

Environmentally Friendly Travelling – The Tourism Perspective - Assumptions of Hansruedi Müller -

Assumption 1: Tourism is *per se* harmful to the environment

In his publication „Die Landschaftsfresser“, Jost Krippendorf (1975) has spoken of „self-destruction tendencies“, i.e. the destruction of tourism by tourism itself. Hans Magnus Enzensberger has referred to tourism not only as the „most popular form of happiness“ but he has revealed the contradiction that lies in it: „Tourists destroy what they seek for by finding it“

Manifold are the threats for the environment caused by tourism and they are also widely known: While many of them may be discussed contradictory, one crucial conflict is obvious: Tourism requires mobility. No mobility – no tourism !

Assumption 2: More mobility – more tourism ! More tourism – more mobility ! More mobility – more tourism ? More tourism – more mobility ?

Attention: More mobility may also mean less tourism. If roads are congested more and more frequently by more and more people. If trains are increasingly overcrowded. And if airports reach the end of their capacities as hypermobile leisure wacks are searching more and more restlessly for remote destinations, perceiving their vicinity already mutilated by mass mobility. The consequence is a growing desire to practise tourism with less mobility.

Assumption 3: In spite of growing environmental awareness and eager political debates, the current tourism trends are more frequent, more individual, shorter, farther, faster. The energy consumption per day is growing and growing...

The big masses remain unimpressed by the environmental debates – at least as concerns their vacations. The holiday-addicted are successfully seduced by cheap and cheapest bargains. Knowledge and action increasingly diverge amongst travellers and tourism leaders.

Assumption 4: The tourism industry has undertaken considerable efforts to make holidays and travelling more environmentally friendly.

On the enterprise level as well as on the political level a lot has been done to



contain tourism's impacts on the environment. Methods such as the assessment of environmental effects have been developed, environmental management systems introduced, environmental officers hired and eco labels created. In many fields environmental engineering has helped to increase the eco-efficiency. Nevertheless, the „white“ industry has problems with its CO2 emissions.

Assumption 5: Environmentally friendly travelling has to be more than just cants. Sufficiency is unpopular.

Criticism on mobility and tourism has led to a huge amount of puns: We hear of soft, environmentally friendly, intelligent, integrative, ecological, sustainable forms of tourism. Or also of tourism with comprehension, with regard, with responsibility. But the therefore required sufficiency (i.e. less often but more unhurried and longer) is – at least until today – still lacking.

Assumption 6: The tourism industry has difficulties with the environmentally friendly mobility as it is neither attracting the masses nor promising high margins. Only niche players are able to survive.

Accommodations, mountain railways, restaurants, funparks, museums, event agencies, tour operators and travel agencies: They are all living on masses and margins. The latter have been shrinking in the course of the destructive competition and as a consequence of overcapacities. Actually a lot of firms and individuals in the tourism industry live on airtravel and on a high level of mobility. Therefore they may flinch from claiming soft mobility. The exceptions (niche players) prove the big majority.

Assumption 7: To boost environmentally friendly travelling it is necessary to intensify incentives and to accomplish the polluter pays principle. But the most efficient way would be to reduce the speed within the whole system:

The approaches are widely known: (1) To raise the attractiveness of public transport with regard to the frequency of connections, quality and price. (2) Costs by cause taxation of fuels, especially of kerosene. (3) Promotion of energy-saving and low-emission vehicles (4) Optimisation of the traffic management in tourism destinations. But the best solution is to (5) slow down traffic as speed is the one and only dominant variable in the system. Thus: Implementation of the 400-200-100-30- equation (Karl Otto Schallaböck of the Wuppertaler-Institut). That would make vicinity more attractive and travelling more environmentally friendly.

