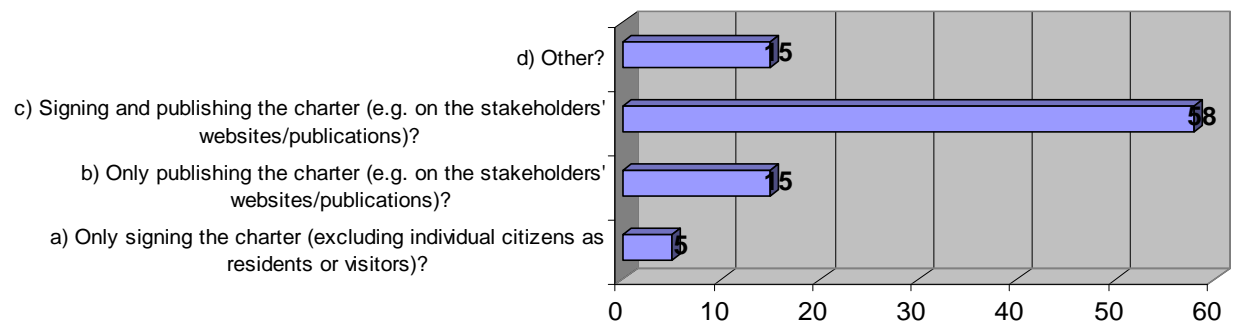
It was advised to demonstrate best practice across Member States, and highlight successful achievements that member states can learn from and replicate. Knowledge transfer is a powerful tool to motivate as it considers and consolidates prior learning, providing the evidence that initiatives work and takes out more of the start-up risk factors and reduces the associated costs.

Moreover, the following concrete suggestions were submitted to make the Charter more inspirational:

- **SIMPLIFICATION.** The charter needs to be simpler, more precise and more realistic; It should be evident that it is addressed to anyone involved in tourism, from policy makers to tourists. Dividing the charter in several charters each addressed to the specific stakeholders could simplify the adoption, implementation and dissemination.
- **MOTIVATION.** The benefits coming from the endorsement and implementation of the charter, and therefore the added value of sustainability must be clearly stated, such as a better promotion, the label or the award, the better access to funds. This motivational part should be included with a clear and simple language in the introduction of the Charter;
- **INSPIRATION.** The stakeholders need to be inspired by the charter, with example of concrete actions resulting with concrete added value “success stories” of implementing sustainable principles. These examples could be taken from the implementation of other existing charters. The charter needs to become more than another tool, but a unique European guide.
- To be successfully implemented there is a need for **EDUCATION** - Elaborating educational contents for the public (visitors) as well as for the professionals. Stakeholders have difficulties in communication among themselves – regular awareness raising actions of businesses is needed, such as seminars, conferences.

Q9: In your opinion, the public and private stakeholders endorsing the Charter should express their endorsement and commitment by:

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Concerning this question, the proposed option c) signing and publishing the charter gathered the major support (62% of all the responses). Options b) as well as option d) were supported by 16% of respondents each. Only 5% of the respondents were in favour of option a) only signing the charter.

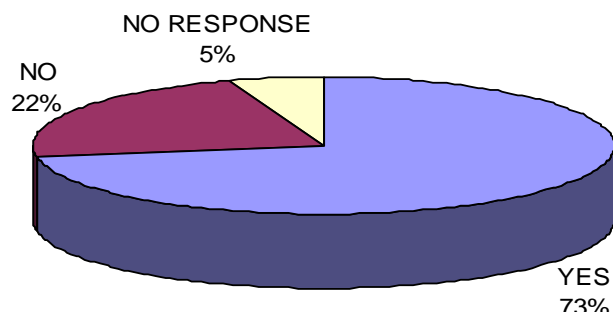
The following list comprises the most repetitive suggestions submitted also by those responding **d) others** to this question:

- the Charter should be integrated in or a part of the overall European, national, regional and local strategies for tourism development. The sustainability issues must become a natural part of the work being done on a daily basis;
- relate the Charter to the sustainability indicators;
- make a signature and implementation of the Charter a condition for EDEN award;
- additional awareness raising campaigns/actions at local, regional and national level are needed;
- only public and private stakeholders who really fulfil most of the criteria of the Charter should get the admission to publish it and should get a certificate, the certificate should get a meaningful character for the stakeholders and also for the public society;
- **a common pan European Charter logo could be developed** to be placed on signatories websites indicating their commitment to the Charter which in case of businesses or destinations would enable consumers to make a more informed choice;

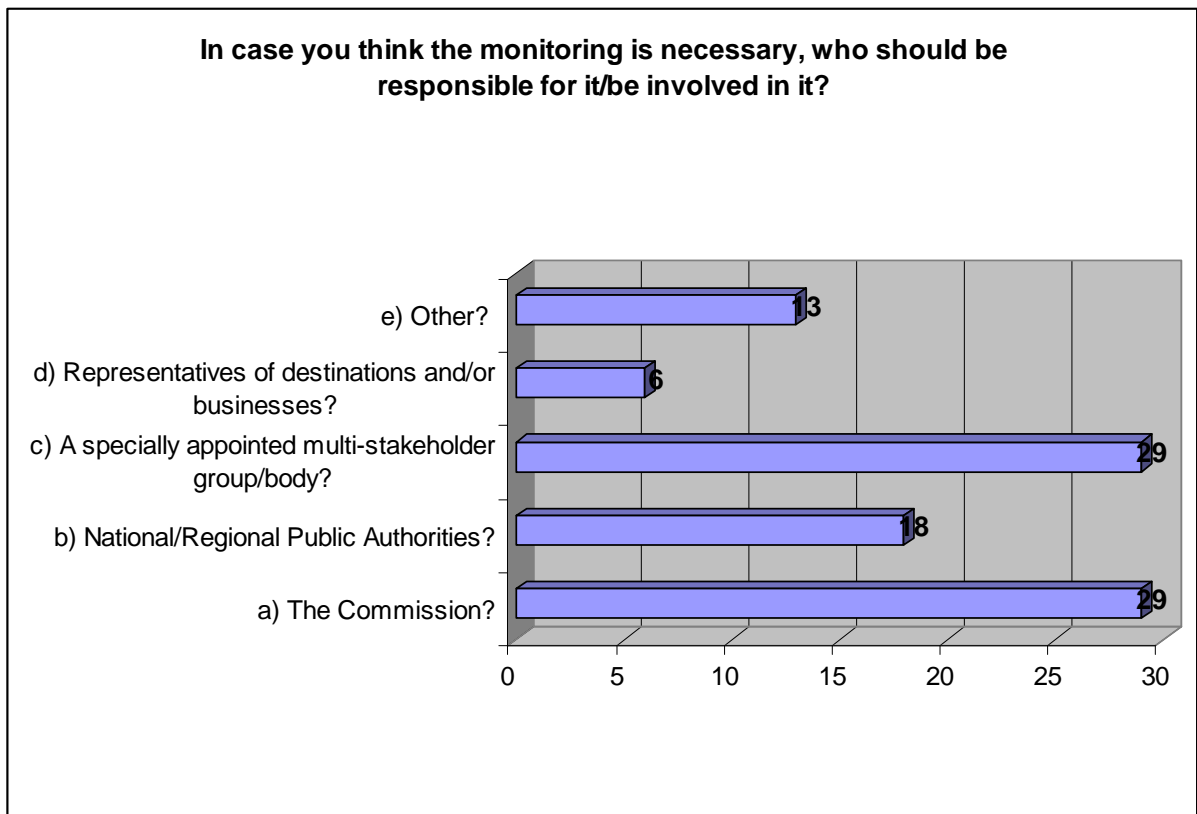
- public authorities should publish yearly policies illustrating their implementation of the Charter and of the local destinations, authorities and businesses signatories of the charter
- businesses and destinations could submit yearly reports to the public authorities
- rewarding good practices;
- it will be difficult for stakeholders to sign the Charter because not all of its content is applicable to each target group; Even the signature of the charter by the stakeholders is going to be very difficult to monitor.
- it was suggested to create an online platform/portal in order to raise awareness. Stakeholders could join the list of signatories online and service providers could link the Charter to their own websites.

Q10: Do you think that the implementation of the Charter by the stakeholders who chose to endorse it and committed to follow its principles and lines of action should be monitored?

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A considerable majority of respondents (73%) agreed that the implementation of the Charter by the stakeholders who endorse it and commit to follow its principles and lines of action should be monitored. However, 22% of respondents were against or very sceptical about monitoring. 5% of respondents did not reply to this question.



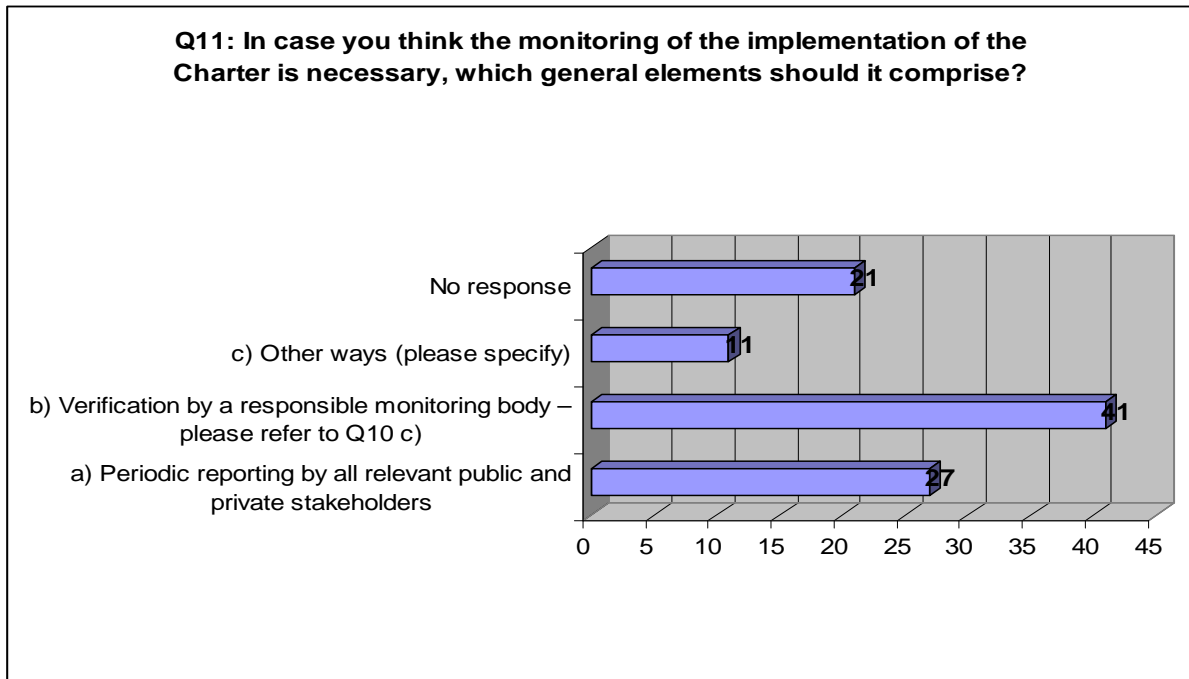
Many stakeholders provided multiple responses to this question. As we can observe at the figure above the most responses were in favour of the involvement of the Commission (a) in monitoring as well as (c) of a specially appointed multi-stakeholder group/body. Not far behind these two options the support was expressed toward involvement of b) National/Regional Public Authorities.

The comments provided on this question indicated that in an ideal world the Charter should somehow be monitored however in reality, **due to their very general nature, the principles stated in the Charter would be very difficult to monitor and a monitoring system would be too costly to establish. It would be a very costly exercise and could potentially take valuable time and resources away from the actions. It was advised to rather use already existing monitoring schemes** and only best practices of the Charter's implementation should be spread e.g. via a dedicated website.

Some respondents expressed the opinion that to award or to monitor something so light like a Charter could be a waste of resources at all levels. It was questioned who would have responsibility for monitoring compliance. As the Charter would be voluntary, it is not possible immediately identify any organisation that would be best placed to monitor voluntary commitments of this nature. It was recommended to keep the Charter as a voluntary declaration, which would have some degree of public scrutiny to check if the principles and actions are being implemented. Anything more would be highly bureaucratic and require a complex and a difficult to sustain verification system.

Some forms of cross-verifications should be encouraged rather than duplication of efforts (if destinations are already being verified by a similar process (e.g. the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas)).

Q11: In case you think the monitoring of the implementation of the Charter is necessary, which general elements should it comprise?



It should be noted that quite high number of "no response" to this question means that numerous (one fifth) stakeholders responding to the consultation think that monitoring is not necessary or not feasible (please refer to response No to Q10).

On the other hand by those judging monitoring as necessary, the multiple responses were provided to the options proposed.

Most support was expressed for the option b) verification by a responsible monitoring body followed by the option a) periodic reporting.

Moreover the following comments were provided with regard to the response c) Others:

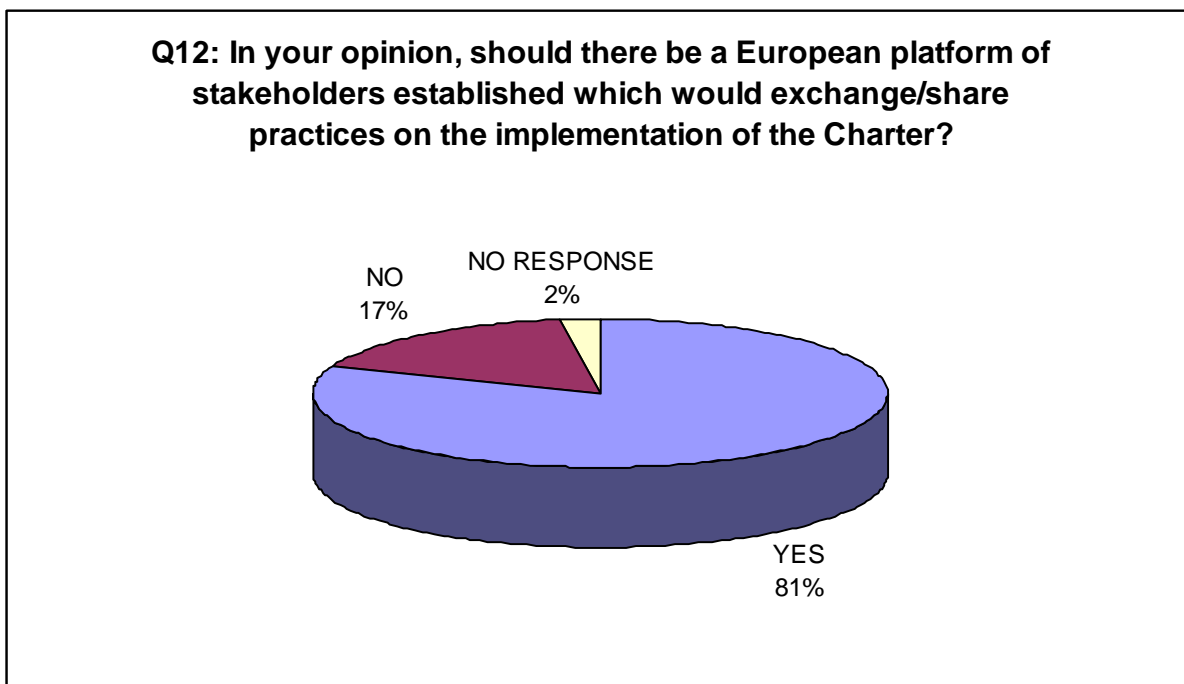
- publish best practices, recommendations;
- regional authorities shall evaluate the periodic reports of public and private stakeholders, agreeing with them on the modalities of the verification procedures which will be based on sampling;
- use user feedback via a dedicated website, online public forums;
- self-evaluation if an online tool is provided;
- voluntary participation at regional /local level destinations in cooperation with NECSTouR and Virtual Tourism Observatory was suggested in order to collect best practices and data;

- the Commission should check if the Member States have the principles from the Charter translated into their national tourism strategies (e.g via National Tourism Reports);

Moreover it was highlighted by some respondents that the register for the commitments is necessary monitoring instrument. Otherwise the coverage of the Charter minimum standards and especially the good practise standards in different levels cannot be estimated. Progress of the implementation of the Charter could be analysed through quantifiable indicators common to all EU member states. It is necessary to provide reliable information about the commitment of the destination to the promotion of the principles, values, and lines of action and recommendations of the Charter. Signing the Charter should be something more than just a voluntary act on the part of the destination, and it should become an on-going commitment in time that could be verified. The verification should be done by the National, Regional and Local Authorities.

Some stakeholders stated that verification would be ideal but expensive and will decrease people's motivation to engage with the process.

Q12: In your opinion, should there be a European platform of stakeholders established which would exchange/share practices on the implementation of the Charter?



The vast majority of respondents (81%) agreed that there should be a European platform of stakeholders which would exchange/share practices on the implementation of the Charter. 17% of respondents responded negatively, and 2% did not respond to the question.

Comments were provided by both responding negatively as well as positively to this question.

The most common suggestions by those responding positively to this question expressed the need to demonstrate some real added value and outputs/outcomes for the stakeholder group.

It was suggested to create an internet platform and/or assure follow-up by the Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG) or to combine it with the Virtual Tourism Observatory. Moreover, the European Tourism Forum and European Tourism Day were mentioned as appropriate events to promote the Charter and deal with possible awards.

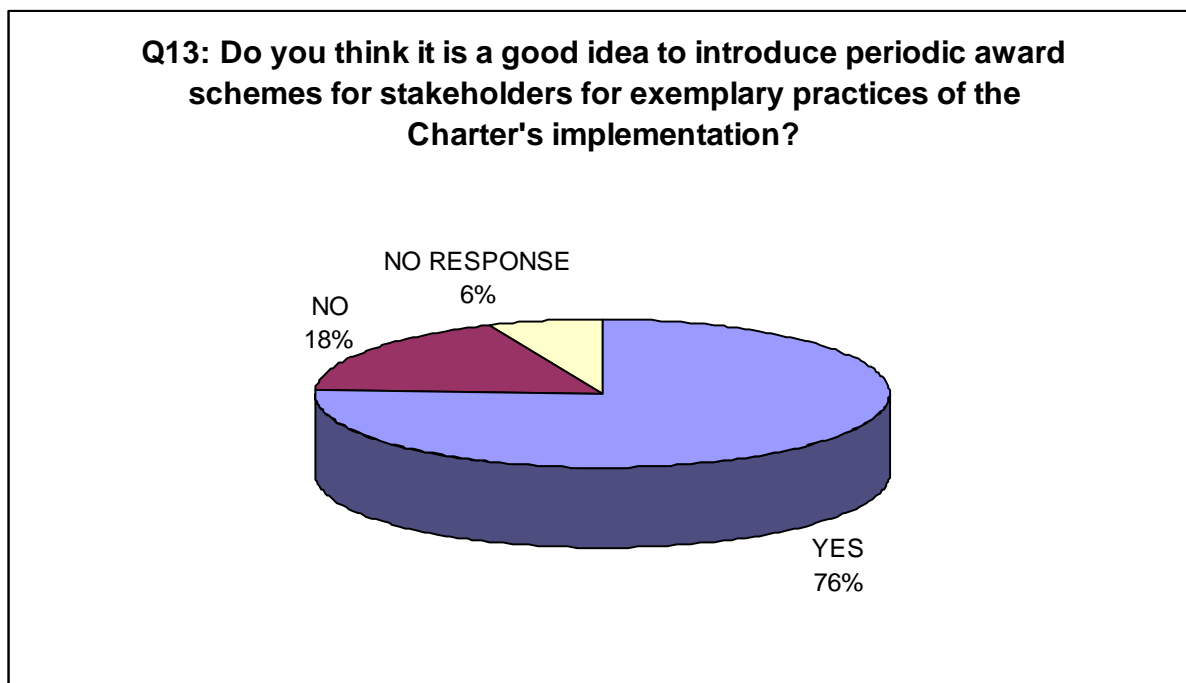
It was highlighted that to demonstrate and to facilitate exchange of best practice would be useful by using as much as possible existing platforms/mechanisms. Some organisations/networks expressed their interest in being this kind of platform (if supported by the Commission) e.g. EDEN Network, NECSTouR, EARTH – European Alliance for Responsible Tourism and Hospitality.

Some respondents point out the idea that exchange of best practices could be combined with exchange visits by relevant authorities, seminars and conferences.

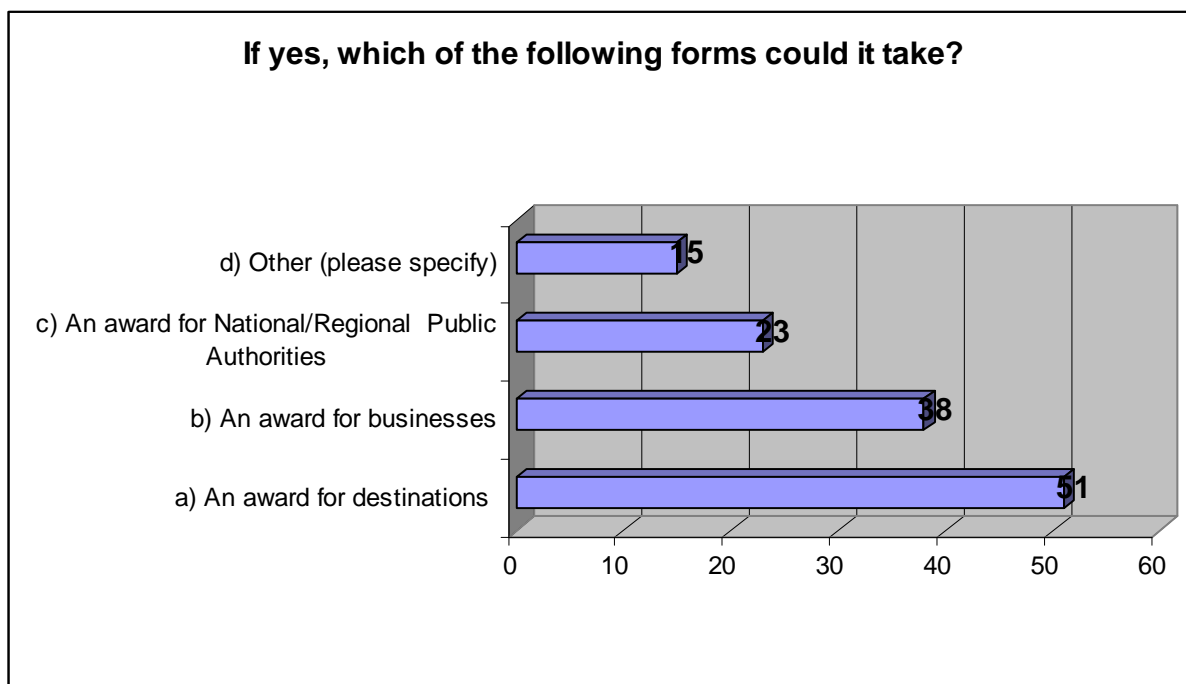
Those who responded negatively suggested as a sufficient solution national/regional public authorities' reports to the Commission + web based exchange of best practices.

In conclusion, the solution **enabling best practice exchange is needed** which should not necessarily be a formalised platform/stakeholders group.

Q13: Do you think it is a good idea to introduce periodic award schemes for stakeholders for exemplary practices of the Charter's implementation?



76% of respondents were in favour of introducing periodic award schemes for stakeholders for exemplary practices of the Charter's implementation. 18% were against and 6% did not respond to this question.



Multiple responses were given to the options proposed. The most support (51 of respondents) was gathered by the option a) an award for destinations followed by option b) an award for businesses (38 respondents). An option c) an award for National /regional Public Authorities was welcome by 23 respondents.

Concerning d) Other the following suggestions among others were submitted:

- Award for each of the above categories;
- A rotation between different categories every year or parallel annual categories linked to a specific theme. One additional award could be addressed to innovative initiatives disseminating and helping to implement the Charter, creating better work conditions.
- Award to local authorities
- Award to local community initiatives;
- Award for NGOs working in tourism;
- Award for successful initiatives of social partners to make employment in tourism sustainable;

The general comments submitted to this question showed the concerns about possible duplication of efforts. Even though, recognised that recognition is always a good motivational factor, it was recommended not to create new awards as the prizes already exist. **The coordination of existing prizes and awards within sustainable tourism should be considered rather than creating any new one.**

A concern was also expressed in case a new award for the Charter is created how such an award scheme would be managed as such schemes require dedicated personnel, resources and promotion. Moreover, the awards take time to establish their credibility and profile. It was rather advised to **link the Charter with existing schemes** (e.g such as The Global

sustainable Tourism Criteria, the future European Quality Label, the Ecolabel for enterprises, EDEN or existing national/regional schemes, such as the "trophées du tourisme durable" and the existing charters...).

Some respondents underlined that a separate award for the Charter is not necessary but in the future European, national and regional tourism awards of all kinds should only be given to those destinations/businesses/authorities which have endorsed and committed to the Charter;

Those who were in favour of introducing a new award stated that a "European" award could be helpful, as most awards are global or national. Moreover, global award scheme for tourism stakeholders in Europe could be developed in different fields (innovation, accessibility, sustainability, promotion) for different sectors (accommodation, transport, attractions) instead of having separate award schemes for the Charter, EDEN etc.;

Finally, some of the stakeholders stated that showcasing exemplary practice is valuable; but not necessary introducing an award system.

Q14: How stakeholders, such as e.g. destinations/businesses, could involve visitors/residents to respect the principles and the lines of action set out in the Charter?

The numerous ideas were submitted to this question. Some respondents proposed that beside the classical promotion by publishing and disseminating the charter, **public authorities and destinations should:**

- **Provide the adequate services and controlling measures**
- **Adapt their policies** to bring them in line with the charter and propose actions that express the objectives of the destination in terms of sustainability and publish their policy documents on all the possible media targeting the residents/tourists.
- **Inform transparently** about the charter by the publications, video and voice messages, web sites, local meetings, conferences, public events and how the destination/businesses respect the charter; To organise consumer awareness raising campaigns, promotional campaigns, produce leaflets, organise seminars, local events;
- **Communicate corporate** is necessary to stimulate the curiosity and interest of the visitors/residents by transparent information and precise communication (e.g. for a company displaying its water or energy consumption) by developing messages or suggestions to encourage visitors and tourist to respect them
- **Educate the tourists/residents/businesses avoiding any language making them feel guilty**, adopting and implementing measures, incentives, monitoring and awareness programmes targeting visitors/residents, Adopting actions to involve and educate tourism providers to work according the principles of sustainability.
- **Develop instruments/actions for a participatory process**; It is essential that local community hosting or receiving the tourism is in agreement, involved, participates and benefits from the economic, social, entrepreneurial and employment aspects that the tourism produces. **Avoiding any forms of separation or exclusion**; A very

inclusive and participatory approach should be made by public bodies to involve local residents in understanding and increasing awareness of the destination. Visitors should instead be involved **by the tourism businesses** by means of management models comprising methods of structural involvement of stakeholders, meeting and knowledge sharing between the local and the visitors/tourists; educational tours.

- **Be interactive;** Involve tourist with activities such as game, competition, prizes, quiz (e.g. on the knowledge of the Charter). Enable tourists to give their feedback in using new technologies via website or creation of an electronic “green passport”;
- **Be inspirational, give the “good example”** (in implementing the Charter) to visitors/residents as a destination or business and show examples and best practices with visibility to be followed; Moreover:
 - ✓ Show and prove to their visitors/residents that they give the good example (in implementing the charter) by successfully participating in a business certification or destination award programme.
 - ✓ Demonstrative actions involving tourists and residents to boost their awareness
 - ✓ Motivate visitors and residents through continuous promotion, education, following one's own good practices ("leading by examples") contests, awards, etc
- **Give incentives;** giving some sort of incentives for travelling to destinations that implement the Charter.

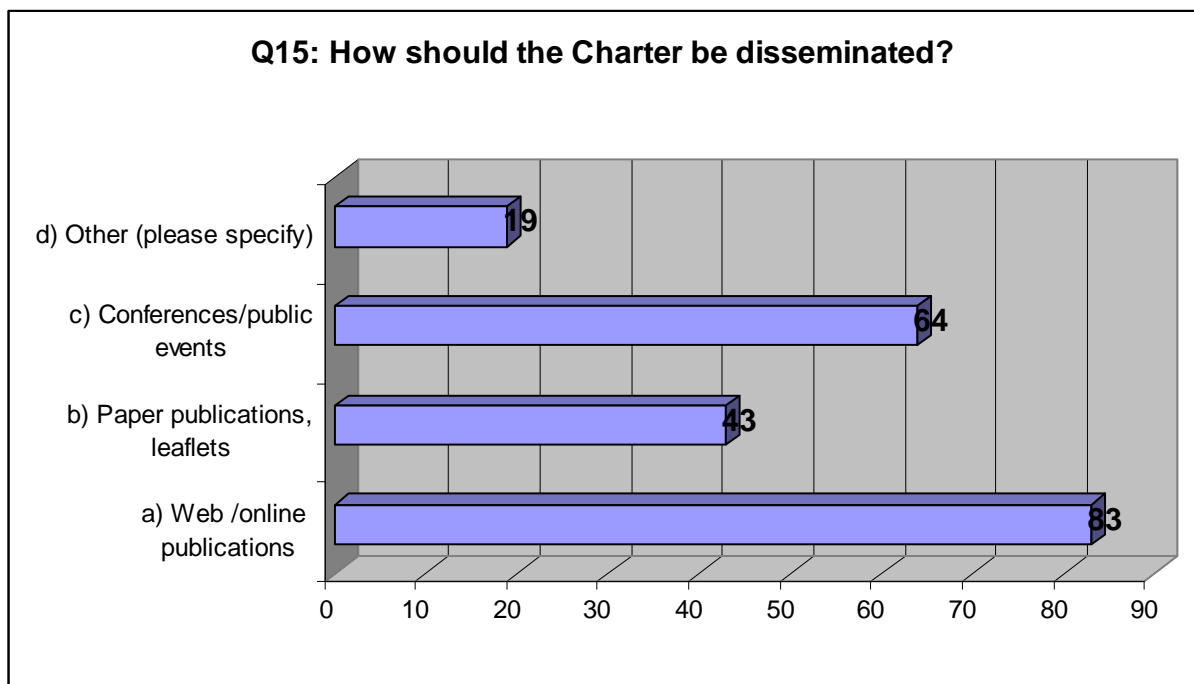
Other comments included, among other, the following ideas:

- Developing and implementation of the broad communication campaign on responsible tourism with clear messages conveyed through targeted channels; putting the Charter on websites, display it publicly, organise consumer feedback questionnaires
- Promote the Charter via public forums, the Charter should be visible and if possible given to tourists in tourist information offices; face-to-face communication with the visitors on the Charter;
- By means of awareness-raising activities and information campaigns carried out in the tourism destinations (airports, railway stations, ports, hotels, tourism information points etc.) with the aim of conveying the principles of the Charter;
- Through a strict and rigorous application of the Charter and evaluating the results;
- Lower prices for those customers or secondary business following the green tourism models;
- Visitor feedback on scores published also on the homepages of the destination and businesses;
- Establish a simple check list (or consumer guide) for these different stakeholders that will enable their customers to be sustainable and responsible tourists; demonstrating/explaining to tourists the positive impacts that their responsible tourism behaviour generates. Additionally, some campaigns that highlight some of

the negative impacts of tourism could be used to reinforce the importance of responsible tourism behaviour;

- A handbook should be drawn up containing a set of simple rules that tourists should respect during their holidays (Universal code of conduct for tourists);
- By establishing a system of local recognition of the stakeholders' commitment to the principles and lines of action of the Charter;
- Tourists organisations, hotels, agencies and other institutions should provide special offers as a motivation for tourists interested in cultural, rural and eco-tourism; residents should be involved in education of benefits of sustainable tourism;
- Whichever stakeholders uphold the Charter should be obliged to involve all visitors/residents respecting the principles.
- Incorporate the Charter's principles in promotional activities of destinations and businesses; By promoting their specific initiatives e.g. eco friendly measures, healthy menus, waste management, energy savings etc. to their guests and locals;
- Inform tourist of their impact with leaflets, posters, small messages on the menus. Let tourist know where the money goes to: collect and spread hotel employees statements, hotel should inform tourist about local initiatives sponsored by them;
- To apply visitor management tool; organize awareness rising events, such as thematic interactive workshops, small fairs in villages, various personal contacts with visitors/residents;
- One idea could be to give all actors (not only tourists), the possibility to add their commitment to the text, i.e. presenting a principle and after that a destination manager/tourist /an accommodation provider, could be describe what she/he does light of the aim of the Charter and how to measure and improve the performance;
- A shorter – easy to read - version of the Charter should be published in a leaflet available in all Info Points, hotel lobbies, rail stations, hotels etc.;

Q15: How should the Charter be disseminated?



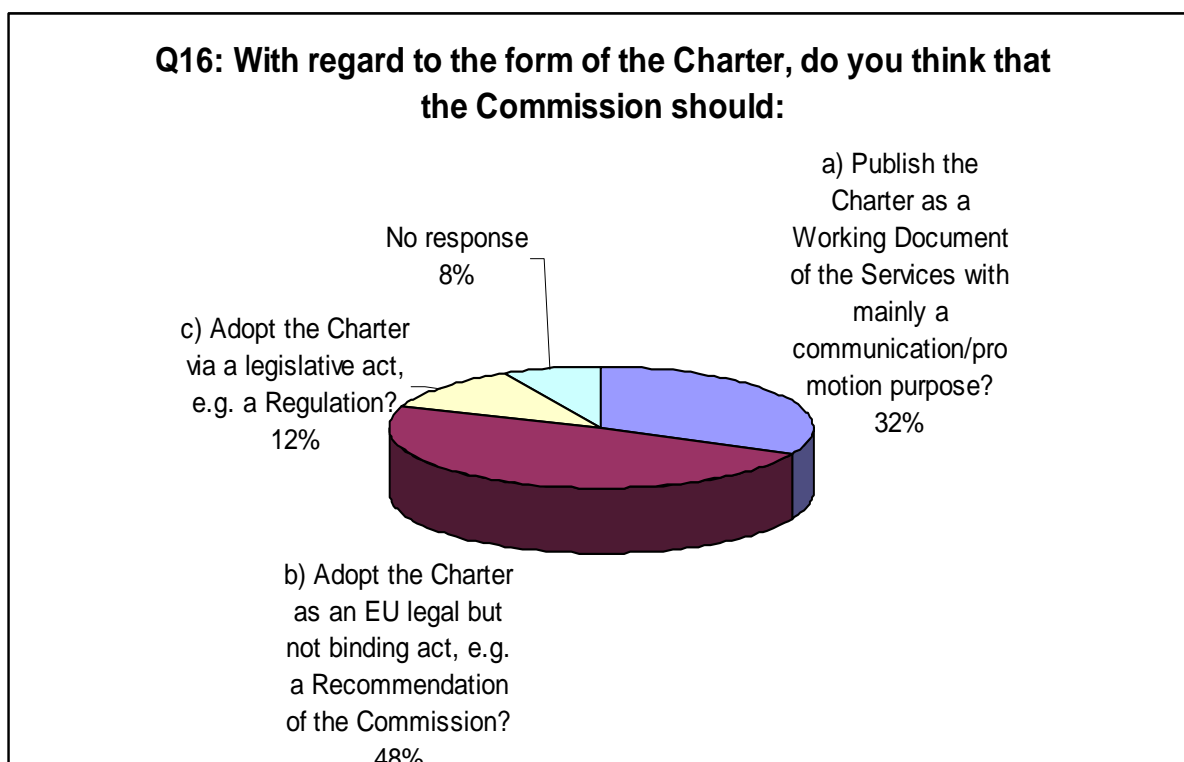
Quite often the respondents indicated multiple responses, choosing 2, 3 or all options proposed. The biggest support was expressed for propositions a) web/online based publications and c) conferences/public events. However many respondents were in favour of all options proposed.

On d) Other - please specify, the following suggestions, among others, were proposed:

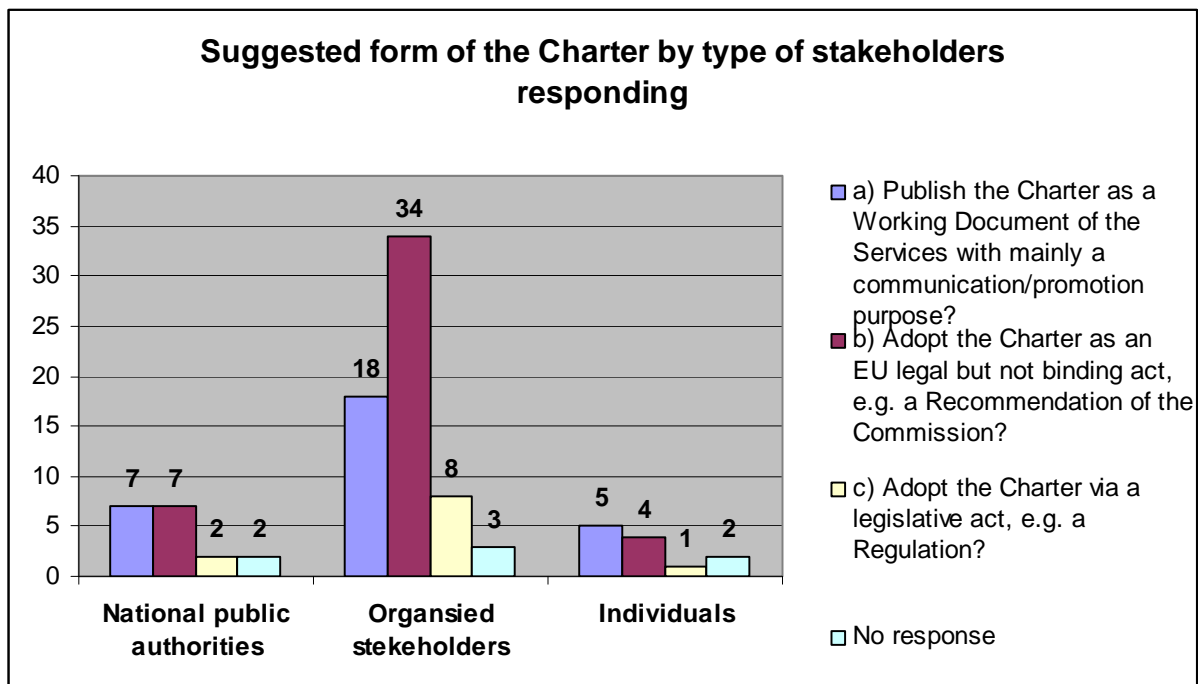
- through the Virtual Tourism Observatory
- animation and information activities for tourists
- tourist may be given a guide in form of the EU passport, containing core information, specific information and guidelines
- international tourism fairs
- through researches comparing the results and impacts of the Charter and non- Charter performance
- dissemination should depend on the target group;
- incorporating the Charter in educational or formative actions in universities, schools of tourism;
- through marketing activities of the stakeholders committed to the Charter implementation;

- direct communication with tourist agencies of the member states;
- through Media (local, regional, national and European) as well as local, national and international events and trade fairs; TV programmes; social networks, radio, all UN events, Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism.

Q16: With regard to the form of the Charter, do you think that the Commission should:



In total, almost a half (48%) of the respondents would see the Charter in a form of EU legal but not binding act. 32% of all responses indicated that the option of a Working Document of the Commission services with mainly communication/promotion purpose could be the best alternative. 12% of respondents expressed their support for adoption of the Charter via a legislative act e.g. a Regulation. 8% of responders did not respond to this question.



Among the Member States Tourism Authorities responding to the consultation: 33% of them were equally for the option a) or b) and 11% for the option c) or no response.

Among the organised stakeholders (organisations, associations, businesses representative, regions...) the proportions were different: Clear majority (53%) of them were in favour of the option b), 29% for option a) and 13% for c). 5% did not respond to this question.

Among individuals who responded to the questionnaire 42% were for the option a), 33% for the option b), 8% for c) and 17% of them did not respond to the question.

Comments provided to this question mentioned that anything wrapped up in legislative/legal document may not be the best way to engender support. Given that it should be a good way to communicate shared principles and examples of good practice and not to represent legal obligations, therefore it is not wishful the Charter being developed into a more formal instrument. The word “charter”, per se means a non-binding document, a strong commitment for the future and a stimulus for further European or national legislations; if the Commission is to develop a compulsory document, it shall not be called “charter” in order to avoid incoherencies.

On the other side, it was also expressed that there is a need for more political strength behind the Charter indicating the Commission true commitment to the sustainability agenda within the tourism sector.

Finally, some stakeholder stated that the Charter could be both, a legal but not binding act and a working document which should evolve according to the ground realities and evolution of the sector.

5. THE NEXT STEPS

The results of this consultation showed the general support of the majority of the stakeholders to the initiative.

The wish of the Tourism Policy Unit is to continue working on this initiative by reshaping the text of the first draft of the European Charter taking into account the comments gathered during the consultation and the TSG meeting of 6th December 2012. The aim is to improve the text, to gain even larger support and to make the Charter as inspirational as possible for all players involved in tourism.

ANNEX - LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS WHO RESPONDED TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM:

Public National Tourism Authorities (Tourism Advisory Committee members)

1. Czech Republic
2. Denmark
3. Greece
4. Belgium: Flemish Government
5. Belgium: German speaking Community
6. Lithuania
7. United Kingdom
8. Italy
9. Finland
10. Spain (TURESPANA)
11. Croatia
12. Austria
13. Cyprus
14. Poland
15. Slovakia
16. Portugal
17. Romania
18. Germany

Organised stakeholders (Organisations, Associations, Business Representatives, Regions... Cities, Tourism Boards)

19. European Union of Tourism Officer – EUTO
20. UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme
21. EDEN Network Association ASBL
22. EUROPARC Federation
23. Chambers of Commerce (IT, FR, ES, GR, INSULEUR, Adriatic,...)
Union Camere

24. EDF – European Disability Forum
25. EARTH asbl – European Alliance for Responsible Tourism and Hospitality
26. Marco Polo Echanger Autrement (FR) – Member of EARTH
27. AITR, Associazione Italiana Turismo Responsabile, IT
28. Association of Danish Travel Agents and Tour Operator – DRF
29. Asociacion Hotelera de Menorca (ASHOME)
30. Federacion Eurpresarial Hotelera de Mallorca
31. Hostelling International
32. RETOUR – Rete Turismo Responsabile (IT)
33. IRU – International Road Transport Union
34. ECTAA – European Travel Agents’ and Tour Operator’s Associations
35. ECOTRANS – No Questionnaire, General comments + Comments to text
36. EFCO & HPA – European Federation of Camping Site – No questionnaire
37. The Association of Scotland’s Self –Cateres
38. LEGAMBIENTE Turismo – No Questionnaire
39. Chamber of Commerce of Milan, IT
40. The Thomas Cook Group plc
41. The Danish Campingboard – DK
42. European Cruise Council – ECC
43. CER – Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies
44. CEE web for Biodiversity (Sustainable Tourism Working Group of CEE web)
45. EURISY Association of Space Agencies in Europe
46. Laseurope (European Federation representing the leasing and automotive rental industries in Europe)
47. ABTA – The Travel Association (UK)
48. ENAT –European Network for Accessible Tourism Association
49. EUROMONTANA – the European Association for Mountain Areas
50. NECSTOUR

51. International Social Tourism Organisation – ISTO (including contribution of Family Holiday Association) (UK)
52. Hungarian National Foundation for Recreation
53. The GOZO Business Chamber, MT
54. ZEIT VERLAG, ZEIT REIZEN
55. Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile – FIA (Diamante Paolo, TSG)
56. University of Greifswald, DE
57. Alliance – The Greens German Bundestag
58. Chamber of Commerce of Pavia, IT
59. Tourism and Congress GmbH – Bonn/Rhein-Sieg
60. ETLC – European Trade Union Liaison Committee on Tourism
61. FITUS – Italian Federation of Social Tourism
62. NPO – Safe Coastal tourism (No questionnaire)
63. NTO (Austrian National Tourist Office ANTO)
64. Carinthia (concerted: Office of the Government of Carinthia, Kärnten Werbung GmbH, KWF Carinthian Economic Promotion Fund)
65. Styria (Styrian Government: Division for Tourism, Division for Regional Development)
66. Tyrol (Tourism Division of the Tyrolean Government and Tirol Tourist Board)
67. Upper Austria (Upper Austrian Tourist Board)
68. Vienne (Federal State/Province of Vienne)
69. Lazio Region Tourism Department
70. Province of Avelino – IT
71. Agencia Valenciana del Tourisme (Valencia Region Tourism Board)
72. Diputació de Barcelona, Spain
73. Turisme de Barcelona
75. German Association of Cities
76. Ruhr Tourismus GMBH
77. City of Krefeld, Germany Marketing – Department and Town Development
78. City of Marktredwitz, Tourist Information, DE

79. Volkstoerisme VZW
 80. Region Västra Götaland, Sweden and West Sweden Tourism Board
 81. Jointland Härjedalen Tourism, Regional Tourism
 82. National Parks Wales
 83. Tourism Society Scotland
 83. The Highland Council (UK)
 84. Tourist Organisation of Kragujevac, Serbia
 85. Dunira Strategy
 86. Carta di Rimini
 87. The Gozo Tourism Association, MT
 88. Visit Manchester
- + HOTREC (the response of this association is not included in the analysis made for this report, because the response was received late, after the analysis had been made. The comments submitted will be taken into account as far as possible for the future works on the Charter).

Individuals

89 -102 Individuals including Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG) Members