



New collaboration with European tourism researchers

Researchers from the Centre for Tourism have started a European network with a focus on tourism and experiences. Finding collaborations with the industry is an important part and Xperience Next at Lindholmen Science Park is on board.

Through a grant from the [European University Alliance EUTOPIA](#), Eva Maria Jernsand and Emma Björner at the School of Business, Economics and Law have been tasked with forming a network with researchers who focus on tourism and experiences. In mid-September, the research group met for the first time, during a two-day meeting in Gothenburg.

“In this first step, it's about getting to know each other and our research areas. The idea is that the network will pave the way for joint projects and applications for research funds”, says Emma Björner, researcher at the Gothenburg Research Institute at the School of Business, Economics and Law.

The collaboration between tourism researchers is the first of its kind within EUTOPIA and can perhaps inspire researchers in other disciplines. At the meeting in Gothenburg, researchers from Venice, Paris, Barcelona and Gothenburg participated.

“We have started to explore what we can do together within the field of tourism. It doesn't just have to be about research, it can also be linked to education. Students from our different universities could work together”, says José Fernández Cavia from Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona.



Introducing the Centre for Tourism, School of Business, Economics and Law

Need for a meeting place for innovation

Before the pandemic, tourism in Sweden corresponded to about 10 percent of both GDP and employment. Tourism contributes to local and regional development, investments, service, conservation and development of natural and cultural environments, and can enhance the attractiveness of places. When travel picks up again, there are many challenges linked to environmental impact and other sustainability aspects that are important to consider.

In the report "[Vägar till hållbar tillväxt - En förstudie om framtidens upplevelseindustri i Västsverige](#)" (Paths to sustainable growth - A prestudy on the future experience industry in West Sweden), written in 2021, Ola Bergström, professor at the School of Business, Economics and Law, states that the public sector is an important financier and organiser of experiences. Publicly funded destination organisations, such as Göteborg & Co, also play a central role in promoting the development of tourism and experiences. With an increased focus on sustainability, reduced travel and digitisation, public efforts are required that support innovation and development in new ways. The report proposed a number of measures to support sustainable growth, including creating a cohesive innovation environment for experiences, and starting a development programme.

These proposals have been heeded and in 2022, [Xperience Next](#) started to foster experience innovation together with national and international partners from business, the public sector and academia. The School of Business, Economics and Law is one of the Xperience Next partners, and during the research network's meeting in Gothenburg, a study visit was made to Lindholmen Science Park.



A workshop, at Xperience Next, at Lindholmen Science Park

“The programme for the experience industry, Xperience Next, is an innovation platform and dynamic meeting place for digitization, technology and business development, working for the transformation of a sustainable experience industry. Areas within culture, sports and tourism are explored in projects, and complex cross-sector cooperation between the public sector, business and research is facilitated”, says Anna Wennblad, Programme Manager.

Strengthening the collaboration between universities and public, private, and civil society is also important within EUTOPIA, and the collaboration around tourism and experiences is not only a research network. Companies and organisations around the universities are also part of the community. By extension, the new community means that universities, companies and public actors in the tourism and experiences sector in Gothenburg can collaborate with and learn from corresponding actors around Europe.

“We will see which collaborations might be interesting and which areas we can explore further together. It was very rewarding to meet representatives of the industry during the joint workshop at Xperience Next. Several interesting ideas about possible collaborations came up already during the workshop”, says Emma Björner.

In total, 29 people participated during the two-day meeting in Gothenburg.

See film from the meeting <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkOHKPXZ-p4>

Researchers from Venice, Paris, Barcelona and Gothenburg met to start up the new network.

Photo: Isac Lundmark

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<https://www.gu.se/en/news/new-collaboration-with-european-tourism-researchers>

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