

# editorial

## Tourism in a VUCA World

The summer issue of *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal* features a collection of best papers presented at the International Tourism Conference Dubrovnik (ITCD) which was held from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of November, 2019. The conference was organized by the Institute for Tourism, one of the publishers of the Journal, on the occasion of the Institute's 60<sup>th</sup> work anniversary, with support by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia, the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Croatia, the Faculty of Economics & Business, University of Zagreb and the City of Dubrovnik.

As for most conferences, the goal was to bring together scholars and practitioners from the area of tourism, in order to exchange ideas and experiences, and to discuss the practical challenges encountered in the ever-changing tourism landscape. The sessions covered the following themes: Transformation in tourism; Spatial aspects of tourism – the impact of globalization; The role of social media in tourism's present and future; "Overtourism" impacts - new solutions; Questions of stewardship – from individual businesses to policy makers; Transformations of contemporary tourists; New directions in gastronomy and food experience; Destination marketing, branding and reputation for the new era; The other side of tourism: possible crisis and conflicts; Knowledge, innovation and education for VUCA tourism future; Changing nature of our societies and new travel trends; Smart destinations and ICT in hospitality; Tourism for all: new directions; Community roles and attitudes in VUCA world; The new age of enhanced visitor engagement and involvement; and The role of indicators in sustainable tourism development. Out of 79 contributions to the conference, 9 articles were finally selected for this special issue following peer-review.

As the title of this brief editorial says, the overarching theme of the conference was *Tourism in the VUCA World*, with the acronym standing for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity. The subtitle of the conference theme was *Towards the Era of (Ir)Responsibility* which seemed highly topical from a pre-COVID-19 perspective—i.e., at a time when problems caused by overtourism urged for a profound and accelerated transformation of tourism in many destinations across the globe. Now, from a perspective when it is rather obvious that the pandemic will bring many actors in global tourism and related sectors to their knees—i.e., now, when we face the problem of *under-tourism* as some say, the conference theme appears even more topical. Indeed, it appears as if over- and under-tourism are, in fact, two sides of the same coin, which is an inherently fragile and unsustainable tourism system created in many destinations worldwide. Let us therefore hope that the process of recovery, with its increased focus on resilience on the part of all actors involved, will finally lay the pathway for a better future tourism world.

**Josip Mikulić**, PhD, Editor-in-Chief