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## Leading tourism businesses commit to global code of ethics endorsed by UN



Prince Felipe (left) and Princess Letizia of Asturias with UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai

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Fourteen prominent Spanish tourism businesses have signed up to follow the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, a set of principles backed by the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and designed to guide the development of the industry in ways that maximize socio-economic benefits and minimize negative impacts.

“If responsible tourism is to become a tangible reality in our world, it is essential that the private sector, like their counterparts in public institutions, embrace the principles of ethical, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism,” said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai, according to a [press release](#) released by the agency today.

“Today, these companies have underscored their dedication to corporate social responsibility, to support the protection and empowerment of vulnerable groups, consumers and humanity’s heritage, to champion gender equality, poverty reduction, accessibility, cultural and environmental sustainability, and to facilitate access to decent employment across the globe,” he said.

The commitment was made last week during the first International Congress on Ethics and Tourism which brought together more than 450 high-profile tourism officials, business leaders, international organizations and experts in Madrid, Spain, to discuss how to guarantee sustainable tourism as well as its role in poverty reduction, gender equality, and fighting exploitation in both the public and private sectors, among other topics.

“Today’s show of private sector commitment to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism from some of Spain’s most important tourism companies is an important step towards a more ethical tourism sector and one other businesses will surely follow,” said Prince Felipe of Asturias, who was present at the closing ceremony of the congress.

Among the companies to sign up for the code were the Spanish Federation of Tour Agents’ Associations, as well as several Hotel Federations for various regions in the country, such as the Balearic Islands.

The majority of the companies also signed the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism, committing themselves to concrete measures to protect children. The code was founded by ECPAT International, a global network for the elimination of child prostitution, child pornography and child trafficking for sexual purposes, and is funded by the United Nations Children Fund ([UNICEF](#)) and supported by UNWTO.

This commitment comes just ahead of World Tourism Day, whose theme this year is ‘Tourism – Linking Cultures.’ Mr. Rifai had previously highlighted this as an opportunity for tourism to contribute to the aims of the UN Alliance of Civilizations, an initiative launched in 2005 by Spain and Turkey under UN auspices to promote better cross-cultural relations worldwide. World Tourism Day will be celebrated on 27 September.

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