



High-level conference on **tourism**

Brussels, 27 September 2017, Hemicycle of the European Parliament

‘A European strategy to enhance the competitiveness of the tourism industry, a key driver for job creation’

On 25 March 2017, the leaders of the EU institutions and of the 27 Member States signed a solemn Declaration in Rome marking the anniversary of the Treaties. This Declaration emphasises that growth and employment are main priorities for the Union.

The tourism industry is a strategic sector in that context. Today, directly and indirectly, it already accounts for some 10% of GDP and jobs in Europe. Tourism also generates spin-offs in other key sectors, such as retail, agriculture and food, transport, construction, cultural and creative industries, textiles and shipbuilding.

At a time when the digital revolution, advanced manufacturing techniques and robotics lead to a diminished reliance on labour, tourism remains one of the most labour-intensive industries.

According to the World Tourism and Travel Council, more than 5 million new jobs linked to tourism may be created in the European Union over the next 10 years. 20% of these jobs go to young people under 25. Tourism hence represents a main avenue to combat youth unemployment, especially in several southern Regions where one out of two youths are unemployed.

The number of international tourists are set to double, from 1.1 billion to more than 2 billion, between now and 2030. Many of these tourists will come from an emerging new class with high spending power, half of which will come from Asia.

Europe, with its unique cultural heritage, landscape and nature, can attract a good part of this new demand. However, it would be a serious mistake to simply wait for this new growth to arrive like manna from heaven. Until the end of the 1990s, Europe played host to more than half the world's tourists; today, although it remains the world's first destination, that figure has dropped to 42%, and it is set to dwindle further to 30% by 2030.

Competition from new tourist destinations is increasing at a time when the European industry is facing significant challenges: investments, the digital revolution, the business environment, upgrading of skills, the fragmentation of efforts in promoting Europe as a destination and sustainability. To exploit the full potential of this sector the Union should support the effort of the tourism industry to become more competitive, transforming these challenges into opportunities.

The European Parliament is very active in this area, through the work of its Committee on Transport and Tourism, of a Task Force and of the Intergroup on Tourism and other relevant Committees. In September 2015, it adopted a resolution calling for an integrated European tourism policy.

For these reasons, on the 27 of September, World Tourism Day, the European Parliament is organising a high-level event to promote a European strategy on tourism as a key driver of growth and job creation.

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Hemicycle of the European Parliament – 27 September 2017, 14:00-19:00

Draft programme

12:30 Registration

14:00 - 15.30 Opening

President of the European Parliament, A. Tajani

European Commission Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, J. Katainen

Introduction

- European Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, E. Bieńkowska
- Minister of Entrepreneurship and Information Technology of Estonia, U. Palo (TBC)
- Director General of UNESCO, I. Bokova
- European Economic and Social Committee President, G. Dassis
- European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, K. Vella
- President of the European Committee of the Regions, K-H. Lambertz
- Head of the Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union, HE Ambassador Y. Yanyi
- Member of the European Parliament and Intergroup Co-Chair on "European tourism development, cultural heritage, Ways of St. James and other European cultural routes", C. Țapardel
- Member of the European Parliament and Vice-Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, I. Ujhelyi
- European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, T. Navracsics

15.30 - 17.15 Round table: How to attract more investment; improve the business environment and upgrade skills

Chair: Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, K. Delli

Introduction: European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, M. Thyssen

Guest: Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria, N. Angelkova

Speakers: Member of the European Parliament and Intergroup Co-Chair on "European tourism development, cultural heritage, Ways of St. James and other European cultural routes", F. Millan Mon

Executive Director of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, M. Favilla;

President of HOTREC, S. Kraus-Winkler; President of the European Travel Commission, P. De Wilde; Chair of the IMEX Group, R. Bloom; Chief Marketing Officer of Ryanair, K. Jacobs

Topics for discussion: *Taxation, Administrative obstacles and red tape, Connectivity, Infrastructure, Vocational training, Energy efficiency, Regional funds use, European Investment Bank, Horizon 2020, COSME, and the next budget*

17:15 - 18:50 Round table: Tourism innovation and digital economy

Chair: Chair of the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection, A. Van Bossuyt

Introduction: European Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society, M. Gabriel

Guest: Minister of Tourism of Romania, T. Dobre

Speakers: Member of the European Parliament and of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, C. Monteiro de Aguiar

President of Confturismo, L. Patanè; President and Chief Executive Officer of Amadeus IT Group, L. Maroto; Associate Professor of Economic Policy and Director of the Master of Economics of Tourism at Bocconi University, M. Antonioli; President of NECSTouR, P. Torrens; Executive Director and Director of Value Retail Management at Value Retail PLC, D. Bollier; Regional Councillor for Tourism of the Region of Emilia Romagna, A. Corsini

Topics for discussion: *The role of digital platforms, augmented reality and virtual travel and Collaborative economy*

17:15 - 18:50 Round table: Promoting Europe as the number one tourist destination (in parallel, in room PHS 3C50)

Chair: Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education, P. Kammerevert

Introduction: Commissioner for Regional and Urban Policy, C. Crețu (TBC)

Guests: Mayor of Venice, L. Brugnaro; Mayor of Budapest, I. Tarlós; Chair of the China Tourism Academy, B. Dai

Speakers: Member of the European Parliament and of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, I. De Monte

Vice Chairwoman and Secretary General of the Global Tourism Economy Forum, P. Ho; Senior Vice-President for Strategy and Investor Relations of Ctrip, Z. Xiaolu; Executive Director of the European Travel Commission, E. Santander; Vice-Chair of the Fondazione Altagamma, A. Branchini; President of the Associazione Dimore Storiche Italiane, G. Della Gherardesca; Tourism Director of the Region of Galicia, N. Castro

Topics for discussion: *Platform to support the promotion of Europe in third countries, Transnational tourism products (European Council Itineraries, etc.), EU Tourism Year - China and the European Year of Cultural Heritage*

#TourismEU