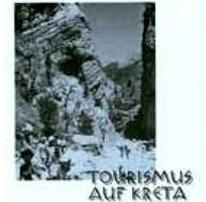




Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

Environmentalism & tourism on Crete no theme?! **Tourism & environmentalism are no contradiction!?**



If holidaymakers search the Internet to get information about environmental activities of their envisaged holiday destination, they surf mostly in vain. This applies especially for Greece and in particular to Crete. Once who has driven the biting smoke of wild dumps in Crete the tears in the eyes, know that the environmental awareness in Greece has no light state – and therefore do not expect corresponding information on the “Hellas-Homepage”. There are several examples of consistent, arisen from private initiative in the tourism industry, environmental protection on Crete. Unfortunately, existing information do not always find the due consideration in the public media therefore the trip planner must sear for long if he/she wants to find out more about “environmentalism & tourism” of the holiday destination (e.g. Crete). Add to that the no longer supported awareness for the environment at the various actors in the holiday industry and the hiding of the long proven knowledge that habitat only can be obtained if **all** the parties concerned engage. The efforts for greater sustainability in the tourism often exhaust itself in the environmental field and take at most economic aspects for the tourism industry in consideration. This throws up questions for social justice, the distribution of benefits and burdens from the tourism but even after the political participation.

In June 1992, **Agenda 21** has been adopted by the Conference for environment and development of the United Nations (**UNCED**) in Rio de Janeiro. It includes all major policy areas of environmentally sound and sustainable development in 40 chapters; the programme of action for the 21st Century was signed by more than 170 countries. The "Agenda 21 for the travel & tourism industry of the **WTO** (World Tourism Organization) / **WTTC** (World Travel & Tourism Council)" adopted further action programmes followed by numerous memoranda of understanding. Its implementation is in the hands of the country's tourism associations. So, the SRV (Swiss Federation of travel agencies) for example adopted a commitment with the "Declaration of Crete" (**EvK**) in 1988, whose goal is the development of a principle which should take the protection of the environment into account. On pressing environmental problems will not simply be reacted. Rather possibilities should be recognized as well as chances should be used to make a precautionary measure for active future constitution.

The steps taken so far are encouraging, but still insufficient. Many people in Europe are aware of the possible negative impact of tourism on the environment and expect a high quality of the environment in their holiday resorts, for which the countries of destination need to be responsible, supported by the respective tourist industry as their contractual partners. Environmental management "on site" is also a task of the tour operator, as it is practiced in the TUI hotels (Robinson Club, Grechotel, Iberotel). The tourism market must move towards sustainability including among other things, an information service on the existing certified offers, their labelling and significance is important. Until the year 2003 such information was only sparsely available.

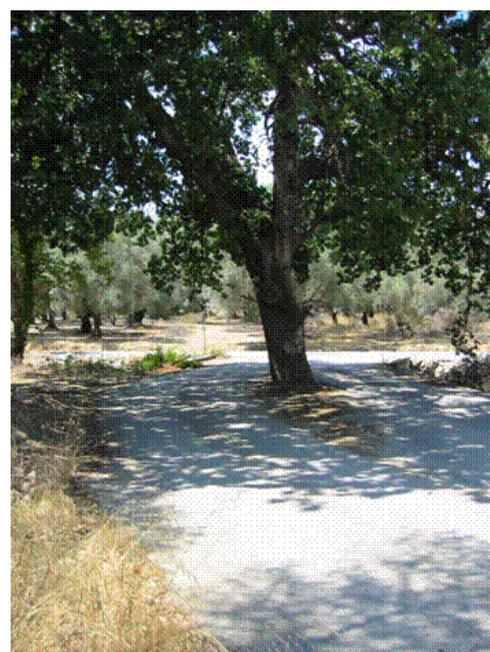


Today there are a variety of online databases, which provide both, consumers and tour operators as well as other tourist service providers with the necessary information. Pioneer in this area is the **VISIT Holiday Guide**: European travel guide with a "Plus" on environmental quality (www.yourvisit.info) and the **Green Travel Market**: Information service on the subject of sustainable tourism for tour operators (www.greentravelmarket.info). Here also the holiday searchers can find the information that they do not get through the tour operator.



Compliance with EU directives and regulations to the European environmental protection shall apply (as in all EU States) to Greece (and Crete). Unfortunately, the environmental awareness has not arrived everywhere - and so there is still a need of informative activities to raise the awareness to all sectors of a society to the environmental problems and their impacts: therefore see also the themes and posts within our forum of the Crete Environmental Forum as well as the leaflets No. 007-04/E and 037-04/E at http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/NLUK_en.htm.

Through the tourism Crete faces today a variety of problems. There is an increasing dependence on tourism, especially since other economic areas, such as the large agriculture, are strongly decreasing since the 1970s. In addition, there are problems with the Parahotellerie. Ecological effects caused by noise and stress of marine and local ecosystems. Increasing water consumption and waste generation are more ecological problems of tourism. The large number of visitors also results in psychological stress of inhabitants; traditional social structures are destroyed, often also the classic family associations. In addition, the unbalanced geographical distribution of tourism on the island is a distinctive issue. Here strategies and concepts are required, that encounters these negative effects and makes tourism on Crete (in particular to benefit of the local population).



Pictures are showing examples for “pro & contra environmentalism” at Crete. The image left shows (“contra environmentalism”) a “witnesses to an accident” on a Canyon slope in the Ida-Mountains. The EU regulation “End of Life Vehicle Directive (ELVD) has not arrived yet on Crete – and so the car scrap stay in the “botanic”; here it does not “serve” the overall appearance of the landscape but as “Target” (as well as many place-name signs – see small image in the top centre) for the arms loving Cretans. The right image is showing a newly bituminized road (at Amari, South-West of the Ida-Mountain), which leads left and right around an old oak tree (to the account of the road width). Large, shady oak trees became rare in Crete and since we could not detect a “traffic saving action” at this place we score this picture as “pro environmentalism” (like the sign about environmentalism, seen in Keratokambos/Kastri (South-Crete); small image at the centre bottom).

Pictures: H. Eikamp (17.07.2003 / 27.08.2002)