

MEET THE SPEAKERS

Manuel Butler, Director of the Spanish Tourist Office in the UK

Manuel Butler has played a key role in Spanish tourism promotion for over 25 years. His extensive career includes serving as Counsellor at the Spanish Embassy in Berlin, Head of Turespaña in both Miami and Frankfurt, and Director General at Turespaña's headquarters in Madrid. He has also held the position of President of the European Travel Commission and returned to Turespaña in London after three years as Executive Director of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Under his leadership, the Spanish Tourist Office in London successfully re-established Spain as Britain's top tourism destination following the pandemic. A passionate advocate for sustainable and accessible travel, Butler is committed to ensuring that his tourism strategy focuses on long-term sustainability.



Emma Aparici Vázquez de Parga, Ambassador of Spain in the UK

Throughout her diplomatic career, Emma Aparici Vázquez de Parga has held various positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Spain, working in the office of different Ministers and in the Directorate-General for the United Nations. Overseas, she served as Deputy Head of Mission at the Spanish Embassy in Libya and as Secretary at the Mission of Spain to the United Nations. She also served as Secretary General for Foreign Affairs at the Prime Minister of Spain's Office. She has been awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Isabella the Catholic and the Order of Civil Merit. Emma Aparici Vázquez de Parga was appointed Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in December 2025.



Rosario Sánchez Grau, Secretary of State for Tourism

Rosario Sánchez Grau is an economist and member of the Audit Corps of the Sindicatura de Comptes of the Balearic Islands, with early career experience at KPMG and extensive leadership roles in regional public administration. She has served as Government Delegate in the Balearic Islands and as Regional Minister of Finance and External Relations, where she oversaw COVID-19 business support and EU Next Generation projects. Her deep knowledge of the Balearic tourism sector and experience managing European funds position her strongly in her role as Secretary of State for Tourism, driving the sector's transformation and the execution of Spain's Recovery, Transformation and Resilience initiatives.



Simon Calder, Travel Expert and Broadcaster

Simon Calder is Britain's leading travel commentator and is known as "the man who pays his way" which means that he pays for his own travel. He began his career at Gatwick airport, where he cleaned out planes for Sir Freddie Laker and, later, frisked passengers. He then started to write travel guidebooks and travel articles. Today Simon is Travel Correspondent for the Independent. Simon also writes for the Evening Standard, National Geographic as well as many other publications. Simon is a regular guest on national TV and radio, often seen on BBC Breakfast, Good Morning Britain, This Morning, CNN, ITV News, Channel 5 and Sky News. Plus BBC Radio 2, 4, 5, LBC, Times and Talk. He is frequently interviewed on national and local BBC radio.



Claire Lampon, Marketing and Communications Lead, Travalyst

Claire Lampon is the Marketing and Communications Lead at Travalyst, the independent not-for-profit coalition founded by Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex, working to change the way the world travels – for good. With over 13 years' experience in the tech, tourism, culture and sustainability sectors, Claire creates and leads content and communications strategies that have storytelling at their heart. Her previous work has included developing a communications strategy to support a sustainable food system and a safer climate at the Soil Association and leading on a digital content strategy that brought the stories of Historic Royal Palaces to life through emerging technology. Claire has won numerous awards for her work and has spoken internationally in Los Angeles (keynote speaker at the Museum Marketing Summit) and in London (Culture Geek, Barbican).



Ezequiel Collantes, Institutional Director, Segittur

Ezequiel García Collantes currently serves as Institutional Director at SEGITTUR, the state-owned body responsible for driving innovation and technology in Spain's tourism sector. From 2021 to 2024, he was Deputy Director General of Artificial Intelligence at the Ministry of Digital Transformation and Public Administration, where he led national-level AI strategy initiatives, including the implementation of Spain's National AI Strategy, support for generative AI and language technologies, and contributions to the governance framework aligned with the EU Artificial Intelligence Act.



Carlos Cendra Cruz, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, Mabrian

Carlos Cendra Cruz is partner and Chief Marketing and Communications Officer at Mabrian, a global leader in Tourism Intelligence for Destinations. With more than 15 years of experience in leadership in business, marketing, market research and tourism, Carlos has been a partner of Mabrian since 2017, when he saw that Artificial Intelligence and data had the potential to change the way decisions are made in the tourism sector, making them more efficient and sustainable. His specialty is transforming complex research and data analysis into actionable strategies, with a focus on international marketing, strategic management, and data analytics. He is passionate about identifying emerging trends and optimizing destination management through the use of up-to-date contextual information.



José Manuel Camarero, Vice President, Turisme Comunitat Valencia - INVATTUR

José Manuel Camarero is a psychologist by training and a marketing professional by vocation, he has built his career in the tourism sector. After working at Paradores de Turismo, Marina d'Or and Visit Valencia, in April 2024 he was appointed Director General of Tourism for the Valencian Community and, since July 2024, has held the post of Regional Secretary for Tourism, leading the promotion, regulation and sustainability of tourism in the Valencian Community.



Fátima Blanco Villaverde, International Marketing Executive, Junta de Andalucía

With over 30 years of experience in destination management, Fatima is a specialist in Andalucía and deeply passionate about her work. Committed to promoting a slow, high-quality and sustainable tourism model that respects both the environment and local communities. Andalucía is not only her professional focus, but a region she proudly represents. Fluent in English and German, she enjoys helping tourism professionals discover the true essence, potential and unique character of Andalucía



Dr Xavier Font, professor of Sustainability Marketing, Independent Advisor at Travalyst

Dr Xavier Font is professor of Sustainability Marketing at the University of Surrey. He has published and consulted widely about different aspects of sustainable tourism production and consumption: certification, product development, marketing and communication, and policies and governance. He is currently serving as independent advisor in the Travalyst coalition. Recently he conducted the stakeholder consultation for the European Commission's Tourism Transition Pathway, reviewed two full size projects for UNEP in the integrated collaborative approaches for sustainable tourism (iCOAST) GEF program, and he was the Principal Investigator for the University of Surrey for the €24.5m EU Interreg project Experience to develop low season sustainable tourism visitor experiences.



Richard Hammond, Founder & CEO, Green Traveller Media

Richard Hammond is the Founder and CEO of Green Traveller Media where he manages a network of freelance writers, photographers and videographers to promote sustainable and regenerative tourism. He is an experienced videographer and has worked with tour operators, hoteliers and tourist boards to produce over 100 videos. For over 20 years, Richard has held a variety of roles in the media, including editor-in-chief of TravelMole, eco travel correspondent for the Guardian, and has written articles for a range of publications, including National Geographic, FT, Telegraph, The Times, and The Sunday Times. His book 'The Green Traveller', was published in 2022 by HarperCollins.



Mark Tanzer, Chief Executive, ABTA

Mark Tanzer has been Chief Executive of ABTA since 2005. ABTA is the UK's leading travel association with more than 900 corporate members, numbering between them 4,300 consumer brands. ABTA offers a broad range of services including financial bonding, health and safety guidance, customer support and alternative dispute resolution activities. ABTA works closely with international tourism destinations and with ABTA Members to support their sustainability strategies.



María Mar Suárez Armas, Counsellor for Tourism, Cabildo de El Hierro

María Suárez Armas is Councillor for Tourism at the Cabildo of El Hierro (Canary Islands), where she promotes a tourism model based on sustainability, regeneration, and local identity. With a professional background as a strategic consultant in key sectors—particularly tourism—she brings a holistic approach to planning, decision-making, and the transition towards more resilient development models. In public office, she leads pioneering initiatives such as El Hierro's Tourism Climate Action Plan—the first of its kind in the Canary Islands and Spain—which, contributing to positioning El Hierro as an international benchmark for non-mass, sustainable tourism aligned with the principles of regenerative tourism.



Ben Lynam, Head of Communications and Research, Travel Foundation

Ben Lynam is Head of Communications and Research at the Travel Foundation, a global NGO working to ensure tourism benefits destination communities and the environment. He leads the Foundation's advocacy agenda, including the Where Next? campaign for climate adaptation which identifies four big ideas to enable tourism's just transition, as well as the Destination Climate RiskScan project to bring data on climate risk to tourism destinations. Ben works closely with governments, DMOs, and industry leaders to reframe tourism's role in a warming world, with a focus on evidence-based, equitable approaches to climate adaptation. He has shaped the Travel Foundation's body of work including Envisioning Tourism in 2030 and Beyond, An Introductory Guide to Climate Justice in Tourism and Creating more Equitable Destinations.



Katerina Bomshtein, Destination Manager UK & Ireland, Turismo de Gran Canaria

Katerina Bomshtein is the Destination Manager for Gran Canaria in the UK and Ireland, based in Spanish Tourist Office in London, leading strategic market development, trade partnerships, and destination promotion across both regions. With extensive experience in international tourism and destination marketing, she has played a key role in strengthening Gran Canaria's presence within the British and Irish travel sectors. Known for building strong relationships with tour operators, travel agents, media, and industry stakeholders, Katerina combines deep market insight with a passion for showcasing the island's diverse tourism offering. Her work continues to drive visitor growth and position Gran Canaria as a leading year-round destination.



Margarita del Cid, Mayor of Torremolinos

Margarita del Cid has been Mayor of Torremolinos since December 2021 and has a long-standing background in public administration. A Law graduate from the University of Málaga, with specialist training in Urban Planning and a Master's degree in Economic and Urban Management, she has also completed the Political Leadership Programme at Deusto Business School. A councillor since 1999, she has held senior portfolios including Urban Planning, Mobility and Social Welfare, served as Deputy Mayor, and was a Member of Parliament from 2011 to 2014 as Deputy Spokesperson for the Tourism Committee. A long-standing member of the Popular Party, she has held key leadership roles, including General Secretary of the PP in Málaga (2012–2017) and President of the PP in Torremolinos since 2016, alongside her current role as mayor.



Kate Nicholls OBE, Chair, UK Hospitality

Kate Nicholls OBE is the full-time Chair of UKHospitality, the powerful voice representing the broad hospitality sector, and leads its lobbying, campaigning and media work. Kate was previously its CEO for seven years, since its inception in 2018. Kate previously worked as CEO and Strategic Affairs Director of the Association of Licenced Multiple Retailers (ALMR). Kate sits on the Government's Tourism, Hospitality, and Food & Drink Sector Councils, where she represents the wider hospitality and tourism sector. As a passionate advocate for inclusivity in hospitality, Kate is also the Government's first Disability Ambassador for hospitality. Kate is the Chair of the Institute of Licensing and ACC Liverpool, a board member of Best Bar None, and a trustee of Hospitality Action and Springboard. She has previously chaired the Tourism Alliance, London Night-time Commission, and London Tourism Recovery Board.



Nick Brooks-Sykes, Director of Tourism, Marketing Manchester

Nick Brooks-Sykes is Director of Tourism at Marketing Manchester, Vice Chairman of the Tourism Alliance and a Fellow of the Tourism Society. Gaining early exposure to the hospitality industry through his parents' 52-bedroom hotel, his early career began at Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and, as a fluent French and German speaker, he has spent time working for tour operators in both Paris and Germany. With over thirty years of experience in the tourism sector, Nick has held several senior management roles at the North West Tourist Board, North West Regional Development Agency, and Bath Tourism. In his current role, Nick leads the tourism and convention team at Marketing Manchester, the agency responsible for promoting Manchester on both national and international stages. Marketing Manchester is the official Local Visitor Economy Partnership for Greater Manchester.



Pere Granados, Mayor of Salou

Pere Granados has been the mayor of Salou since 2009 and is a key figure in local politics, with a long-standing commitment to serving the municipality. Granados began his political career in 1995, holding various positions in Salou's local government, including Public Safety, Culture, Education, Finance, and Economic Promotion. Since 2009, he has led the independent political group FUPS and currently serves as President of the Salou Municipal Tourism Board. He has also been a member of the Tarragona Provincial Council, where he has held responsibilities in the Knowledge Region and, currently, Employment and Entrepreneurship Policies. From 2022 to 2023, he served as President of the Spanish "Alliance of Sun and Beach Tourist Municipalities" (AMT), and he is active in several tourism and territorial development bodies.



Ade Adepitan, BBC Presenter and Disability Advocate

Ade Adepitan MBE is a Paralympic medallist, television presenter, actor, and philanthropist with over two decades of experience in broadcasting and advocacy. He is known for fronting major BBC programmes on climate change and global travel, including Climate Change: Ade on the Frontline and Africa with Ade Adepitan. A former elite wheelchair basketball player, he won bronze for Great Britain at the 2004 Paralympics and has since become a prominent voice on inclusion, disability rights and social justice. Widely recognised for his contributions, he holds multiple honorary doctorates and remains a sought-after motivational speaker on resilience, diversity and global issues.

