

The World Tourism Cities Federation Asia Pacific Tourism Conference concluded on March 27, with the theme of "One Belt One Road: Development of Tourism Corridor and City Hub".

P2

Projects

By the end of 2017, it is predicted that the total number of tourism trips between China and countries along the route in the last three years will be 110 million.

P3

Analysis



The initiative will give more opportunities and impetus for the global cultural tourism industry, making it a key pillar of economic growth.

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new stories of the Silk Road

No.

8

April, 2017

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Belt and Road Initiative takes tourism to new heights

As an open and comprehensive industry, tourism has played a unique role in pushing forward the Belt and Road Initiative. To realize connectivity, personnel exchanges and tourism come first. Tourism is an engine of global economic growth and a connector for global inclusive development. Its progress will advance related industries in the field, and will also improve infrastructure and change modes of production. Especially in the context of the internet and sharing economy, tourism is targeted as a strategic industry by most countries, regions, and cities.

Collaborating to boost Belt and Road tourism

If the fact that Zhang Qian, an ancient Chinese diplomat, visited Central Asia more than 2,100 years ago had opened up a channel for mutual understanding between China and the West, the Belt and Road Initiative has provided a new blueprint for open and inclusive regional cooperation, which will bring peaceful development, mutual benefit, and win-win results. In this blueprint, tourism is meant to be of great importance.

The World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) Asia Pacific Tourism Conference concluded on March 27, with the theme of “One Belt One Road: Development of Tourism Corridor and City Hub”. A proposal released at the conference points out that all members are ready to take advantage of the WTCF in organizing events and establishing platforms. And they will implement the proposal in eight areas: tourism product development, infrastructure construction, industry standards setting, tourism investment and financing, improved consulting services, tourism promotions, talent exchanges and training, and information sharing. They will also take a lead in realizing the proposal to provide more experience for tourism cooperation and development.

Call to Action: Building Node Cities on the Belt and Road Tourism City Corridor (excerpts)

1. Increasing openness and cooperation to achieve reciprocity and win-win results

Countries along the route should embrace a development philosophy of openness, inclusiveness, and sharing in the construction of the Belt and Road. Institutional barriers should be removed to create open markets, and traffic rights should be relaxed to link airports, ports, and stations. Road connectivity and infrastructure should be further enhanced for a land-ocean-air international travel network. Border restrictions should be increasingly eased and services such as mutual acceptance of identification, rescue vehicles, and travel insurance will be improved, to make tourist visas more convenient. A tourism cooperation conference mechanism should be set up, as well as other cooperation mechanisms, to lure more social capital into tourism development and more people to travel.

2. Appreciating cultural diversity and establishing cooperation mechanisms

All members should respect one another's historical heritage, nationalities, religions, beliefs, languages, customs, cultures, and environments. Natural environments should be preserved and human civilizations should be supported to provide excellent, ecologically-minded, and varied tourism products. Tourism resources should be protected and used to promote the economies in cities along the route.

Win-win cooperation mechanisms will be built to stimulate multi-lateral cooperation that is cross-border, -industry, -level, and -sector, in order to create a greater market for tourism development.

3. Making use of the WTCF to create tourism products

By fully exploiting the WTCF as a platform, all members should analyze cultural traditions in different countries, regions, and nations, to respond to various requirements from tourists. Diverse, top-quality tourism products, featured brands, and itineraries will be designed and promoted, making the Belt and Road Initiative a driving force of global tourism. The countries should also focus on the continuous development of the cruise industry to make full use of marine tourism resources and fine international cruise itineraries.

4. Encouraging key cities to innovate services

Key cities along the route will jointly organize tourism forums, academic exchanges and media releases, and provide products and services, to get involved in the international market. Tourism cities should improve basic services for international tourists, such as providing services in more global languages and adding signs. A key city will also develop services suited for individual tourists and enhance its reception of personalized travel, based on new media resources.

5. Improving emergency systems for tourist safety

Safety is the first prerequisite in tourism. Countries and cities along the route should take tourism safety seriously by solving contradictions and problems via bilateral or multilateral negotiations. Hub cities should guarantee social security and regulate tourism markets to offer a safe and orderly tourism environment, and to make the “Belt and Road” tourism corridor a model of safety and harmony for global tourism.

In the Belt and Road Initiative, there is mutual respect and trust, win-win cooperation, and drawing on the civilizations of one another. Together in peace and towards the same target, the countries will be able to make new achievements in the construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, and deliver benefits to all their people.

People visit the “Cave Temples of Dunhuang: Buddhist Art on China's Silk Road” exhibition at Getty Center in Los Angeles, the United States on May 6, 2016.

Photo/ Xinhua



The WTCF Asia Pacific Tourism Conference is held in Penang, Malaysia, from 25 to 29 March 2017.

Photo/ World Tourism Cities Federation

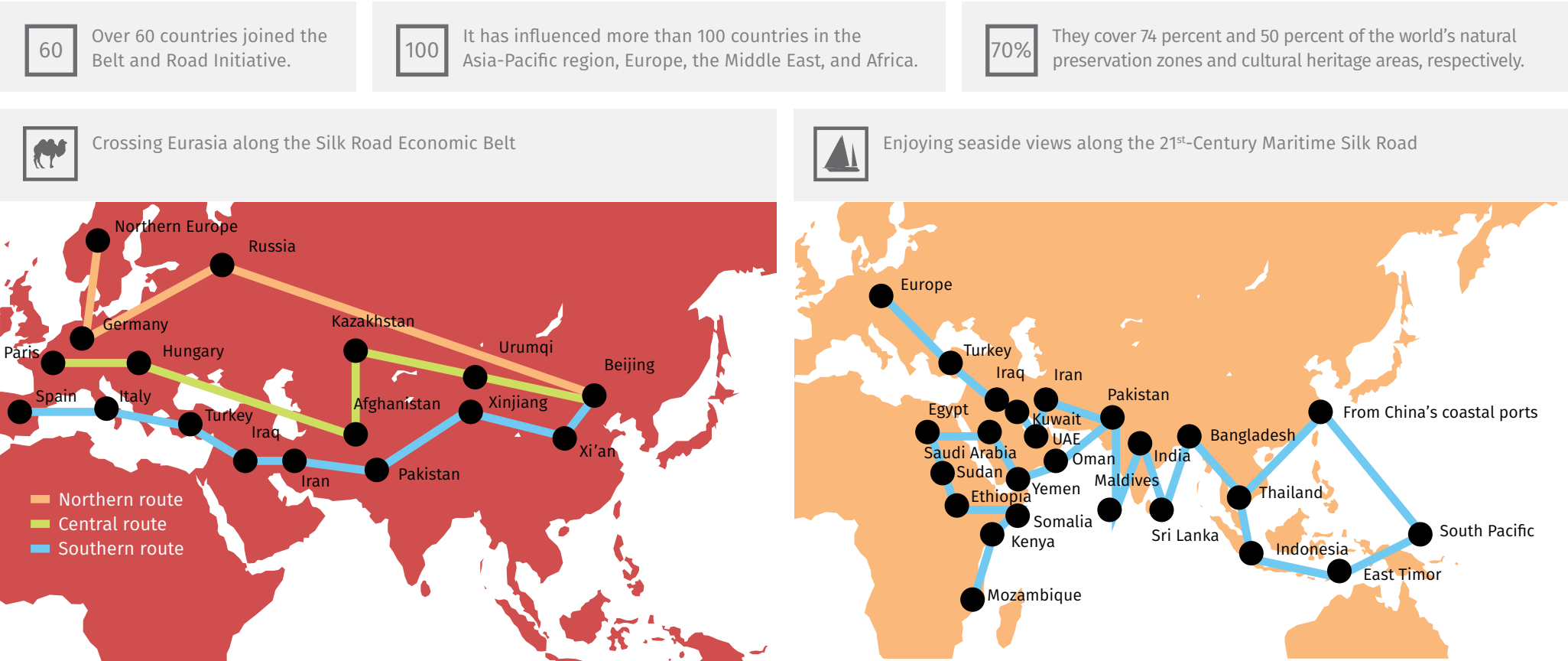
Dancers from Sri Lanka perform at Xi'an Silk Road International Tourism Expo in Xi'an, Shaanxi province on August 26, 2016.

Photo/ Xinhua



Tourism development along the “Belt and Road” route

1. A selection list of countries



2. Convenience brought by “Belt and Road”



Region-based tourism has changed traditional cooperation between China and countries along the Belt and Road, from simple cooperation between tourism agencies to an overall one between regions and countries, and from scenic spots to the tourism industry. More than cooperation between tourism companies, local residents will also take part in the construction, and share the benefits.

Moreover, we should include the concept of "Tourism Plus" in the cooperation agreements, which combines tourism with other sectors, such as commerce, industry, agriculture, forestry, healthcare, research, and education, to multiply the advantages.



Li Jinzao, head of the National Tourism Administration

Taleb Rifai, Secretary-general of the UN World Tourism Organization



The Belt and Road Initiative has offered great opportunities to countries and regions along the route, and better lives to local people, and will benefit the rest of the world in the long term.

In this context, the initiative will give more opportunities and impetus for the global cultural tourism industry, making it a key pillar of economic growth. The United Nations has paid more attention to the improvement of local infrastructure, while creating greater convenience for tourism at a controllable level. Further promoting the industry coincides with a key part of the initiative, which is enhancing interconnection of international tourism, in order to maintain convenient and safe mobility of tourists.

The Belt and Road Initiative has provided new opportunities for tourism cities around the world, while close cooperation in these cities has given new content for the vision of its construction.

Focusing on interconnection and tourism in the initiative has brought new opportunities to China and countries along the route in their cooperation and development, and enhanced regional tourism cooperation to a new level.



Cecília Szilas, Hungarian Ambassador to China

Ujhelyi István, Chairman of the Europe-China One Belt One Road Culture & Tourism Development Committee, and Vice-chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism



The Belt and Road Initiative has laid a strong foundation for cooperation between Europe and China in fields including culture and tourism. The Europe-China One Belt One Road Culture & Tourism Development Committee will work harder to promote such cooperation and increase exchanges and understanding between the people, to build a long-term, stable, friendly, and mutually-beneficial Europe-China relationship.

The Belt and Road Initiative will strengthen cooperation among governments, cities, and enterprises. First, simpler visa policies and customs will be adopted in tourism cities, especially visa-free policy and fast customs clearance. Second, cooperation in tourism resources will be emphasized, such as integration of new products and routes, and research on top routes and projects. Third, government-guided agencies and enterprises will apply "Internet Plus" to a set of more convenient services for tourists.



Song Yu, Secretary-general of the World Tourism Cities Federation, and Director of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development