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*Committee on Regional Development*

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**2010/2206(INI)**

10.3.2011

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Transport and Tourism

on Europe, the world's No. 1 tourist destination – a new political framework  
for tourism in Europe  
(2010/2206(INI))

Rapporteur: Salvatore Caronna

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Transport and Tourism, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Points out that the Article 195 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union grants new powers to the EU with regard to tourism, particularly by complementing the action taken by Member States in respect of the principle of subsidiarity, with a view to enhancing that sector's competitiveness and capacity for dynamic and sustainable growth; stresses the importance of developing the tourism sector in order to strengthen the regional dimension within the EU and consolidate a sense of European citizenship;
2. Points out that Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund numbers among its priorities the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage as offering potential for the development of sustainable, high-quality tourism with a view to added value, stressing the importance of an integrated and coherent approach, thereby promoting economic growth and the creation of new jobs and helping to promote Europe as a favourite destination for visitors from both inside and outside the EU, highlighting its extraordinary cultural wealth, exemplified by UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and the exuberant natural beauty found in Natura 2000 sites across the EU; calls, in this context, for a clear commitment to increasing the promotion of tourism through the cohesion policy in the next programming period;
3. Emphasises that tourism has a tangible impact on economic, social and territorial cohesion in all the Member States; stresses also that tourism represents, or could represent, the main resource of some EU regions - e.g. islands, mountainous regions, remote border towns, sparsely populated regions, rural areas and outermost regions - which are lagging behind economically, and that it has a direct impact on growth in other sectors, and accordingly stresses the importance of not separating tourism from cohesion policy; stresses that in this context tourism could offer an opportunity for economic recovery, especially in regions affected by demographic decline or depopulation, and that there is a need to consider their accessibility, principally through extension of the trans-European transport network objectives to these regions;
4. Stresses the need for an active competition policy to monitor the trend towards concentration of the sector or any abuse of a dominant position;
5. Recalls that Europe's cultural heritage and regional and linguistic diversity represent a significant comparative advantage in the global tourism marketplace; calls for these factors to be given due recognition in economic analyses of the tourism sector, especially in the context of allocating resources to maintaining and upgrading destinations of cultural significance;
6. Stresses that social, economic and environmental sustainability are a prerequisite for developing and maintaining all tourism activity; urges the Commission to develop, if appropriate, after the launch of a public consultation and an impact assessment, and taking into account the best practices from Member States, a 'European label', in order to create

a profile for products and services of excellence and at the same time to enhance Europe's image worldwide, while coordinating this initiative with the 'European Heritage Label' and the UNESCO sites;

7. Calls on the Commission to support the inclusion on the World Heritage List of popular traditions within the Member States, including culinary traditions, with a view to preserving them for future generations and establishing a European strategy for the promotion of popular traditions at European and international level;
8. Reiterates that the development of sustainable and socially responsible forms of tourism would provide local economies with a lasting source of income and a means of promoting stable employment, while at the same time making it possible to safeguard and enhance the landscape and the cultural, artisanal, historical and social heritage of every region, also taking into account the opportunities provided by Natura 2000; supports, therefore, the exploitation of synergies between the promotion of tourism and all the regional specificities which can contribute to revitalising local and regional economies; welcomes the Commission's initiative to plan a strategy for sustainable coastal and marine tourism, and hopes that specific strategies will also be undertaken with regard to islands, mountainous regions and other sensitive areas;
9. Considers that the sustainable development of tourism should be organised in such a way that its natural, cultural and heritage assets are in equal measure appreciated at the present time and preserved for future generations;
10. Emphasises the key role which the ERDF and the EAFRD can play in developing the tourism potential of the rural environment and diversifying its economic activities;
11. Highlights the role of sport in promoting tourism and welcomes initiatives such as the 'Watersports in the Atlantic Area' project; recalls that sport is a cultural as well as an activity-based pursuit, which can attract tourists to peripheral regions of Europe;
12. Welcomes the Commission proposal to group actions promoting tourism under four priorities; considers, however, that the development of a new political framework for tourism in Europe requires an integrated approach that is closely related to the specific nature of each region and efficient coordination of Community, national, regional and local policies which enables the synergies created amongst different areas of activity with a direct or indirect impact on tourism to be used to advantage, in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity; urges the Member States to involve relevant regional and local authorities from the very early stages of negotiations;
13. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and the local and regional authorities to encourage and support the development of integrated tourist networks and projects encompassing all infrastructural aspects, so as to avoid uncoordinated development, and to encourage the creation of partnerships for the exchange of best practice; calls for active participation by regional and local bodies, in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and partnership; underlines the need for concrete initiatives to be undertaken in support of innovation and the development of new information technologies and communication channels; calls for initiatives designed to make appropriate use of financial engineering systems, to promote e-commerce and to eliminate the remaining barriers to the internal

market; calls for a simplification of the rules in order to facilitate access to the relevant financial instruments, especially microloans, for stakeholders in the tourist industry, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, the self-employed and the cultural and creative industries;

14. Considers it necessary to introduce a European policy for protection of the rights of tourists and their safety;
15. Stresses the need to protect and enhance the diversity of the tourist services that Europe offers on the basis of economic, social, environmental and territorial cohesion criteria;
16. Emphasises the particular vulnerability of coastal regions, islands, outermost regions and mountainous regions, whose economy often depends on tourism, to the environmental effects of tourism and to the global challenge of climate change, which should also be taken into account in the new tourism framework; stresses, therefore, the need for the investments made in these regions to be sustainable;
17. Considers it necessary to counterbalance the effects of seasonal tourism by diversifying and specialising tourism, and supporting all forms of all-year-sustainable tourism, tourist routes, eco- and socially-responsible tourism, in particular those aimed at schoolchildren, young people, people with reduced mobility and the elderly, who constitute a market with huge growth potential; welcomes the positive results achieved by the CALYPSO preparatory action and calls on the Commission to continue to work for its future development and to support the introduction of a mechanism promoting off-season tourist exchanges between the Member States for senior citizens, young people, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups;
18. Calls on the Commission to develop a strategic plan to attract tourists from the emerging countries, especially the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China), through cooperation agreements, tourist promotion initiatives and more flexible tourist visa arrangements; takes the view that EU tourism promotion initiatives should portray Europe as a global destination, complement initiatives by the Member States and regional and local authorities, and avoid favouring any European destinations over others;
19. Welcomes the Commission's consideration of the socio-economic and environmental implications of the tourist sector, and encourages efforts to achieve a higher level of competitiveness combined with responsible management of resources (energy, water, raw materials, etc.);
20. Points to the importance of ensuring regional mobility and connectivity, particularly in the regions with poorest access, in order to ensure that tourism policies genuinely succeed in all the EU's regions;
21. Calls for greater emphasis to be placed on quality of employment in the tourism sector, with a focus on specialist training with a high language and technology content, on support for SMEs and entrepreneurship, especially among women and young people, on labour force mobility and decent pay, and on combating undeclared work and preventing exploitation; encourages the Member States and the regional and local authorities to make use of the vocational training tools offered by the European Social Fund and by other

Community and national instruments; stresses the importance of taking measures to prevent imbalances in the regional employment market as a result of seasonal tourist activities;

22. Emphasises that the tourism sector should make better use of the full potential of cross-border investments in competitive clusters at both the internal and the external borders of the European Union;
23. Calls on the Member States to simplify the rules and reduce the administrative burden in order to make optimum use of the European financial instruments available for the current financial programming period, and to develop the competitiveness of the tourism sector and of tourist destinations; urges that, as part of the cohesion policy review and in light of the new Treaty competence for tourism, the role of tourism as a means of redressing the social, economic and territorial balance be upgraded; hopes that every form of funding that the EU provides for tourism will be tied to the provision of competitive services of an excellent standard and quality, and to sustainability; calls for the next financial perspectives and Structural Fund regulations to include among their priorities the rehabilitation of tourist areas that have fallen into decline in order to guarantee their competitiveness and sustainability;
24. Considers that better coordination among all stakeholders, including European, national, regional and local authorities, as well as greater complementarity of the actions and financial resources provided by the Structural Funds and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development will encourage more integrated and sustainable development of the tourism sector and will help unlock its full potential;
25. Stresses the importance for the tourist sector of adequate infrastructures, and calls accordingly for progress to be made in developing the Trans-European Transport Networks, especially the Motorways of the Sea;
26. Calls on regions with undeveloped tourist potential to take note of examples of good practice regarding tourism both inside and outside the EU that have led to the development of significant tourist activity over the last ten years;
27. Recommends the creation of an EU online tourism platform to promote local and regional tourist potential as effectively as possible.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	28.2.2011
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 32 -: 1 0: 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	François Alfonsi, Luís Paulo Alves, Charalampos Angourakis, Jean-Paul Basset, Alain Cadec, Salvatore Caronna, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Danuta Maria Hübner, Seán Kelly, Evgeni Kirilov, Constanze Angela Krehl, Ramona Nicole Mănescu, Riikka Manner, Iosif Matula, Erminia Mazzoni, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Jan Olbrycht, Wojciech Michał Olejniczak, Markus Pieper, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Monika Smolková, Georgios Stavrakakis, Nuno Teixeira, Michail Tremopoulos, Oldřich Vlasák, Kerstin Westphal, Hermann Winkler
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Karima Delli, Karin Kadenbach, Andrey Kovatchev, Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid, Patrice Tirolien, Derek Vaughan
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote</b>	Stanimir Ilchev