

### The Conference on Managing Tourism Across Continents, September 2-4, 2020 (MTCON'20)

The first Conference on Managing Tourism Across Continents (MTCON'20), which was organized by the Association of Turkish Tourism Academics (TUADER), was held virtually between September 2 and 4, 2020. The conference, which had been planned to be arranged face-to-face in Antalya/Turkey in April 2020, had to be postponed to September 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and was held online. The slogan of the conference has been determined as "Tourism for a Better World".

MTCON'20 was held with the contribution of many people. Conference chairs were Prof. Dr. Muzaffer UYSAL and Prof. Dr. Orhan ICOZ; conference coordinator was Prof. Dr. Ebru GUNLU KUCULALTAN; conference vice-coordinator and operations coordinator was Asst. Prof. Dr. Alaattin BASODA. Furthermore; an organizing board of 24, an advisory board of 23, a scientific board of 98, and an organization team of 56 took part in the conference. Besides, the technical infrastructure sponsor was Hotel Linkage, and thanks to the technological support they provided, the conference was held smoothly in the virtual environment.

The conference aims to bring tourism scientists, students, and professionals from all over the world together and to discuss new trends and developments in all tourism related-disciplines from different continents in a multicultural scientific environment. The second important aim of the conference is to contribute to the development of a more sustainable environment through responsible tourism development and to try to establish more peaceful international relations.

MTCON'20 was held with the support of 41 national and international universities. At the congress, a total of 210 papers from 24 countries were presented. Besides, experience interviews and sectoral panels were also arranged. With its strong technological infrastructure and over 4000 participants from 36 countries, it has attracted the attention of many other tourism academics and professionals around the world. The conference aroused the interest of many tourism academics and professionals around the world with its presentations, interviews, panels, and strong technological infrastructure. Accordingly, it has reached over 4000 participants from 36 countries.

The opening speeches of the conference were made by Prof. Dr. Orhan ICOZ, Prof. Dr. Muharrem TUNA, and Prof. Dr. Muzaffer UYSAL. At the

conference, three experience conversations were held so that the leading academics of tourism can share their deep academic perspectives and experiences with participants. The moderator of the "Experience Conversation-I" was Assoc. Dr. Güney CETIN GURKAN and the guests were Prof. Dr. İbrahim BIRKAN, Prof. Dr. Celil ÇAKICI, and Prof. Dr. Derman KUCUKALTAN. In this conversation, experienced tourism academics shared their private sector and academy experiences abroad with young participants. Panellists mentioned about the challenges at the beginning of their careers and how they overcame them. They highlighted the possible difficulties that young people may experience in their academic lives and pointed out the importance of patience and work ethic.

The moderator of the "Experience Conversation-II" was Asst. Prof. Dr. Necibe SEN and the guests were Prof. Dr. Suavi AHIPASAOGLU, Prof. Dr. Meryem AKOGLAN KOZAK, and Prof. Dr. Ahmet AKTAS. In the 2nd conversation, the future of recreation and tourism guidance departments was discussed, and it was emphasized that tourism departments in the cities where tourism has not developed adequately yet could not reach the desired level of success. The moderator of the "Experience Conversation-III" was Asst. Prof. Dr. Demet TUZUNKAN and the guests were Prof. Dr. Muzaffer UYSAL and Prof. Dr. Fevzi OKUMUS. In the 3rd conversation, the situation of the tourism academy abroad -especially in the USA- was mentioned, the stories of the panellists themselves residing in the USA were shared, and recommendations were given to young academicians in this direction.

The plenary session convened on the first day of the conference. The plenary session was moderated by Prof. Dr. Ebru GUNLU KUCULAKTAN with the participation of Prof. Dr. Tanja MIHALIC, Prof. Dr. Joseph SIRGY, Prof. Dr. Nina Katrine PREBENSEN, Prof. Dr. Serena VOLO, and Prof. Dr. Cihan COBANOGLU. In the plenary session, opinions on current issues that will affect the tourism industry were shared. The main topics of these sessions were sustainable and responsible tourism, self-congruity theory, resilient tourism innovations, visual big data, and smart tourism.

In addition to all these, two panels were held at the conference. The first one was "Alumni Panel in the Future of Tourism" and the other was "Panel for Representatives of the Tourism Sector." Alumni Panel was moderated by Asst. Prof. Dr. Mehmet BAHAR. The guests of the panel were Soner INAL

(chairman of ATMED), Erdogan OZKAN (chairman of ATIOYOMED), Feridun ERGUN (chairman of BTIOYOMD), Selver KORKUT (chairman of Trade and Tourism Graduates Association), Erdem DASI (chairman of METIOD), and Ali Dede COSKUNER (chairman of NEVTIM). In the Alumni Panel, it was stated that tourism is not accepted as a profession and the necessity of the Law for Tourism Profession was highlighted. It was also underlined that job security for the graduates of tourism and tourism-related fields should be provided as well as the priority given to the graduates of these fields in the personnel recruitment of units such as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and provincial/district organizations. The Panel for Representatives of the Tourism Sector was organized to include all the stakeholders of the tourism sector at the conference. In the panel, whose moderator was Prof. Dr. Muharrem TUNA and the panellists were Firuz BAGLIKAYA (president of TURSAB), Kaya DEMIRER (president of TURYID), Oya NARIN (president of TTYD), and Sururi CORABATIR (chairman of TUROFED), it was underlined that people can take risks to meet their travel needs despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the conference, it was aimed to emphasize the issues such as nature, environmental awareness, and sustainability that have been frequently focal point in tourism during recent years, and to build a friendship bridge through tourism by getting to know each other better. The second Conference on Managing Tourism Across Continents (MTCON'21), will be held between March 1 and 3, 2021. If the congress will be held face to face or virtual will be determined depending on the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**İpek İtir Can, M.Sc.**

Anadolu University Faculty of Tourism  
Department of Tourism Management  
*ipekic@anadolu.edu.tr*