



The Holy See

*Letter of the Holy Father John Paul II
to the Chairman and Delegates of the 90th General Assembly
of the International Tourism Alliance*

1. My pastoral visit to the Austrian nation coincides with the 90th General Assembly of the International Tourism Alliance being held in Vienna and it gives me great pleasure on this occasion to extend my good wishes.

In the International Tourism Alliance, you serve millions of people involved in tourism and travel. As a non-governmental organization within the international community you work for the general interests of humanity in such important aspects of daily life as traffic safety, education, health and the environment

2. Tourism makes it possible for people of different cultures, religions and races to meet and exchange ideas for their mutual enrichment. It helps them to know one another better and to appreciate their mutual interdependence, thereby strengthening bonds of solidarity that are the foundation on which real peace and authentic human development can be built (cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38-39). Accordingly, I would encourage you, in your exchanges as individuals and in groups, to seek those solutions which facilitate the meeting of peoples and foster true dialogue.

3. One sector of your organization, called "Open Air Activities" which supervises such things as cycle touring, ramblers' groups and youth activities, is of particular interest. My personal experience has shown me how rewarding such activities can be. They do not usually involve the expenditure of large sums of money and yet they enable people to come into contact with the beauty of nature and to appreciate the natural environment which has been entrusted to all mankind as a precious heritage. They also provide an opportunity for personal growth and for the strengthening of friendships.

An influential organization such as yours manifests the healthy nature of its dynamism when it shows concern for the rights of all individuals, especially the weakest members of society. I was

therefore pleased to hear that you propose to include in the Public Policy Statements which guide the activities of your member clubs resolutions against the exploitation of persons and for the full respect of the basic human rights of all.

4. Your Organization has survived two World Wars and many other calamities which have shaken and divided humanity. In such a period of history its aims and purposes answer the needs of an ever-increasing number of our contemporaries. Accordingly, I wish you success in continuing to serve the people of today's highly mobile and interdependent society. May your commitment and courage, guided by God's help, measure up to the enormous task before you. As you cultivate the interests of the members of your clubs, may your vision embrace wider horizons which include the good of all mankind. Help to make our planet, where distant places are today united by fast and efficient means of communication, an ever more peaceful, prosperous and happy home for all its inhabitants.

From the Vatican, 8 June 1988.

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