

In 2016, we launched an annual global trends theme issue that is edited by Global Trends Editor Dr Jorge Costa and his colleagues. Jorge is a founding member of the *WHATT* editorial advisory board, and he links *WHATT*'s global trends issue to an annual, professionally organized conference for senior practitioners. The outcomes (after presentation, discussion and peer review) are published annually in *WHATT* Issue Number 6. Prior to publication, Jorge and his team convene a trends event each year in Porto, Portugal which is attended by senior tourism practitioners and policy makers from Europe and beyond. In 2017, the topic was *Trends and opportunities for businesses and destinations*, and the event was attended by more than 200 invited guests from major associations, government and industry. Speakers at the 2017 trends event included: Yolanda Perdomo, Director, Affiliate Member Program, UN World Tourism Organisation, Daphne Kasriel-Alexander, Consumer Trends Consultant, Euromonitor International, Richard Butler, Professor, University of Strathclyde, UK and John Bowen, Professor, University of Houston, USA. Most of these contributors developed their work for this issue together with analysts from IPDT – Institute of Tourism and the University of Algarve. The issue also includes practitioner insights from: the Azores Regional Secretary for Energy, Environment and Tourism, Futebol Clube do Porto Museum, the Madeira Regional Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Culture, the Mayor of Melgaço, the President, Tourism of Portugal, Travelport and The Fladgate Partnership. I should like to thank them, Jorge and his co-editors Mónica Montenegro, and João Gomes and Daniela Rodrigues and her colleagues at IPDT – Institute of Tourism, Portugal for providing an insightful analysis of some of the key issues affecting global tourism.

**Dr Richard Teare**  
*Managing Editor, WHATT*

## How are companies and destinations “surfing the wave” of global tourism?

Tourism trends and topics such as new tourist profiles, millennials and the sharing economy are at the top of the international agenda. Entities such as Airbnb are challenging many regulatory issues and the need for intervention in many destinations, as is currently happening in Barcelona, Sao Paulo, New York, Paris, Lisbon, amongst many others. By analyzing the responses of organizations and destinations to these trends and their possible future impacts, we will take the reader on a journey to explore some of the key issues affecting the tourism industry across the world, analyzing how tourists are looking for new experiences and the solutions that organizations and destinations are developing to accommodate a potential new paradigm of tourism growth.

*How are companies and destinations “surfing the wave” of global tourism?* Tourism has become a panacea used by most governments in the world as the potential solution to developmental problems. In fact, never before has an economic sector been so explored and revered, as is the case with tourism today. The World Tourism Organisation observes on its website that over the years, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. As such, these dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress.

Today, the business volume of tourism equals or even surpasses that of oil exports, food products and automobiles. Tourism has become one of the major players in international



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commerce and represents one of the main income sources for developed and many developing countries. This growth goes hand in hand with increasing diversification and competition among destinations. This global spread of tourism in industrialized and developed states has produced economic and employment benefits in many related sectors – from construction to agriculture and telecommunications. In fact, the contribution of tourism to social and economic well-being has improved over the years and presently is a reality in every part of the world. However, as with any sector that has witnessed major developments and growth, tourism is now under the spotlight in many major European cities, facing opposition from various groups that accuse the sector of undermining authenticity and promoting gentrification. Excess demand has already led to “tourists are not welcome here” slogans – now regularly seen on walls in Madrid, Lisbon, Barcelona and Paris amongst others. Given these trends in tourism, it is necessary to discuss its central role in the development and re-qualification of cities and destinations, bearing in mind that tourism needs to be planned and managed so that the original character and authenticity of a destination is preserved for future generations. This seems obvious, but the quest for profit sometimes blinds public and private decision makers and investors, and this can lead to the destruction of what really motivates tourists to travel and visit. The key question then relates to how much development and change can be accommodated by destinations and, at the same time, ensure that critical attributes are maintained and conserved.

As the rate of change in the business environment quickens, we must identify how these changes will affect our business and our customers and make adjustments. This is the context that justifies and defines our broad strategic question, especially as the answers and solutions are unique in each organization and destination.

**Jorge Costa**

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