REPORT

on the Commission communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on working together for the future of European tourism


Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism

Rapporteur: Helena Torres Marques
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By letter of 15 November 2001 the Commission forwarded to Parliament a communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Working together for the future of European tourism (COM(2001) 665 – 2002/2038(COS)).

At the sitting of 27 February 2002 the President of Parliament announced that he had referred the communication to the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism as the committee responsible and the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market, the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy for their opinions (C5-0077/2002).

The Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism had appointed Helena Torres Marques rapporteur at its meeting of 19 December 2001.

It considered the Commission communication and the draft report at its meetings of 21 March and 18 April 2002.

At the latter meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution by 40 votes to 3.

The following were present for the vote: Luciano Caveri, chairman; Helmuth Markov, Gilles Savary and Rijk van Dam, vice-chairmen; Helena Torres Marques, rapporteur; Luigi Cocilovo, Christine de Veyrac, Fernando Fernández Martín, (for Rolf Berend, pursuant to Rule 153(2)), Carlos Bautista Ojeda (for Daniel Marc Cohn-Bendit), Danielle Darras, Garrelt Duin, Giovanni Claudio Fava, Jacqueline Foster, Mathieu J.H. Grosch, Konstantinos Hatzidakis, Ewa Hedkvist Petersen, Roger Helmer (for Philip Charles Bradbourn), Georg Jarzembowski, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Brigitte Langenhagen (for Felipe Camisón Asensio), Sérgio Marques, Emmanouil Mastorakis, Erik Meijer, Rosa Miguélez Ramos, Bill Miller (for Michel J.M. Dary), Francesco Musotto, Wilhelm Ernst Piecyk, Samuli Pohjamo, Bernard Poignant, Adriana Poli Bortone, Alonso José Puerta, Reinhard Rack, Carlos Ripoll i Martínez Bedoya, Isidoro Sánchez García, Marieke Sanders-ten Holte (for Herman Vermeer), Ingo Schmitt, Brian Simpson, Renate Sommer, Dirk Sterckx, Ulrich Stockmann, Joaquim Vairinhos, Ari Vatanen and Mark Francis Watts.

The opinions of the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market, the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy are attached.

The report was tabled on 25 April 2002.

The deadline for tabling amendments will be indicated in the draft agenda for the relevant part-session.
MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION


The European Parliament,


– having regard to the report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Follow-up of the European Council of 21 September: the situation in the European tourism sector (COM(2001) 668),

– having regard to Article 3(u) of the EC Treaty,

– having regard to the conclusions of the Council Presidency of Bruges, 18 September 2001, document 11894/01,

– having regard to its resolution of 18 February 2000 on the Commission’s communication entitled ‘enhancing tourism’s potential for employment’,¹

– having regard to Rule 47(1) of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism and the opinions of the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market, the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy (A5-0152/2002),

A. whereas the tourist sector is of vital importance to the European Union, accounting for some 5% of GDP and employment (rising to 12% of GDP if the activity it generates in other sectors such as transport and distribution is included) and is undergoing a high rate of growth which is set to continue,

B. whereas Europe is still the world’s most important tourist destination, but its relative position has been worsening in recent years and an increasing number of Europeans are choosing tourist destinations in countries outside the EU,

C. mindful of the benefits of greater accessibility for consumers to tourism products,

D. whereas tourism is an economic sector which is constantly expanding at European and world level in terms of both production and employment; whereas it also represents a

¹ OJ C 339, 29.11.2000, p. 286.
highly important economic and cultural resource for many cities, regions and local communities in the Union,

E. having regard to the positive effect which the introduction of the euro, following on from freedom of movement for individuals, has had on the daily life of Community citizens, and to the need to introduce other fundamental elements of a genuine common dimension in European life,

F. whereas the tourist industry offers many varied job opportunities for both men and women and will continue to do so in the future, and whereas employment policy in the tourism sector must be geared to maintaining strategies to improve the quality of work and reducing its precarious nature,

G. whereas joint efforts and coordinated action with a European dimension are required to support the initiatives implemented by each of the 15 Member States,

H. whereas an enormous number of measures taken by the European Union directly or indirectly affect the tourist sector, and whereas Community decision-making processes should take the tourism considerations into account,

I. whereas when the economic and social cohesion policy is reviewed, the role of tourism will need to be emphasised more strongly because tourism is an economic activity that can not only help to restore regional socio-economic equilibrium, but can also boost development through its multiplier effect on agricultural production, craft trades, and industrial manufacturing,

J. whereas for certain regions of the Union whose development is lagging behind, and for the outermost regions in particular, the tourist industry is the leading source of income and contributes significantly to their efforts to ensure the convergence of their economies towards the Community’s average rate of development,

K. whereas, therefore, tourism whose development is handled with prudence over the long term must provide local economies with a source of sustainable income and employment and must also contribute towards safeguarding and enhancing the landscape, cultural, historical and environmental features of the regions of the Union,

L. having regard to the failings of the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States as regards applying a reduced VAT rate on labour-intensive services, particularly where the restaurant sector is concerned,

M. whereas geographical, historical, cultural and environmental differences are a source of wealth and one of the main factors in attracting tourists to the Community’s regions; whereas the European Union should support activities which seek to promote and develop their specific characteristics,

N. whereas mass tourism in sensitive areas, such as coastal and mountain regions, may represent a threat to the local environment and cultural resources unless the influx of tourists and urban development are subject to appropriate management,
O. whereas tourism is increasingly regarded in our society as a social right, meaning that, on the one hand, the needs of some social categories should be taken into account (e.g. disabled people and the poorest in society), and on the other hand that there is a great additional potential needing to be developed in connection with retired people, young people and activities which are of minor importance at present but have bright future prospects, such as rural tourism, ecotourism, spa tourism and social work camps for young people, and which will help make tourism more than a seasonal phenomenon and will nurture mutual understanding between our peoples,

P. mindful of the importance of tourism as a vehicle for peace and of its key role in the economic development of certain peripheral regions of the European Union,

Q. whereas communication between individual operators, particularly small businesses at regional, national and especially international level, is very limited, thus making a uniform approach difficult or even impeding operators in their relations with one another,

R. having regard to the current economic situation, particularly since 11 September 2001, resulting from the coincidence, for the first time, of various negative factors: a crisis in the world’s largest economies (the EU, the United States and Japan), the crisis in air transport, the crisis of confidence among citizens and the crisis in tourist firms faced simultaneously with consumer uncertainty and the power of certain mega-tour operators who are attempting to profit from current difficulties,

S. whereas the figures recently issued by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) in its 2001 report call for forceful action to restore confidence (the figures show a worrying fall in world tourism in the last three months of the year, amounting to 24% for America and South Asia, 30% for the Middle East, 6% for Europe and 11% for the world as a whole),

A European strategy for tourism

1. Welcomes the Commission’s two documents of 13 November 2001, and regards them as a concrete signal of a desire to boost at European level a sector which is of great importance to the economy and the life of society;

2. Welcomes the incorporation of tourism into Community policies and measures and hopes that this will be accomplished swiftly;

3. Points to the need to lay down a coherent overall planning framework for European tourism; calls, therefore, given that tourism issues cut across boundaries, for the directorates-general concerned (transport, regional policy, employment, the environment, social policy, consumer protection, education and culture, etc.) to work to eliminate the existing fragmented planning and produce more accurately targeted and more closely interlocking Community programmes to guarantee sustainable development of the sector and vertical cohesion encompassing the regions, the national governments and the Community institutions; considers that for this purpose a business impact assessment of all EU measures with a major effect on tourism should be carried out, to ensure that activities with this aim benefit sustainable and responsible tourism;

4. Believes that the new procedure for discussing the Commission’s annual programme with
Parliament should cover the whole range of current and projected measures related directly or indirectly to tourism;

5. Calls on the Commission and the Council to guarantee that Parliament has a role of substance to play in the open coordination method;

6. Is very much in favour of organising a European Forum on tourism which, at Community level, might form an interface for promoting and improving cooperation between those professionally concerned with tourism and all others involved, in the interest of a cooperative approach to the future of tourism as proposed by the Commission; also wishes to see a strengthening in the role of the Advisory Committee on Tourism at Community level, with the participation of, amongst others, European consumer bodies and cultural and environmental heritage protection associations;

7. Calls for the Advisory Committee on Tourism and the Forum to meet in public at least once a year and, in areas which are sensitive to tourism, for the Commissioners responsible for decisions affecting tourism directly or indirectly to hold discussions with representatives of the industry and tourism associations;

8. Calls for the annual European Tourism Forum to provide the setting for discussion forums, which would run alongside the discussions on priority areas for the sector proposed by the Commission and would share information (Community tourism initiatives launched in other areas such as Culture 2000 and Interreg), good practices and pilot schemes;

9. Stresses that access to comparable information throughout the European Union would be greatly facilitated if uniform assessment procedures and labels were available, and calls on the Commission to encourage the drawing up of the relevant standards by encouraging and catalysing initiatives in the sector, though without supplanting it; this aspect is particularly important with a view to future Union enlargement to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, with which it is already possible to proceed;

10. Considers it necessary, however, also to improve the quality of the information disseminated and the indicators produced, emphasising the credibility of the figures and the fact that they must be fully incorporated in the national accounts in order to provide an overall picture of the tourist industry and its component activities;

11. Believes that the forthcoming enlargement of the Union will open up new prospects for European tourism, not just because more tourists from the new Member States will start visiting the Union, but also because the industry already plays an important role in the economic and social development of those countries and must continue to do so in the future;

12. Expresses its interest in moving forward with the adoption of measures to respond effectively to the challenges facing the sector and prepare the ground for future action enabling Europe as a whole to remain the world’s top tourist destination; calls, therefore, for support for a Community-wide framework programme for tourism and for a specific budget heading to be employed so as to enable the various projected measures, especially those related to training or intended to promote innovation, to be pursued coherently;
13. Calls for the debate on tax harmonisation in the EU to look into its implementation in the tourist sector;

14. Insists that the government bodies responsible for tourism as well as those coordinating the banking system should take all measures to ensure that, from 1 July 2002, the Regulation on cross-border payments in euros is applied and that all eurozone tourists should be guaranteed absolute transparency regarding payments by bank card; urges the Commission to continue to use all instruments at its disposal and take the necessary steps to ensure that the costs of cross-border transactions are brought closely into line with those of domestic transactions, thus making the concept of the euro zone as a domestic payment area tangible and transparent to tourists;

**For sustainable tourism**

15. Calls, as regards the future, following the fundamental guidelines of Community policies and the conclusions of the Göteborg summit, for sustainable tourism to be developed, which must be of high quality, competitive, and open to all, but never overstrain the reception capacities of natural and cultural sites; points accordingly to the need to develop information networks to be used to exchange knowledge and good practices so as to make private operators more aware of the social and environmental impacts of tourism;

16. Notes that tourism can be key in the regeneration of a whole community; calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that the role of local and regional authorities in implementing sustainable economic development strategies is taken into account;

17. Expresses its belief that the development of tourism must go hand in hand with policies geared towards the use, promotion and enhancement of environmental, artistic, historical and cultural resources;

18. Considers it necessary to promote programmes and forms of aid to ensure that all the sectors and operators in the tourism chain, including local and regional authorities, draw up their own programmes for sustainable tourism, taking into account the potential of tourist destinations, identifying natural resources, protected areas, cultural heritage and specific features, as well as drawing up programmes to enhance and market the potential attractions of lesser-known regions;

19. Stresses the need to develop efficient and sustainable transport infrastructure, not least with a view to ensuring access to remote regions such as mountain areas and islands;

20. Believes in this context that the White Paper on Transport does not pay sufficient attention to the consequences of increasing tourism-related traffic;

21. Calls on the Commission to assemble and evaluate the necessary measures to safeguard the accessibility of major tourist locations and publish the results;

22. Welcomes the Commission’s initiative to implement Agenda 21 in order to promote the sustainable development of tourism and hopes that all the parties concerned will be fully involved; calls for the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) – which has been accessible to local authorities since 2001 – to be promoted in these activities;
23. Is very much in favour of building on Agenda 21 in order to promote targeted initiatives to foster sustainable tourist activity, including labelling for tourist services and tour operators (tour operators, hotel sector, agencies, tourist guides, municipalities, etc.); fiscal measures designed to fund measures to redress the adverse effects of tourism; integrated management practices in sensitive areas (such as coastal and mountain areas); and the inclusion of tourism-related aspects in other economic activities;

24. Calls on the Commission to consider the impact of European tourism on underdeveloped countries and to promote tourist activities and practices that further economic and social cohesion in those underdeveloped countries with tourist destinations;

25. Considers that, in order to devise sustainable tourism indicators, it is necessary to include the criteria and recommendations set out in the European Charter on sustainable tourism signed by all the Member States;

26. Calls for a third manual to be drawn up as a guidance document defining and applying the basic criteria of sustainable tourism and risk management in tourist destinations;

A resource for employment

27. Stresses once more the role of tourism and the contribution it can make in the context of the challenge thrown down at the Lisbon summit to transform Europe into a region of full employment, with a vital and competitive economy, especially as regards those regions whose development is lagging behind, and the outermost regions in particular; recalls in this connection that tourist activities are highly labour-intensive, involving a workforce, especially seasonal workers, needing to be more and more specialised, which requires and encourages technologically more advanced occupational training and language skills and greater mobility for tourist service providers;

28. Welcomes the Commission’s proposal to identify new types of tourism and urges the Commission to look at the role sports-related tourism can play in both creating jobs and increasing visitor numbers;

29. Proposes that Community funds be used to develop new forms of tourism to help improve the profitability of the sector, for example rural tourism, health and especially spa tourism, or social tourism aimed not only at workers, but also at young and retired people, who constitute markets offering considerable potential growth; stresses the need to promote special forms of tourism such as incentive travel, spa tourism, tours to religious sites and commemorative tours, while working to combat sex tourism and the like and impose penalties on those in the profession who encourage such practices by selling tourism products of that nature;

30. Asks for greater emphasis to be placed on the quality of jobs created in the tourism sector, with a focus on training, the development of career structures, the recognition of qualifications, the protection of workers in insecure employment and the combating of clandestine employment;

31. Calls on the Member States to ensure that tourism has an important role in their national action plans for employment in order to exploit all the opportunities which the
development of tourism could offer for high quality sustainable job creation, and to restrict the negative impact of the current economic and political situation;

32. Stresses the need to link the proposed actions with those of the multiannual programme for SMEs, particularly in the areas of training and the promotion of innovation – key points in the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council which the Commission communication does not deal with directly;

33. Welcomes the Commission’s recognition that the lack of adequate resources in terms of certain occupations and qualifications represents a challenge for the tourist industry; regrets that there are no clear proposals for tackling this problem; calls on the Commission to draw up a study into the human resource requirements by sector and region, taking account of existing and future challenges, and the context of a general tourism policy at national and regional level; calls on the Member States to benefit from all the opportunities in the European Social Fund for appropriate professional training and foreign language learning;

34. Points out also that, by international standards, European tourist enterprises tend to be small (micro-enterprises, family firms, and SMEs), a fact which, given that laws and tax provisions have yet to be harmonised at European level, makes them less competitive;

35. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational training (Cedefop), to propose quality and control standards for personnel training, in keeping with the needs of the local labour markets and technological developments; also calls on Cedefop to facilitate partnerships and dialogue between training institutes and the tourism industry to generate the requisite synergy between learning and professional experience;

36. Calls on the Commission to draw up a communication on the recognition of vocational qualifications of workers in the tourist industry at European and international level;

37. Regrets that no agreement has been reached between management and labour on the adoption of a directive to improve the conditions of workers in temporary employment; but welcomes the Commission’s proposal and reserves the right to give its views in connection with its opinion on the special needs of workers in the tourist industry;

A positive response to a difficult economic situation

38. Firmly believes in the usefulness of supporting small businesses, particularly in the case of networking, to promote Europe as a tourist destination, which should focus on new forms of tourism and places as yet little visited and should in particular encourage those people living in mainland Europe to discover the appeal of Europe’s islands and outermost regions as tourist destinations; proposes, moreover, that Europe’s profile be raised and promotion intensified by making appropriate use of the system of EU representations throughout the world;

39. Calls on the Commission to propose a promotion programme to be implemented outside the Union’s frontiers, involving the Member States and, possibly, applicant countries wishing to take part;
40. Calls on the Commission to use its campaigns to promote the euro outside the Union to explain the advantages that tourists will have because they can use the same currency in most Union countries;

41. Considers it essential that Satellite accounts for tourism (SATs) should be set up as proposed by the Commission in its communication, in accordance with the WTO’s, OECD’s and Eurostat’s indications, so that the development of tourist activities in the Member States can be understood and assessed as fully as possible; is convinced, furthermore, that an instrument of such importance cannot be made reliant upon the goodwill of administrators in the Member States and should therefore be the subject of a Community framework initiative;

42. Calls on the Commission to ensure that local authorities and the private sector are fully involved in the introduction of measures and schemes for the good use of Community financial and non-financial instruments (measure 6);

43. Sees the need for the EU institutions to devise a strategic response to the crisis in air transport (Community airlines saw their business drop by 17.6% in the last 111 days of 2001 as compared with 2000, with a €3 400 million drop in turnover);

44. Calls for the Community’s administrative resources (at present there is only a Tourism Unit) to be commensurate with the tasks needing to be completed and for Europe to give itself the chance to realise its ambitions; believes that if its organisational machinery and human and material resources were boosted in this way, the Commission would be able to:
   – use interdepartmental consultations to take prompt, effective steps to ensure that the measures proposed by the various directorates-general regarding other Community policies properly allowed for the tourism aspect and the specific nature of typical tourist enterprises (SMEs), among other things on the basis of the necessary cost-benefit analysis;
   – establish effective communication with tourist boards and key professional organisations in the sector, whether operating at European or national level;

45. Calls on the Commission to draw up at the earliest opportunity proposals to include the restaurant sector, and possibly other as yet ineligible tourist services, on the list of sectors of activity entitled to a permanent reduction in the VAT rate, so as to boost employment and modernisation in the industries concerned and make European tourism better equipped to deal with international competition;

46. Calls on the Convention currently considering the future of Europe to evaluate closely the need for the tourist sector to have a solid legal basis enabling it to give force to Community measures, by including in the Treaty a genuine common policy on tourism which, by encouraging the essential differences between the countries and regions, would make it possible to take coordinated measures for the development of European tourism, while complying with the subsidiarity principle and promoting European tourism in third countries;

47. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, and the governments and
parliaments of the Member States.
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

A Sector in the throes of change

The tourism sector in the European Union accounts for some 2 million firms, mainly SMEs, and contributes around 5% to GDP and employment. It is also one of the sectors of the European economy with the best prospects for the future. Forecasts point to growth continuing to exceed average economic growth. This is a result of increased free time, global economic growth, and the improved living conditions (health) of the population in general and of elderly people in particular.

On the plus side, Europe possesses a great wealth, diversity and density of tourist attractions which make it the most popular tourist region in the world, even compared to a number of emerging overseas regions, which holds out the prospect of a doubling in volume of European tourism over the next 20 to 25 years, bringing a net benefit in terms of expenditure and profits of the order of 3% per year. Employment will increased by some 15% over the next ten years.

One of the most important factors in the growth of tourism in the next few years will be the trends in the demographic structure of the population: in twenty years’ time, the population aged over 65 will have increased by 17 million. People in this age bracket enjoying better health, a longer life expectancy and greater resources, will be much more inclined to travel than in the past. At the same time, the demand for tourism will evolve: cultural and heritage tourism will increase significantly.

Other factors boosting the tourist sector, such as the liberalisation of transport and the development of transport networks, the progress of the single market (particularly the reality of the single currency), and the considerable developments and outcomes of the Information Society will continue to promote mobility and the internationalisation of tourist flows. And of course enlargement will also help increase demand for tourism to the new Member States and by new Community citizens to our countries (a phenomenon which is already occurring).

Tourism and employment

It is only very recently that the role which tourism is capable of playing in promoting full employment in the Union has been understood. Faced with the need to help the European economy catch up with other regions such as the USA, particularly in the most innovative sectors, it has been noted that tourism has great potential and that in particular it is possible to invest in its long-term development, even at the current difficult stage which the world economy is experiencing.

In the light of this crisis, a conference held in November 1997 in Luxembourg on the topic of tourism and employment launched the process which would lead to the adoption in 1998 by the Commission of the communication entitled ‘Increasing the potential of tourism for employment’.

In its conclusions of 21 June 1999, the Council then called on the Commission and the Member States to cooperate in order to widen the contribution which tourism could make to
growth and employment, particularly on the themes on which four high-level working parties have been established (information, training, quality and sustainability).

More recently, in Lille in November 2000, the French Presidency proposed the establishment of more intensive consultation, particularly to create a pilot network of regions, to develop sustainable tourism and to promote the exchange of information.

In Bruges on 2 July 2001 the Belgian Presidency, seeking to make tourism accessible to target groups (young people, the elderly, those living below the poverty line, unemployed and disabled people), put forward the idea of ‘Tourism for all’ (see Presidency conclusions on ‘tourism for all’ set out at the Council meeting of 27 September 2001).

Situation after 11 September 2001

The reaction of concern shown by the tourism industry after the 11 September 2001 attacks should cause no surprise. In social terms, tourism is an activity which, even in a context of long-term stability, is more susceptible than other industries to being disturbed by individual events; this is because most tourism does not meet a vital need, and because the behaviour of tourists is particularly sensitive, subject to psychological and social influences, personal emotions and short-term reactions. The terrorist attacks in the US also struck a sector already weakened by the difficulties in the economic cycle and other recent events such as the foot and mouth disease epidemic and oil spills at sea.

The Commission’s initial reaction was not to exaggerate the impact of the events of 11 September on tourism; however, over the months worries have grown in the sectors affected and in the political and economic world; in fact a crisis or at least a slowdown seem to be taking hold, and the prospects are not as reassuring as had been hoped. The WTO’s report for 2001, published in January, does not seem to reassure those in the profession; first of all it confirms that a change is under way in the tourism market, and not only in response to the events in New York: tourists are travelling differently (avoiding air travel if possible), changing their destinations (preferring in general to stay in Europe) and are showing a tendency to stay nearer home.

However, the most significant figures are those showing the downturn in tourism, with no exceptions but with a lot of variation, during the last three months of 2001. This trend seems to be confirmed in early 2002. This economic situation, confounding hopes for an upswing at an early date, was a shock to many operators who are looking for reservations for the coming months and are faced with a serious cash flow problem in order to remain in the market.

At the same time, there is a risk of distorting competition still further to the benefit of the largest tour operators which are possibly already trying to conquer the market by slashing prices. Over and above that, there is the difficult economic situation in some countries, such as Germany, which have an enormous effect in generating demand for tourism, plus the crisis in air transport.

On the other hand, it is certain that the terrorist attacks in the USA have had a negative effect on European tourism from outside the EU, affecting the ‘quality tourism’ sector, based on a rich client base, often from America or Japan.
Effective action

What the tourist industry has asked for following the tragic events in New York is decisive political action at European level to face the threatened crisis, and in the first instance, an action to promote Europe as a tourist destination. What it has got, however, have been uncoordinated responses, national promotion initiatives which risk cancelling each other out.

In responding to this request the Commission tends to recall the principle of subsidiarity which is the bottom line for all initiatives, since the Treaties provide no legal basis for tourism. The action which the Commission proposes is therefore limited to ‘a new dynamic for a coherent approach’ in the interest of incorporating tourism into Community policies and measures.

The practical outcome of this is a number of measures of doubtful effectiveness, to say the least. These consist of the ‘introduction by the Commission, in co-operation and co-ordination with the Member States and the tourism industry, of mechanisms to improve the integration of the concerns of all tourism stakeholders in Community policies and initiatives affecting the sector.’ A second interesting measure proposes promoting ‘a better interface with the tourism industry and other groups of stakeholders.’ In practice this should involve holding an annual European Tourism Forum.

An unambitious strategy

Even though the Commission has a well-defined intention to propose an action plan capable of enhancing the dynamism of one of the most promising sectors in the European economy, it is also true that the measures envisaged are still ineffective and do not reveal any new strategy for really developing European tourism.

All the economic development potential which tourism can represent, particularly for backward regions, presupposes more forceful action at Community level: the European Union, which has just acquired a single currency, cannot remain completely idle in the tourist sector. There exist both the opportunities and the means to introduce a common tourism policy, going beyond what would be possible on the current legal bases.

First of all, we may seize the opportunity represented by the reality of the single currency to promote the Union as a tourist destination, making the most of the inestimable wealth of heritage based on the peaceful co-existence and integration in diversity and democracy which half a century of Community history has made possible. An information and promotion campaign should highlight the fact that the most visited continent in the world, with different cultures, traditions and languages, is presented today as a homogeneous and unitary whole for all tourists.

However, it would be desirable to promote more coherent harmonisation at Community level for standards of tourist services, regarding both the level of quality of services offered to customers and the characteristics of destinations.

One of the priorities for an action at European level in the tourist sector should be to take account of environmental aspects. The sector is entirely dependent on safeguarding the
natural, historic and architectural heritage. There cannot in future be tourist activities which are not ‘sustainable’, i.e. which are not capable of incorporating under their own conditions the sustainability of any activity.

Towards integrated action

The Union wants increasingly to realise a policy which reflects an integrated development project, capable of producing synergies between measures carried out in the different fields of action. The tourism sector too may benefit from this kind of strategy: each Community programme should therefore consider and assess its impact on the development of tourism, in order to make the most of its potential.

Tourism is really a sector which lives by making the most of the benefits of other actions: this is clear from the programmes set up under the structural funds which, by improving accessibility and a framework for promoting economic activities, create a more favourable environment for tourism. Tourism should be enhanced by measures in the objective 1 regions and the cohesion states.

The Lisbon process and its ambitious challenge calling for progress towards full employment, particularly in the most innovative sectors, may of course find that tourism, with all its plus points, offers one of the most favourable environments. To start with, new technologies are at the heart of tourist activities, both in terms of managing potential and structures and in terms of promoting and ‘marketing’ destinations.

Tourism also makes a great contribution to the training and mobility of human resources: this is no doubt where the most developed language skills may be found, even though it is always possible to call for greater mobility and training.
16 April 2002

OPINION

of the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market
for the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism


Draftsman: Philip Charles Bradbourn

PROCEDURE

The Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market appointed Philip Charles Bradbourn draftsman at its meeting of 19 February 2002.

The committee considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 26-27 March and 16 April 2002.

At the latter meeting it adopted the following conclusions by 18 votes to 12, with 1 abstention.

The following were present for the vote: Giuseppe Gargani, chairman; Willi Rothley, Ioannis Koukiadis and Bill Miller, vice-chairmen; Philip Charles Bradbourn, draftsman; Paolo Bartolozzi, Maria Berger, Ward Beysen, Brian Crowley, Bert Doorn, Janelly Fourtou, Marie-Françoise Garaud, Evelyne Gebhardt, Fiorella Ghilardotti, José María Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado, Malcolm Harbour, Heidi Anneli Hautala, Othmar Karas, Kurt Lechner, Klaus-Heiner Lehne, Toine Manders, Arlene McCarthy, Manuel Medina Ortega, Ana Palacio Valdeersundi, Francesco Enrico Speroni, Marianne L.P. Thyssen, Rijk van Dam, Rainer Wieland, Joachim Wuermeling, Matti Wuori, Stefano Zappalà, Hannes Swoboda (for François Zimeray) and Véronique De Keyser (for Carlos Candal, pursuant to Rule 153(2)).
SHORT JUSTIFICATION

Your draftsman recognises the importance of the tourist and travel industries to local and national economies and their role in fostering employment. He is particularly conscious of the large number of SMEs involved at grass roots level in rural areas.

However, although Article 3(u) of the EC Treaty does include among the activities of the Community ‘measures in the sphere of tourism’, such measures are expressed to be for the purposes set out in Article 2, which sets clear limits on the Community’s action. Moreover, any action taken must pass the subsidiarity test - no easy matter in an area such as this which is patently a matter of national - often, moreover, regional or local - competence, given the diversity of tourist destinations, facilities and accommodation even within a particular area.

To treat Europe as a single tourist destination makes no sense: even within a single State, tourism tends to be devolved to the regional and local level and competition extends down to the level of individual resorts. Your draftsman consequently regards the communication before the committee as being to a large degree an unnecessary and undesirable attempt to extend Community competence. In particular, the Commission should not have any legislative role in this area, except as regards the Structural and Cohesion Funds.

In its White Paper, Reforming the Commission, the Commission stated that it needed a more effective method for setting its priorities and allocating resources to them. ‘Its limited resources have become too thinly spread across a wide range of activities and tasks, thus damaging its effectiveness and credibility. We need to re-centre the Commission on its core activities and political objectives’. The communication under consideration suggests that this message has not yet been taken on board.

Furthermore, your draftsman takes the view that, given the currently underexploited Rural Development Policy and the particular problems at present besetting rural areas, the Commission should focus on deregulatory practices, since most of the businesses at local level in this sector are SMEs. However, where the Commission does have a role to play is in acting as a facilitator for the voluntary exchange of best practice between tourism businesses in Europe.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market calls on the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following points in its motion for a resolution:

Point 1

Stresses that, as regards proposed measure 1, the Commission’s role should be confined to gathering and exchanging information within the tourism sector and should specifically exclude the development of policy at European level; at the same time, points out that tourism is a vital economic activity for many Community regions and an essential element of the

internal market as regards free movement of persons and freedom to provide services;

Point 2

Considers that, as far as proposed measure 3 is concerned, the Commission’s action should be confined to encouraging rather than promoting any interface between the industry and end-users and key sector players and that this should move forward only on a strictly voluntary basis;

Point 3

Maintains that it should be made clear that the increased interaction between stakeholders and destinations and the promotion of partnerships provided for in proposed measure 4 should expressly cater for the inclusion of the private sector and local authorities as interested players in order to avoid their being marginalised;

Point 4

Points out that the Commission’s role must be strictly confined to providing the initial stimulation in the case of proposed measure 4 and that, given the availability of the existing Community financial instruments, no further ring-fenced funding will be necessary;

Point 5

Welcomes the Commission’s proposed role as a facilitator for networking services and the provision of support services but warns it against the creation of any observatories at EU level (measure 5);

Point 6

Calls on the Commission to ensure that local authorities and the private sector are fully involved in the introduction of measures and schemes for the good use of Community financial and non-financial instruments (measure 6);

Point 7

Considers that proposed measure 7 would constitute an inappropriate use of scarce Community resources, particularly in view of the essentially national, regional and local character of tourism and the need to comply with the principle of subsidiarity, and could result in the imposition of further red tape on businesses, particularly SMEs; accordingly proposes that it be replaced by a measure under which the Commission and the Member States are to adopt systems to facilitate the use of best practice;
Point 8

Considers that proposed measure 8 should read ‘encourage sustainable development of tourism activities in Europe whilst respecting the principle of subsidiarity throughout’;

Point 9

Calls on the Commission to delete proposed measure 9 as it is overly bureaucratic and contrary to the principle of subsidiarity;

Point 10

Takes the view that, whereas benchmarking and quality indicators need to be covered by the exchange of best practice, it is unnecessary for the Commission to play more than a facilitating role, given in particular the position taken by the Commission itself in its White Paper, Reforming the Commission;
16 April 2002

OPINION

of the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy

for the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism

on the Commission communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Working together for the future of European tourism

Draftsman: Willy C.E.H. De Clercq

PROCEDURE


It considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 18 March and 16 April 2002.

At the latter meeting it adopted the following conclusions unanimously.

The following were present for the vote: Carlos Westendorp y Cabeza, chairman; Yves Piétrasanta, vice-chairman; Willy C.E.H. De Clercq, draftsman; Sir Robert Atkins, María del Pilar Ayuso González (for Guido Bodrato), Felipe Camisón Asensio (for Werner Langen), Massimo Carraro, Giles Bryan Chichester, Harlem Désir, Carlo Fatuzzo (for Peter Michael Mombaur), Concepció Ferrer, Francesco Fiori (for Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl), Colette Flesch, Christos Foliás (for Christian Foldberg Rovsing), Per Gahrton (for Nuala Ahern), Neena Gill (for Luis Berenguer Fuster), Norbert Glante, Michel Hansenne, Roger Helmer (for Jaime Valdivielso de Cué), Hans Karlsson, Bashir Khanbhai, Peter Liese (for Umberto Scapagnini), Rolf Linkohr, Caroline Lucas, Eryl Margaret McNally, Erika Mann, Marjo Matikainen-Kallström, Elizabeth Montfort, Angelika Niebler, Paolo Pastorelli, Elly Plooij-van Gorsel, Samuli Pohjamo (for Nicholas Clegg), John Purvis, Daniela Raschhofer, Imelda Mary Read, Machtild Rothe, Paul Rübig, Ilka Schröder (for Konstantinos Alyssandrakis), Konrad K. Schweiger, Esko Olavi Seppänen, W.G. van Velzen, Alejo Vidal-Quadras Roca, Dominique Vlasto, Myrsini Zorba and Olga Zrihen Zaari.
SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The economic sector of tourism accounts for 5% of all jobs in the European Union, distributed amongst various public or private service activities (transport, hotels, cultural heritage, etc.) and not including the numerous spin-off jobs. It is a net source of capital for the EU balance of payments.

Although tourism is not a Union policy in its own right, the relevant activities (besides transport) are covered by Articles 49 and 50 of the EC Treaty concerning services and are directly affected by other provisions, such as those on the Structural Funds and the environment.

In spite of the recent economic difficulties following the events of 11 September 2001, the tourism sector is growing and giving proof of vitality. Two million SMEs – often small companies – account for most of the activity and employment in the tourism industry. The voluntary sector also plays an important part in the industry and its social and economic role is not insignificant.

Lastly, the market segments – from business tourism to short haul travel, or tours organised by tour operators and individual ‘green’ holidays – are not merely generic groupings, but form a mosaic of activities whose needs and relations with customers, trading partners and public authorities differ widely.

The aim of this communication is not, strictly speaking, to frame a Community tourism policy in the sense of the Community environment policy, or even the Common Agricultural Policy. It would be difficult to imagine, beyond the title, what such a policy would actually cover at present.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that common needs do exist and we must identify them. There are also a number of national and regional initiatives, which would merit extension or imitation. From this viewpoint, the creation of networks, benchmarking and support for the drawing up of harmonised labels deserve to be encouraged. In this regard, our committee is surprised that the communication makes no reference to the multiannual programme for enterprises, which would be a natural starting point.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy calls on the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following points in its motion for a resolution:

1. Approves the aim of giving the strategic debate on tourism a Community dimension, which would be a first step in ensuring that the European Union’s institutions furnish themselves with a strategic response; calls on all those involved to take a long-term approach in discussing this matter, without taking into consideration the current economic situation in the wake of recent international developments;

2. Welcomes the Commission’s initiative, which paves the way for a Community approach
to the sector as a whole by establishing a European Tourism Forum which, whilst having no executive function, will provide a facility for discussion, debate and ideas for the future of the industry; stresses, however, the need to pay attention to the specific characteristics of the various market segments concerned;

3. Stresses that access to comparable information throughout the European Union would be greatly facilitated if uniform assessment procedures and labels were available, and calls on the Commission to encourage the drawing up of the relevant standards by encouraging and catalysing initiatives in the sector, though without supplanting it; this aspect is particularly important with a view to future Union enlargement to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and could be implemented immediately, in cooperation with those countries;

4. Reiterates the importance of the voluntary sector for tourism, as both sponsor and operator, recognises its entrepreneurial flair, flexibility and adaptability, and recommends that the special features of this sector be taken into account, especially so that it can retain its social role;

5. Welcomes the Commission’s initiative to convene an annual European Tourism Forum to allow the industry to establish its own priorities, in cooperation with the public authorities and representatives of civil society; considers that this Forum will play an important role in ensuring that the creation of networks and gathering of information proposed in the communication will be based on those priorities rather than on bureaucratic considerations;

6. Points out that tourism plays a vital role in some peripheral regions of EU Member States and is often an important source of revenue and a tool of economic growth; considers that any tourism policy should thus facilitate the maximum involvement of regional actors;

7. Stresses the need to link the proposed actions with those of the multiannual programme for SMEs, particularly in the areas of training and the promotion of innovation – key points in the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council which the Commission communication does not deal with directly;

8. Urges the Commission to review the implications of the proposed Temporary Agency Workers Directive for the part-time and short-term employment sector which characterises the tourism industry;

9. Acknowledges the importance of tourism within the structures of economic activity since it is one of the world’s largest economic sectors seen in global terms;

10. Emphasises the special status of the tourism sector since it plays a crucial role in Europe for job opportunities, economic growth and the development of sparsely populated regions where the business world ought to cooperate in developing the tourism, visits and adventure sector;

11. Wishes to place particular emphasis on the significance of sustainable tourism where the new tourism/adventure sector ought to display a considerate attitude, benefit the environment in the longterm and create secure job opportunities;
16 April 2002

**OPINION**

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
for the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism

on the Commission communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions ‘Working together for the future of European tourism’

Draftsman: Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou

**PROCEDURE**

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs appointed Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou draftsman at its meeting of 12 December 2001.

It considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 19 March and 16 April 2002.

At the latter meeting it adopted the following conclusions by 29 votes to 2.

The following were present for the vote: Theodorus J.J. Bouwman, chairman; Marie-Hélène Gillig, Winfried Menrad and Marie-Thérèse Hermange, vice-chairmen; Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, draftsman; Sylviane H. Ainardi, Jan Andersson, Elspeth Attwooll, Regina Bastos, André Brie (for Arlette Laguiller), Philip Bushill-Matthews, Alejandro Cercas, Proinsias De Rossa, Harald Ettl, Jillian Evans, Carlo Fatuzzo, Ilda Figueiredo, Anne-Karin Glase, Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso, Lisbeth Grönfeldt Bergman, Stephen Hughes, Ioannis Koukiadis, Thomas Mann, Mario Mantovani, Manuel Pérez Álvarez, Bartho Pronk, Lennart Sacrédeus, Herman Schmid, Miet Smet, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Ieke van den Burg and Barbara Weiler.
SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The Commission’s proposal is in part a response to the terrorist attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001 and in part a continuation of the ‘tourism and employment process’ initiated by the conclusions of the Council of 21 June 1999, in which the European Parliament played a decisive role.

As regards the repercussions of the terrorist attacks in the USA, the Commission agrees with the conclusions of the World Tourism Organisation and considers that, from an economic viewpoint, the impact on tourism in Europe will be relatively limited in range and duration provided there are no further dramatic events. This is contrary to the concern expressed by professionals in the sector and some regions concerning the decline in tourist numbers.

The Commission’s communications focus on devising a strategy for the European tourist industry equal to the political and economic challenges which will arise both in the medium and long term. This strategy is to be implemented through the open coordination method between all stakeholders and with minimal Commission involvement in accordance with the subsidiarity principle.

Although the proposed measures are based on the conclusions of the working groups set up in early 2000 as part of the cooperation process within the Advisory Committee on Tourism, they are often vague and have no immediate specific objectives.

The opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs’ should therefore focus on practical action with a view to exploiting the potential of tourism for job creation and achieving the Lisbon objectives. Studies have shown that services and, in particular, tourism, are the sector of the economy with the highest rate of continuous growth.

Your draftsman considers that this advantage could be enhanced by:

- Member States recognising and exploiting the potential for tourism by making specific commitments on employment in the tourist industry in their national employment action plans,
- promoting the development of tourism by improving the quality of working conditions in the tourist industry and by developing human resources,
- developing social tourism,
- supporting enterprise and the SMEs.

Improving the quality of working conditions could be achieved by means of training, the development of career structures, recognition of diplomas and protection of workers in insecure, seasonal, temporary and unlawful employment. Your draftsman supports the proposal put forward by the industry to set up a permanent observatory on learning and

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employment, and calls for quality and control standards to be established for personnel training, the recognition of vocational qualifications of workers in the industry and the drawing up of a study into human resources requirements by sector and region, which takes into account future challenges.

Your draftsman believes that particular attention should be paid to the potential offered by social tourism for the sustainable development of tourism and social cohesion. The ministerial conference which took place in Bruges on 1 to 2 July 2001 recognised the need:

- to make tourist activities as accessible as possible to certain target groups, in particular young people, old people, those living on the threshold of poverty, the unemployed and people with special needs,

- to devote particular attention in Community programmes to plans to promote the direct or indirect participation of various social groups in tourist activities,

- to simplify certification systems with a view to their accessibility and harmonisation.

Your draftsman calls for action to be taken on the conclusions of the ministerial conference, as adopted by the Council on 27 September 2001.

Your draftsman supports the view that all the opportunities and innovative approaches to developing social tourism should be exploited. When the professional bodies in the tourist industry are involved and it is not simply an unproductive policy of subsidisation, social tourism can contribute to economic development, job creation, regional cohesion and cultural exchange between Europeans.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following points in its motion for a resolution:

**Paragraph 1**

Calls on the Member States to ensure that tourism has an important role in their national action plans for employment in order to exploit all the opportunities which the development of tourism could offer for high quality sustainable job creation, and to restrict the negative impact of the current economic and political situation;

**Paragraph 2**

Notes that tourism can be key in the regeneration of a whole community; calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that the role of local and regional authorities in implementing sustainable economic development strategies is taken into account;

**Paragraph 3**

Calls on the Member States to acknowledge the need to develop sustainable tourism, with the cooperation of the relevant stakeholders, so that it is accessible to the target groups, encourages social inclusion and respects equal opportunities; calls for these conclusions to be taken into account when drawing up Agenda 21 and calls on the Commission to draft a communication on social tourism in its various forms and its contribution to the mobility of European citizens and the economic and cultural development of Europe’s regions;

Paragraph 4

Welcomes the Commission’s recognition that the lack of adequate resources in terms of certain occupations and qualifications represents a challenge for the tourist industry; regrets that there are no clear proposals for tackling this problem; calls on the Commission to draw up a study into the human resource requirements by sector and region, taking account of existing and future challenges, and the context of a general tourism policy at national and regional level; calls on the Member States to benefit from all the opportunities in the European Social Fund for appropriate professional training and foreign language learning;

Paragraph 5

Emphasises the need to make good use of all human resources and to adopt policies to encourage disabled people, older people and women to participate to have access to the tourism labour market, in particular creating infrastructure for working mothers of children aged between 0 and 3 years;

Paragraph 6

Supports the proposal to set up a permanent observatory on learning and employment in the tourist industry which may ensure a balance between supply and demand, the transparency of the labour market in the tourist industry at European level and facilitate the mobility of seasonal labour at European and national level;

Paragraph 7

Asks for greater emphasis to be placed on the quality of jobs created in the tourism sector, with a focus on training, the development of career structures, the recognition of qualifications, the protection of workers in insecure employment and the combating of clandestine employment;

Paragraph 8

Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational training (Cedefop), to propose quality and control standards for personnel training, in keeping with the needs of the local labour markets and technological developments; also calls on Cedefop to facilitate partnerships and dialogue between training institutes and the tourism industry to generate the requisite synergy between learning and professional experience;

Paragraph 9
Calls on the Commission to draw up a communication on the recognition of vocational qualifications of workers in the tourist industry at European and international level;

Paragraph 10

Regrets that no agreement has been reached between management and labour on the adoption of a directive to improve the conditions of workers in temporary employment; but welcomes the Commission’s proposal and reserves the right to give its views in connection with its opinions on the special needs of workers in the tourist industry;

Paragraph 11

Calls on the Member States to adopt positive tax measures to encourage entrepreneurship among women and young people, family firms, micro-businesses and small and medium-sized businesses and to encourage their access to the new technologies and to ‘Learning Areas’; calls on the Commission, in the context of measure 1, to ensure that competition rules are duly implemented in order to combat the trend towards centralisation;

Paragraph 12

Emphasises that providing information to the stakeholders is of the utmost importance in achieving measure 6, which relates to promoting stakeholder access to Community instruments; calls on the Member States to set up the appropriate infrastructure for the widest possible dissemination of information and technical support for outlying regions and SMEs;

Paragraph 13

Calls on the Commission and the Council to guarantee that the European Parliament has a role of substance to play in the open coordination method.
OPINION

of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy
for the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism

on the Commission communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: ‘Working together for the future of European tourism’

Draftsman: Emmanouil Bakopoulos

PROCEDURE


It considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 26 February and 27 March 2002.

At the last meeting it adopted the following conclusions by 26 votes to 1, with 3 abstentions.

The following were present for the vote: Caroline F. Jackson, chairman; Alexander de Roo, vice-chairman; Emmanouil Bakopoulos, draftsman; Per-Arne Arvidsson, María del Pilar Ayuso González, Hans Blokland, David Robert Bowe, John Bowis, Philip Bushill-Matthews (for Martin Callanan), Raffaele Costa, Anne Ferreira, Christel Fiebiger (for Pernille Frahm), Karl-Heinz Florenz, Cristina García-Orcoyen Tormo, Laura González Álvarez, Robert Goodwill, Jutta D. Haug (for Rosemarie Müller), Marie Anne Isler Béguin, Christa Klaß, Paul A.A.J.G. Lannoye (for Patricia McKenna), Giorgio Lisi (for Giuseppe Nisticò), Jules Maaten, Marit Paulsen, Encarnación Redondo Jiménez (for Cristina Gutiérrez Cortines), Dagmar Roth-Behrendt, Guido Sacconi, Jonas Sjöstedt, Renate Sommer (for Peter Liese), María Sornosa Martínez and Kathleen Van Brempt.
SHORT JUSTIFICATION

Tourism is an important economic activity within the European Union. It has enjoyed a period of strong growth in recent years as a result of an improved range of products offered by tour operators, very attractive prices for a larger number of destinations and an improvement in the standard of living of the population of Europe (a slight fall in unemployment, and upward economic growth). Tourism is itself a job-creating activity.

Tourism is also aiming to become increasingly accessible to the broad majority of the population across all age groups. It must adjust to something of a seasonal overload, such as during the school holidays. The greater mobility of our generation is not likely to decrease. Future generations must also be able to continue enjoying the places that we have chosen because of the pleasure they give us.

The effects of this development, however, sometimes weigh heavily on the environment, whether it be the natural, historical or cultural environment. There are several examples of this, ranging from waste management to conservation of the countryside surrounding tourist resorts - from the point of view of the urban environment, architecture or vegetation – and from the trampling under foot of certain areas to illegal souvenir hunting, etc.

The sustainable development of tourism is therefore an integral part of the European strategy for sustainable development – meeting the needs of the present without compromising those of future generations – strengthened by the Göteborg Council in June 2001 through the recognition of the environmental dimension in tandem with the social and economic dimensions.

The implementation of an Agenda 21 and the organisation of an annual European Tourism Forum, as proposed by the Commission, could make a sound contribution towards the sustainable development of tourism but local, regional and national environmental organisations must be involved.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy calls on the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following points in its motion for a resolution:

(a) whereas the tourist industry is undergoing a high rate of growth which is set to continue,

(b) whereas the tourist industry offers many varied job opportunities for both men and women and will continue to do so in the future, and whereas employment policy in the tourism sector must be geared to maintaining strategies to improve the quality of work and reducing its precarious nature,

(c) whereas tourism is an economic sector which is constantly expanding at European and world level in terms of both production and employment; whereas it also represents a
highly important economic and cultural resource for many cities, regions and local communities in the Union,

(d) whereas the development of Community tourism is closely linked to its sustainability in relation to Community objectives, the rights of local communities, the quality of life and of the environment,

(e) whereas geographical, historical, cultural and environmental differences are a source of wealth and one of the main factors in attracting tourists to the Community’s regions; whereas the European Union should support activities which seek to promote and develop their specific characteristics,

(f) whereas mass tourism in sensitive areas, such as coastal and mountain regions, may represent a threat to the local environment and cultural resources unless the influx of tourists and urban development are subject to appropriate management,

1. Welcomes the incorporation of tourism into Community policies and measures and hopes that this will be accomplished swiftly;

2. Points out that tourism is an important tool of development policy; in the context of the European Union’s regional policies activities linked to the development of forms of sustainable and quality tourism must be promoted;

3. Expresses its belief that the development of tourism must go hand in hand with policies geared towards the use, promotion and enhancement of environmental, artistic, historical and cultural resources;

4. Points out that any disruption of ecological balance as a consequence of incorrect planning of the use of land intended for tourist activities will ultimately also lead to the failure of policy on tourism;

5. Considers it necessary to promote programmes and forms of aid to ensure that all the sectors and operators in the tourism chain, including local and regional authorities, draw up their own programmes for sustainable tourism, taking into account the potential of tourist destinations, identifying natural resources, protected areas, cultural heritage and specific features, as well as drawing up programmes to enhance and market the potential attractions of lesser-known regions;

6. Calls on the Commission to support and increase forms of rural tourism as an instrument for creating jobs and making the best possible use of land, especially in the disadvantaged regions; similarly, calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote a diversified form of tourism, as well as drawing attention away from the most popular tourist attractions towards rural tourism and mountain areas;

7. Stresses the need to develop efficient and sustainable transport infrastructure, not least with a view to ensuring access to remote regions such as mountain areas and islands;

8. Considers that the environmental organisations are entitled to take their place on the
Advisory Committee on Tourism;

9. Calls on the Commission to organise a European Tourism Forum as quickly as possible;

10. Considers that, in order to devise sustainable tourism indicators, it is necessary to include the criteria and recommendations set out in the European Charter on sustainable tourism signed by all the Member States;

11. Calls for a third manual to be drawn up as a guidance document defining and applying the basic criteria of sustainable tourism and risk management in tourist destinations;

12. Welcomes the Commission’s initiative to implement Agenda 21 in order to promote the sustainable development of tourism and hopes that all the parties concerned will be fully involved; calls for the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) - which has been accessible to local authorities since 2001 - to be promoted in these activities;

13. Considers that in the context of Agenda 21 it would be appropriate to include natural and cultural areas and the exploitation of potential in tourist destinations and to devise indicators to measure the impact of tourism on the environment, the possible loss of distinctive features, the accommodation capacity of coastal areas and places of historic and visual interest;

14. Points out that an initiative of great interest would be to devise and disseminate methods and tools for measuring quality and for comparative assessment. An important role must be played in this plan by environmental issues, in particular those connected with land use, the exploitation of resources, the treatment of waste and the conservation of the landscape;

15. Points out that the Single European Sky could reduce not only air travel delays but also fuel usage and emissions; calls therefore on the Commission to move ahead with such proposals as rapidly as possible.