
Tourism and the European Union

Recent trends and policy
developments



IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

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Author: Maria Juul

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This paper helps to understand the definition of tourism, how important it is for the European Union economy, and the trends which affect tourism in the EU. It also provides an overview of EU tourism policy, and describes how some other EU policies are related to tourism. Lastly, it looks at recent developments in the sector.

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eprs@ep.europa.eu

<http://www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu> (intranet)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank> (internet)

<http://epthinktank.eu> (blog)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tourism is the third largest socio-economic activity in the European Union (EU), and makes an important contribution to the EU's gross national product and to employment. Europe is also the world's number one tourist destination. Within the global sector, however, Europe is not the fastest-growing region and its market share, in terms of international tourist arrivals and receipts, is shrinking.

Tourism businesses in the EU are confronted with a number of changes in tourists' profile and behaviour. Demographically, tourists in the EU are older than in previous decades. Geographically, a growing number of tourists travelling to the EU come from emerging countries, although EU source markets still provide the biggest share of tourists. Tourists nowadays increasingly use the internet to plan and buy their travel, including via online platforms through which they can access or buy services directly from other individuals. Although a growing number of tourists pay attention to the environment while travelling, they still largely travel using modes of transport – aeroplanes and cars – that generate a significant amount of CO₂ emissions. New forms of tourism are gaining in popularity, including agro-tourism and health tourism.

EU tourism policy has developed in a limited fashion over the years, reflecting the EU's feeble competences in the area. However, since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) allows the EU to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States in the domain. Adoption of common rules is possible in other policy areas related to tourism where the EU has exclusive or shared competency with Member States (e.g. transport or consumer protection).

Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Commission prepared an EU tourism strategy with the stated aim of retaining Europe's position as the world's number one tourism destination. In the framework of this strategy, the Commission has launched various projects and initiatives to provide support (mostly financial) for tourism in the EU. Further steps have been taken in other policy areas: in the framework of migration policy and home affairs, for example, the EU has regulated visa rules for third-country citizens required to hold a visa when travelling to the Schengen Area. Following a public consultation in 2013-14, the Commission is expected to present an updated tourism strategy later in 2015.

The European Parliament has also worked on a number of tourism issues, providing input to the EU tourism strategy and adopting, together with the Council, different legislative acts in areas related to tourism. The Parliament has also organised several public hearings on tourism, and its Committee on Transport and Tourism is preparing an own-initiative report on promotion of the tourism sector, focusing inter alia on issues arising from trends towards digitisation and the rise of the sharing economy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Tourism definitions and economic importance	3
1.1. What is meant by tourism and the tourism industry?	3
1.2. The economic importance of tourism	5
2. Latest trends	6
2.1. Developments in terms of volume	6
2.1.1. International tourist arrivals	6
2.1.2. International tourism receipts	8
2.2. Changes in tourist profiles and behaviour	9
2.2.1. Senior tourists	9
2.2.2. Source markets.....	10
2.2.3. Digitalisation and independent travel.....	10
2.2.4. Peer-to-peer platforms	11
2.2.5. Transport modes and environmental concerns	12
3. Future trends	13
4. EU tourism policy.....	15
4.1. Tourism in the treaties	15
4.2. EU tourism strategy	16
4.3. Projects and initiatives within the EU tourism strategy.....	16
4.4. Tourism in other EU policy areas.....	18
4.4.1. Industry and SMEs.....	18
4.4.2. Consumer protection	19
4.4.3. Transport.....	20
4.4.4. Migration and home affairs.....	20
4.4.5. Regional policy	22
4.5. The European Parliament	22
5. Outlook for EU tourism policy	23
6. Main references.....	25

List of main acronyms used

EDEN:	European Destinations of Excellence
ETC:	European Travel Commission
GDP:	Gross national product
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SME:	Small and medium-sized enterprise
UNWTO:	United Nations World Tourism Organization

1. Tourism definitions and economic importance

1.1. What is meant by tourism and the tourism industry?

Over time, different definitions and classifications have been used to measure and analyse tourism, leading to difficulties in comparing statistics between countries. The international community, led by the United Nations (UN), has taken steps towards harmonisation, by adopting various international guidelines on tourism statistics and definitions.¹

Based on these guidelines, Eurostat (the Statistical Office of the EU) has published its own manual for tourism statistics, in which it defines **tourism** as 'the activity of visitors taking a trip to a main destination outside the usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose, including business, leisure or other personal purpose, other than to be employed by a resident entity in the place visited'.²

The UN defines tourism in almost the same way, as an activity of visitors and specifies that a visitor is a traveller 'taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited'.³

Eurostat also defines what is constituted by the 'usual environment'. This term is of particular relevance as it can determine which trips can be considered tourism trips and which not. According to Eurostat:

'Usual environment means the geographical area, though not necessarily a contiguous one, within which an individual conducts his regular life routines and shall be determined on the basis of the following criteria: the crossing of administrative borders or the distance from the place of usual residence, the duration of the visit, the frequency of the visit, the purpose of the visit.'

For example, shopping trips that are made on a regular basis and are linked to regular life routines would be considered within the usual environment and not classified as tourism trips. Similar trips on a more irregular basis and not linked to regular life routines, on the other hand, are not part of the usual environment and can be termed tourism trips. However, as pointed out by Professor Norbert Vanhove from the

¹ Such as [Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008](#); [Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual](#) and [Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services 2010](#).

² [Methodological manual for tourism statistics](#), Eurostat, 2014, p. 16.

³ [International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics](#), United Nations, 2010, p. 10.

University of Leuven (KUL),⁴ there is no general rule on where the line between tourism and recreational activities is drawn.

Eurostat delineates the following forms of tourism:

- **Domestic tourism** is the tourism of residents within the country of reference⁵ either as part of a domestic trip or part of an outbound trip. For example, if residents of Belgium, living in Brussels, take trips to Bruges, they take domestic trips. Their final destination might be inside the country – e.g. Ostende (domestic trip) or outside the country of reference – e.g. London (outbound trip).
- **Inbound tourism** is the tourism of non-residents within the country of reference on an inbound trip. For example, if residents of Germany take trips to Brussels, for Belgian statistics these are counted as inbound trips.
- **Outbound tourism** is the tourism of residents outside the country of reference, either as part of an outbound trip or as part of a domestic trip. For example, if residents of Belgium take trips to London, for Belgian statistics they take outbound trips. If before arriving to London they make a stop in their country (e.g. in Ghent), the first part of the trip is domestic and the second part (in London) is an outbound trip.

These three forms of tourism can be combined in various ways to derive other forms of tourism, such as:

- **National tourism:** domestic + outbound tourism
- **Internal tourism:** domestic + inbound tourism
- **International tourism:** inbound + outbound tourism

Debate is ongoing in the literature as to whether tourism constitutes an industry in its own right. Although '**tourism industry**' is a widely used expression, some authors (e.g. Professor Vanhove of KUL University of Leuven, or Professor Peter F. Keller of the University of Lausanne) claim that tourism is not an industry, because tourists consume a variety of goods and services. Others suggest that 'there is not one tourism industry but many' or that the 'industries serving tourists directly may be designated tourism-related industries'.⁶

Eurostat uses the term 'tourism industry' in the singular as well as plural, but does not define it in the manual for tourism statistics. The European Commission, in its 2010 Communication on tourism, cites some examples of tourism industries: 'Traditional suppliers of travel and tourism services (hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, car hire, charter airlines, tourist coaches, cruise vessels, etc.) offering goods and services directly to visitors'.⁷

The UN suggests that tourism industries comprise establishments which serve visitors directly, but it adds that the main activity of these establishments has to be 'tourism characteristic' in order to be classified under tourism industries. It further explains that

⁴ ['The Economics of Tourism Destinations'](#), Norbert Vanhove, 2011, p. 5.

⁵ In the following examples, the country of reference is Belgium.

⁶ First citation: '[Why 'the tourism industry' is misleading as a generic expression: The case for the plural variation, 'tourism industries'](#)', N. Leipner, *Tourism Management*, volume 29, issue 2, April 2008, pp. 237–251. Second citation: '[The Management of International Tourism](#)', Stephen F. Witt et al., 2013, p. 23.

⁷ Footnote 1 on page 3 of the Commission [strategy paper](#) on tourism.

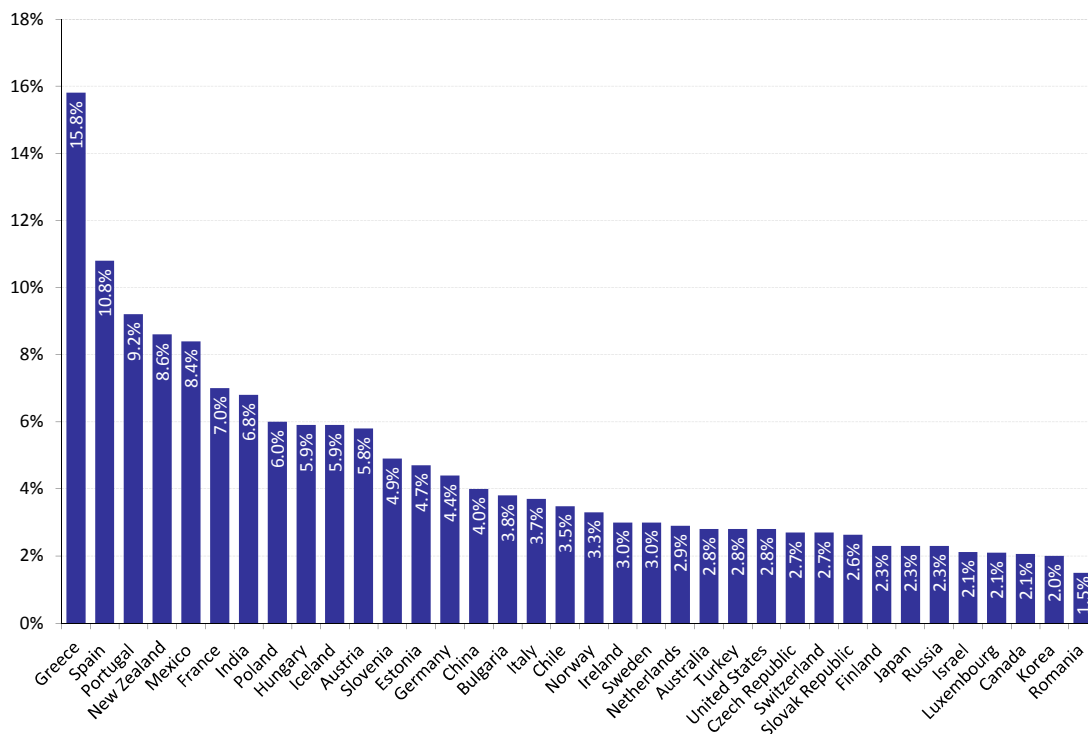
since 'establishments might have secondary activities, not all production of tourism characteristic products happens within tourism industries; on the other hand, tourism industries also have outputs that are not tourism characteristic products'.⁸ In short, other industries (e.g. distribution, construction and transport) also produce tourism characteristic products.

1.2. The economic importance of tourism

Tourism plays a major role in the EU economy. According to the European Commission, it is the **third largest socio-economic activity** in the EU (after the trade and distribution, and construction sectors), and has an overall positive impact on economic growth and employment. Tourism also contributes to the development of European regions and, if sustainable, helps to preserve and enhance cultural and natural heritage.

The Commission has highlighted the contribution of tourism industries to the EU Gross National Product (GDP). In its 2010 strategy paper on tourism, it indicates that the tourism industry directly generates over 5% of EU GDP, and when taking into account other industries that produce tourism characteristic products, tourism's contribution to the economy is even higher: over 10% of EU GDP. According to the latest data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in OECD Member States, tourism directly contributes, on average, around 4.7% of GDP. The OECD data reveals significant differences between countries (see figure 1).

Figure 1 – Direct contribution of tourism to OECD economies (as a percentage of GDP, 2012 or latest year available)⁹



Data source: ['OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2014'](#), p. 18.

⁸ ['Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008'](#), United Nations, 2010, p. 25.

⁹ The OECD is missing data for some of its Member States. The data refer to direct and indirect contribution (goods and services that the tourism industry buys from its suppliers) for Greece, New Zealand, Poland and Spain.

The Commission estimates that EU tourism industries comprise almost 2 million enterprises, most of them **small and medium-sized enterprises** (SMEs), providing work for 5.2% of the total EU workforce. In 2013, the accommodation and food services sector alone offered almost 10 million jobs (4% of total EU employment).

The tourism industry also plays an important role in the **employment of women**. At 56%, the female participation rate in the tourism workforce in the EU28 (in 2013) was higher than in the EU economy as a whole (46%). Their employment was especially high in travel agencies and tour operators, followed by the accommodation and food services sector.

However, many jobs in the tourism sector are seasonal, part-time, low-paid and menial. In 2013, one third of jobs in the EU accommodation and food services sector were seasonal.¹⁰ In addition, many employees in the tourism sector have irregular working hours and work on Sundays, in the evenings and at night. All these factors contribute to a rapid turnover of staff.¹¹

2. Latest trends

2.1. Developments in terms of volume

2.1.1. International tourist arrivals

Besides statistics on tourism's contribution to GDP and employment, international organisations also collect statistics on tourist arrivals and tourism receipts. In terms of arrivals, international tourism has shown exceptional growth since the end of World War II, growing from 25 million in 1950 to 1.1 billion in 2014.¹² For comparison, the world population in the same period has grown from 5.7 billion in 1994 to 7.2 billion in 2014.

With 588 million international tourist arrivals in 2014, Europe¹³ is the most visited region of the world (see figure 2). Of these, 457 million were to EU28 destinations. Five EU28 Member States rank among the top 10 destinations by arrivals worldwide: France, Spain, Italy, Germany and United Kingdom.

However, Europe is not the fastest-growing region. While Europe measured approximately 3% average annual growth for the 2005-14 period, the figure for Asia and the Pacific region in the same period was 6%, due not least to the tourism boom in China.

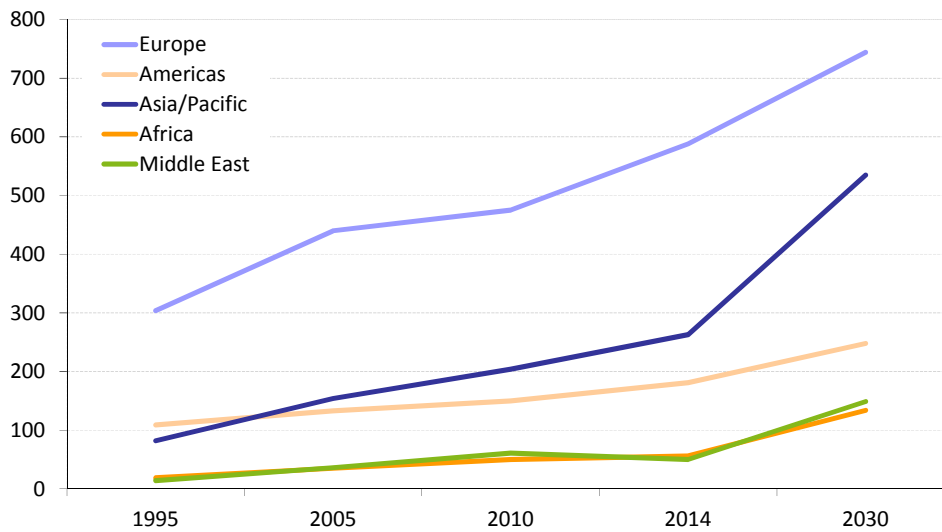
¹⁰ Data about jobs in the accommodation and food services, seasonal jobs and female employment in tourism in the EU: '[Tourism in the EU economy](#)', briefing – statistical spotlight, EPRS, European Parliament, 2014.

¹¹ '[Measuring Employment in the Tourism Industries](#)', UNWTO, 2014.

¹² '[International tourism trends in EU-28 member states. Current situation and forecasts for 2020-2025-2030](#)', prepared for European Commission by UNWTO, 2014, p. 3 for data about 1950; UNWTO press releases '[Over 1.1 billion tourists travelled abroad in 2014](#)' (27 May 2015) for data about 2014.

¹³ UNWTO '[UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2015 Edition](#)' (table on page 8), UNWTO uses the word 'Europe' in a broad sense, including Russia and Turkey.

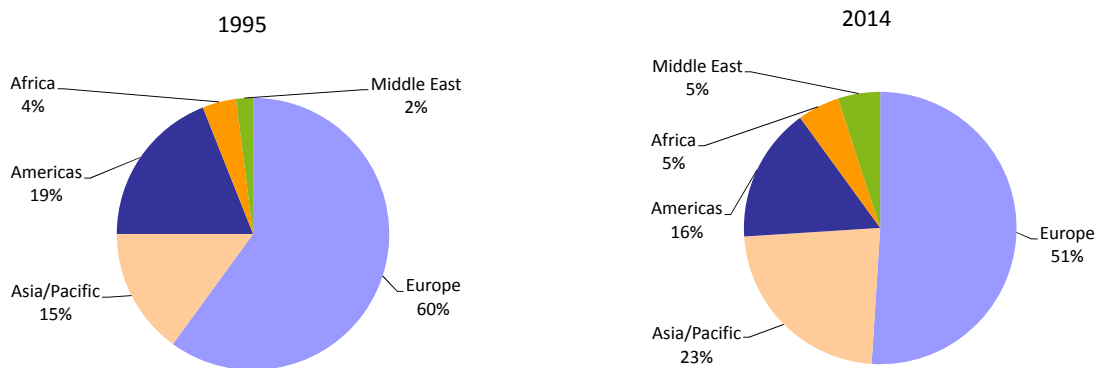
Figure 2 – International tourist arrivals in the world (in millions)



Data source: EPRS calculation, based on UNWTO data.

Because of Europe's slower growth, its market share has reduced from 60% in 1995 to 51% in 2014. Regions which have seen an increase include Asia and the Pacific (from 15% in 1995 to 23% in 2014), the Middle East (from 2 to 5%) and Africa (from 4 to 5%) (see figure 3).

Figure 3 – Evolution of market share (%) in terms of international tourist arrivals, 1995 and 2014



Data source: EPRS calculation, based on UNWTO data.

Maintaining Europe's leading market position has been set as the objective of EU tourism policy.¹⁴ Tourism is seen not only as important for jobs, growth and socio-economic cohesion but also as a fundamental contributor to economic recovery. Whether Europe can indeed successfully maintain its leading market position will depend on a number of internal and external factors, as well as its capacity to take advantage of its comparative strengths and respond to different challenges. As pointed out by UNWTO,¹⁵ Europe's main strengths include its infrastructure, its cultural diversity in a comparatively small area, and its borderless travel area within the Schengen zone. Challenges to be faced include, among other aspects, demographic change, sustainability and innovation.

¹⁴ European Commission [Communication](#) on 'Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe', 2010, p. 2.

¹⁵ ['International tourism trends in EU-28 member states. Current situation and forecasts for 2020-2025-2030'](#), prepared for European Commission by UNWTO, 2014, p. 28.

International tourist arrivals are also affected by wars and conflicts, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, outbreaks of deadly contagious diseases, currency instability, etc. When these factors affect other regions of the world, the market share of Europe usually increases slightly and *vice versa*. For example, at a time of political upheaval in the Arab world in 2011 and 2012, the market share of the Middle East decreased from 6.4% in 2010 to 5.0% in 2012, while Europe's market share increased from 50.7% in 2010 to 51.6% in 2012

Conflict closer to home can also have negative impact on arrivals in Europe. A recent study on 'European Tourism amid the Crimea Crisis', suggested that the situation between Ukraine and Russia is, in the short-term, reducing arrivals from Russia and diverting Russian tourists to non-European destinations. According to the study projections, arrivals from Russia to Europe¹⁶ will be 10% lower in 2015 than might have been anticipated had the crisis not occurred.

Lastly, international tourist arrivals can be also affected by visa policies. It is argued that the EU loses many tourists due to difficulties with visa applications. According to a Commission study on the economic impact of short-stay visa facilitation on the tourism industry,¹⁷ in 2012 the EU lost a total of 6.6 million potential travellers from China, India, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Ukraine, due to difficulties with visa applications. The situation might change if the EU adopts a package of changes to visa rules. In addition, the EU is in dialogue on visa liberalisation with Ukraine (as with some other Eastern Partnership countries), to take steps towards visa-free travel to Europe.

2.1.2. International tourism receipts

In 2014, European countries¹⁸ earned €383 billion from international tourism receipts: 'receipts from international visitor spending on accommodation, food and drink, entertainment, shopping and other services and goods'.¹⁹ As for international arrivals, Spain, France, Italy, United Kingdom and Germany ranked among the top 10 earners worldwide.

Europe has the biggest market share of international tourism receipts. In 2014, it accounted for 41% of worldwide international tourism receipts, compared to 30% for Asia and the Pacific, 22% for the Americas and less than 10% for the Middle East and Africa.

However, Europe's market share in terms of receipts (41%) is lower than that of arrivals (52%). As explained by UNWTO, this reflects the lower average expenditure per trip: 'With its comparatively short distances and good infrastructure, travel in the EU28 is characterised by more frequent but shorter trips'.²⁰ This is also seen from Eurostat statistics:²¹ in 2013, short trips (one to three nights) accounted for more than half of

¹⁶ Europe is defined in the study as members of the European Travel Commission – ETC (non-profit organisation that promotes Europe as a tourist destination) plus France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Among ETC members are, for example, Turkey, but not Russia. The full list of members is available on the ETC [website](#).

¹⁷ '[Study on the economic impact of short stay visa facilitation on the tourism industry](#)', European Commission, 2013.

¹⁸ European countries in the broader sense, as used by UNWTO, including Russia and Turkey.

¹⁹ '[UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2015 Edition](#)', UNWTO, p. 5.

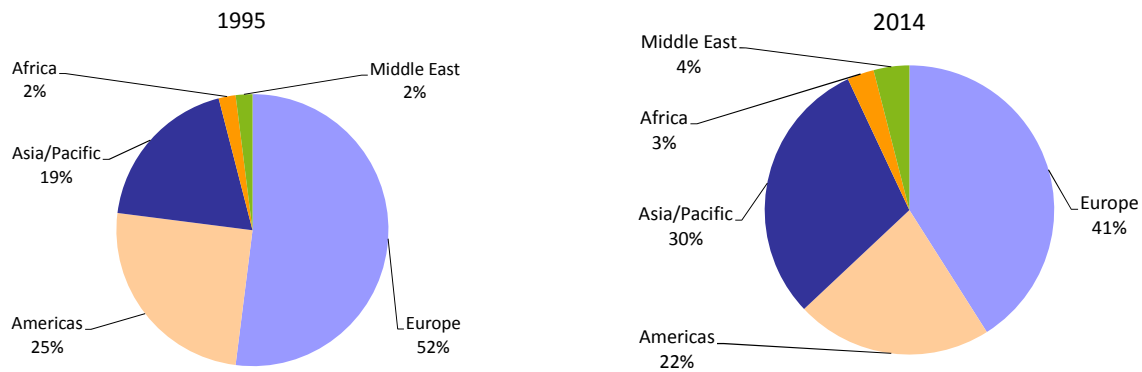
²⁰ '[International tourism trends in EU-28 member states. Current situation and forecasts for 2020-2025-2030](#)', prepared for European Commission by UNWTO, 2014, p. 4.

²¹ '[Tourism statistics - characteristics of tourism trips](#)', Eurostat, 2015.

the total number of trips of EU28 residents, and three quarters of trips were to domestic destinations.

As for arrivals, Europe's market share in terms of receipts (see figure 4) is decreasing (from 52% in 1995 to 41% in 2014), whilst increasing in some other regions of the world, in particular in Asia and the Pacific, (from 19% in 1995 to 30% in 2014).

Figure 4 – Evolution of market share (%) in terms of international tourism receipts, 1995 and 2014



Data source: EPRS calculation, based on UNWTO data.

2.2. Changes in tourist profiles and behaviour

Besides developments in terms of tourism volume, other changes can be noted in the profile and behaviour of tourists travelling to or within the EU. These changes are largely due to a number of factors such as demographic trends, geopolitical developments or technological evolution.

2.2.1. Senior tourists

Tourists are, on average, older than in past decades. Globally, the share of people aged 60 or over has increased from 9% in 1994 to 12% in 2014. Although Eurostat points out that the participation rate among EU28 tourists aged 65 and over was lower in 2012 than their share in the total population, it also reports that seniors make more trips than in the past: in 2011, people aged 65 and over made 29% more trips than in 2006.²²

Older persons' travel habits may differ from other age groups. As mentioned in the European Commission's 2014 draft report 'Europe, the best destination for seniors',²³ 7 out of 10 seniors in the EU undertake only domestic trips. They tend to prioritise safety and be increasingly quality conscious. Those of retirement age can travel during off-season periods. Seniors also tend to spend more money on trips than in the past. In 2011, EU seniors spent 33% more money on trips than in 2006. They also tend to make longer trips than other age groups. In 2011, the average duration of their trip was about 11 nights, compared to a general average of 9.8 nights. However, overall, they remain a rather heterogeneous group with different needs and motivations.

Similar preferences can be observed among senior travellers in some third countries. As Scott et al. point out,²⁴ compared to past generations, seniors from the US and

²² Data on the share of people aged 65 and over participating in tourism from '[Tourism statistics – participation in tourism](#)', Eurostat, 2015 and data on the increase of trips from '[Ageing and tourism in the European Union](#)', Eurostat, 2012.

²³ The Commission refers in its [draft report](#) to seniors in the broader sense: people aged 55 and over.

²⁴ '[New insights into Senior Travel Behaviour: The Canadian Experience](#)', Darren M. Scott et al., 2009, p. 141.

Australia 'tend to take more trips, a greater variety of trips, and longer trips, reflecting increased incomes, better health, and more active lifestyles'.

2.2.2. Source markets

Geographically, a growing number of tourists travelling to the EU come from emerging countries, although EU source markets still provide the biggest share of tourists to EU destinations. The second biggest group comes from Europe outside the EU, the third from the Americas and the fourth from Asia and the Pacific (see figure 6).

The largest individual source market for tourism in European destinations in 2013 was Germany, followed by the United Kingdom, Russia, France, the Netherlands, Italy, the United States and Belgium (see table 1). These eight countries counted for about half of international arrivals to Europe in 2013. Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and France were among the five largest source markets already in the period 2003-08 but their share fell in the following period (2008-13). Russia's market share, on the other hand, is increasing. Russia has risen from eighth position in the period 2003-08 to third position in 2013. In the period 2014-15, the Crimea crisis slightly slowed this pace of growth.

Table 1 – Origin markets for tourism in Europe

	Average market share, 2003-08	Average market share, 2008-13	Market share, 2013
Germany	17.2%	15.0%	14.2%
United Kingdom	12.4%	10.2%	9.4%
Russia	3.2%	4.7%	5.9%
France	5.5%	5.4%	5.3%
Netherlands	5.6%	5.1%	4.6%
Italy	5.0%	4.7%	4.2%
United States	4.3%	4.0%	4.0%
Belgium	3.8%	3.9%	3.8%

Data source: ['European Tourism Portfolio Analysis'](#), 2014.

One of the fastest growing source markets for tourism in Europe is China. Travel from China grew in the years 2003-08 by 11.4% and in the years 2008-13 by 17.6%. In 2013, it was the 16th largest source market for European destinations (1.3% market share). Although Brazil and India have also grown as a source market for Europe, their share is still very limited: respectively 0.7% and 0.3% in 2013. In 2013, with this market share, Brazil held 20th and India 21st place as source markets for Europe.

2.2.3. Digitalisation and independent travel

Tourists, especially younger tourists, increasingly tend to use digital technologies and social media channels (such as review portals, blogs and forums) for tourism purposes. The internet has contributed to self-organised holidays and independent travel by shifting 'the balance of power from the providers of tourism services to consumers'.²⁵ It has also increased the number of people booking various parts of their trip separately.

²⁵ ['OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2014'](#), p. 26.

All these trends are highlighted in a 2015 Eurobarometer survey on 'Preferences of Europeans towards tourism'.²⁶ According to the study:

- two thirds of respondents used the internet to organise holidays;
- 4 in 10 respondents took at least one holiday where they purchased various parts of the trip (such as flights and accommodation) separately;
- more than half (55%) of respondents considered recommendations by friends, colleagues or relatives the most important source of information when making travel plans, while just under half (46%) mentioned internet websites.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the use of mobile devices (e.g. smartphones and tablets) to access information, products and services before and during tourism trips. If access to cheap high speed internet continues to improve, this may open up further possibilities in the use of these devices for tourism purposes.

2.2.4. Peer-to-peer platforms

Compared to the past, today's tourists demand, in general, more individual and authentic experiences. To respond to this need, new players have entered the market, facilitated by the emergence of online platforms where individuals can access tourist services directly from other individuals (either free or for a return). Far from being limited to tourism, these online platforms (in other words peer-to-peer (P2P) platforms) are developing in a variety of sectors. A 2013 study coordinated by the Commission²⁷ refers, for example, to online peer-to-peer platforms where individuals e.g., sell their meals, organise food tours and rent various objects such as travel equipment, property or means of transport to other individuals.

Many of these platforms have a growing number of users. For example, in September 2015 the US-based online platform through which users can list and book accommodation – Airbnb – publicised on its website that its users offered over 1.5 million lodgings in more than 190 countries worldwide (for comparison, Hilton Worldwide or Intercontinental Hotels Group – some of the largest hospitality companies in the world – have fewer hotel rooms).

Airbnb has claimed positive impacts for its activities. In a 2014 study²⁸ it claimed that traveling with Airbnb 'results in significant reduction in energy and water use, greenhouse gas emissions, and waste, and encourages more sustainable practices among both hosts and guests'. Another study²⁹ claimed that, from November 2012 to October 2013, Airbnb generated US\$824 million in economic activity, and supported 11 629 jobs in the UK. However, critics say that these jobs are mostly part-time without any of the benefits of a comparable traditional full-time job.³⁰

Furthermore, critics draw attention to various aspects in which, in their view, fair treatment between traditional tourism companies and companies managing peer-to-peer platforms is not guaranteed. Hoteliers point out that they have to register their

²⁶ Flash Eurobarometer 414 '[Preferences of Europeans towards tourism](#)', European Commission, 2015.

²⁷ '[The Sharing Economy. Accessibility Based Business Models for Peer-to-Peer Markets](#)', European Commission, 2013.

²⁸ '[New Study Reveals A Greener Way to Travel: Airbnb Community Shows Environmental Benefits of Home Sharing](#)', Airbnb press release, 31 July 2014.

²⁹ '[New Study: Airbnb Community Generates \\$824 Million in Economic Activity in the UK](#)', Airbnb press release, 27 January 2014.

³⁰ Alan E. Young, '[How the Sharing Economy is \(Mis\)shaping the Future](#)', 02 September 2015.

activity, pay several taxes, fulfil safety, hygiene and cleanliness requirements, and respect environmental and labour laws. Many Airbnb hosts do not fulfil the same requirements. A 2014 report³¹ on Airbnb in New York (one of Airbnb's most important markets) suggests that between January 2010 and June 2014, at least 72% of Airbnb rentals studied violated some state or local law (e.g. a New York law which forbids renting private rooms for less than 30 days if the permanent resident is not present).

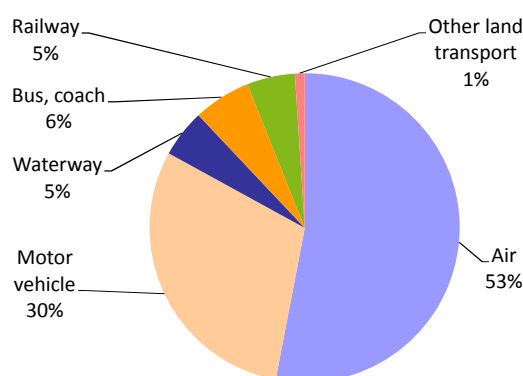
Furthermore, not all Airbnb hosts pay taxes on the revenue received from short-term renting and Airbnb itself has placed its headquarters in locations where corporation tax is low. This raises concern among public authorities. For example, France public authorities have claimed³² tax losses on Airbnb profit margins, as the French Airbnb branch (as per other European branches) pays corporation taxes on profit margins in Ireland (which has reportedly the lowest corporate tax rate in Europe) and other taxes in France. This meant that in 2013 the French Airbnb paid taxes in France of €3.4 million while its actual French revenue was estimated to be €100 million. The situation is likely to change soon: as from 1 October 2015 Airbnb will collect taxes directly for each reservation in Paris. Other public authorities (such as Amsterdam), have also signed agreements with Airbnb to simplify tax collection. Moreover, Amsterdam city council helps³³ Airbnb hosts to understand the rules and laws with which they must comply.

2.2.5. Transport modes and environmental concerns

Tourists in Europe travel predominantly using modes of transport that generate a significant amount of CO₂ emissions: air transport and motor vehicle transport.

Air transport is growing at a faster pace than surface transport (by road, rail or over water). In the period 1980-2010, surface travel grew worldwide 3% per year on average, while travel by air grew 5%.³⁴ In 2013, just over half of international tourists worldwide arrived at their destination by air. Air transport is also EU28 residents' principal mode of transport for outbound trips. In 2013, it was used for 53% of outbound trips of EU28 residents (see figure 5).

Figure 5 – Outbound trips of EU28 residents by main means of transport, 2013



Data source: 'Tourism statistics – [characteristics of tourism trips](#)', Eurostat, 2015.

³¹ ['Airbnb in the city'](#), Eric T. Schneiderman, Attorney General, New York State Office, 2014, p. 2.

³² ['Low Irish taxes boost Airbnb profits'](#), Euractiv, 22 July 2014.

³³ See dedicated Amsterdam city council [website](#) (in Dutch).

³⁴ ['International tourism trends in EU-28 member states. Current situation and forecasts for 2020-2025-2030'](#), UNWTO, 2014, p. 21.

In the past five to ten years, growth was especially high in the low-cost segment, accelerated, among other factors, by the global financial crisis. Europe is the region where low-cost airlines are the most active. According to Oxford Economics 2014 data,³⁵ low-cost airlines were used for 250 million passenger trips per year in Europe, compared to 173 million passenger trips per year in North America and 117 million passenger trips per year in Asia.

At the same time, in 'OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2014', the OECD mentions that in the medium-term, climate change will continue to put pressure on individuals to choose more sustainable transport modes. According to UNWTO estimations,³⁶ tourism is responsible for 5% of global CO₂ emissions and this percentage is expected to grow if current practices continue. The biggest share of CO₂ emissions emitted from tourism comes from transport, in particular air transport. In 'Tourism in the Green Economy' (published 2012), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimated that air transport accounts for 40% of tourism's contribution to CO₂, followed by cars (32%) and accommodation (21%).

Although UNWTO also cites³⁷ some potentially positive effects of climate change on tourism (e.g. longer beach seasons), it highlights mainly negative effects that outweigh the positive effects. Rising sea levels could submerge small islands and coastal regions. Desertification, deforestation and the harm to biodiversity could make certain destinations less attractive. Loss of snow cover could cause a fall in winter tourism.³⁸ All these effects call for more sustainable solutions in tourism.

3. Future trends

In the longer-term, the above-mentioned trends are likely to continue to shape tourism, globally as well as in Europe. UNWTO forecasts³⁹ that the number of international arrivals worldwide will continue to increase from 2010 to 2030 by an average of 3% per year. In absolute numbers, these arrivals are expected to reach almost 2 billion by 2030. UNWTO has not projected international tourism receipts in the long term because exchange rate fluctuations and inflation make such projections difficult.

As more and more destinations develop tourism, arrivals spread more widely across the globe. Europe is expected to maintain its position as the top receiving region and to receive 744 million tourists by 2030 (out of which 577 million to EU28 destinations). However, its market share is forecast to drop from 60% in 1995 to 41% by 2030. Most tourists arriving in EU28 destinations will still originate from other EU28 countries. In fact, their share is forecast to increase (see figure 6).

³⁵ ['Shaping the Future of Travel. Macro trends driving industry growth over the next decade'](#), Oxford Economics, 2014, p. 3.

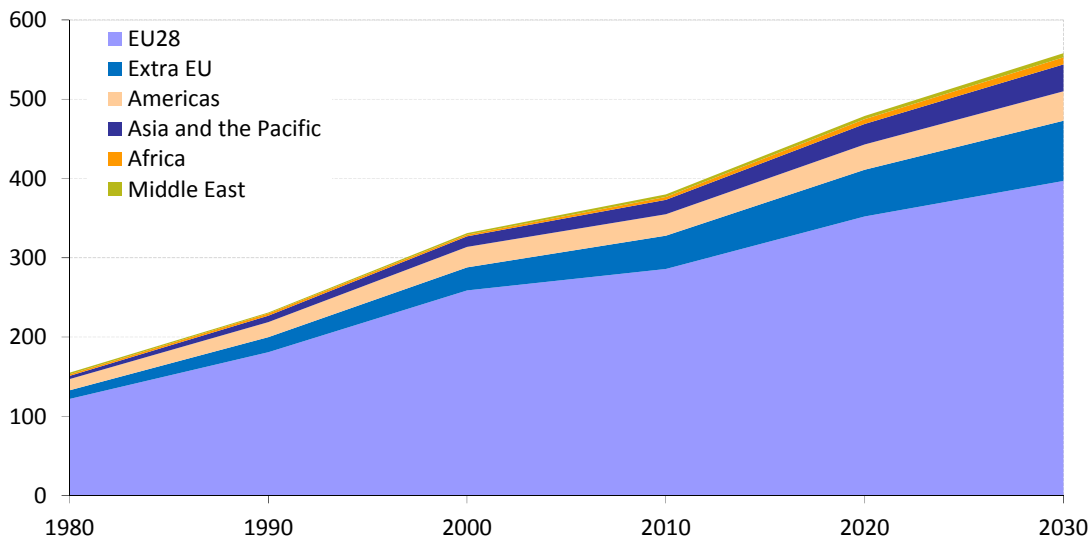
³⁶ ['Tourism in the Green Economy'](#) (Introduction), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2012.

³⁷ UNWTO [website](#) on climate change and tourism (last consulted in September 2015).

³⁸ See for example the impact of [climate change](#) on winter tourism in Slovenia.

³⁹ UNWTO ['Tourism Towards 2030. Global Overview'](#), 2011 and ['International tourism trends in EU-28 member states. Current situation and forecasts for 2020-2025-2030'](#), 2014. UNWTO does not present its forecasts 'as precise and perfect predictions, but as likely outcomes indicating the direction (increasing, decreasing or stationary) and magnitude of change'.

Figure 6 – International tourist arrivals in EU28 countries by region of origin, 1980-2030 (in millions)



Data source: '[International tourism trends in EU-28 member states. Current situation and forecasts for 2020-2025-2030](#)', UNWTO, 2014, p. 25.

Worldwide, the market share of the Asia and Pacific region is expected to increase from 15% in 1995 to 30% in 2030. The Middle East is forecast to receive 10 times, and Africa seven times more international tourists than in 1995 by 2030. The Americas will more than double their international arrivals.

Air transport will continue to increase its market share as a mean of transport for international travel but its growth is forecast to slow. Between 1980 and 2010, the average annual growth of air transport worldwide was 4%; in the period between 2010 and 2030 this is estimated at 3%.

Tourism academics⁴⁰ highlight the continued impact of ageing populations. As pointed out by Robinson et al., the share of retired seniors with free time to travel will increase. At the same time, more retired people also puts greater pressure on pensions, which might reduce income available for leisure activities.

Changes in family structures (cohabiting unions, single parents, blended families, etc.) might also impact the needs and preferences of future tourists as well as future tourism products. Niche tourism (e.g. health, agro-, LGBT⁴¹ and solo tourism) is, in general, forecast to grow. Some highly specific activities like space tourism may become more widely available in the future. The first aspiring space tourists have already bought tickets to travel into sub-orbit, but so far tests have not been successful enough to allow them to travel into space.⁴²

Wars and conflicts, natural disasters, outbreaks of deadly contagious diseases, uncertain economic and political situation in some countries might continue to create problems for the tourism sector, but these factors are often unpredictable. Climate change is forecast to continue to impact tourism in some destinations. Heat waves and

⁴⁰ For example, Peter Robinson et al. in '[Tourism](#)', 2013 and Claude Origet du Cluzeau et al. in '[Le tourisme des années 2020](#)', 2009.

⁴¹ Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.

⁴² '[Will Space Tourism Survive the Crash of SpaceShipTwo?](#)', Popular Science, February 2015, vol. 286, issue 2, p. 30.

drought in southern areas of Europe might mean that tourism in these areas has to be spread over the year. Multi-holidaying (taking several holidays a year) is, in general, forecast to gain in popularity.⁴³

Lastly, tourists are forecast to become increasingly autonomous, organising their travel bookings themselves. Value for money and digitalisation will probably continue to be important. These factors might be favourable to further development of peer-to-peer platforms where tourists can use tourist services directly from other individuals. However, the future of these platforms also depends on whether and how public authorities will regulate them and how platforms will facilitate the creation of trust among users.⁴⁴

4. EU tourism policy

In recognition of the importance of the tourism industry to the EU economy, and taking into account some of the trends outlined above, the EU has taken a wide range of measures in the field of tourism. However, since EU treaties exclude any harmonisation of tourism laws and allow the EU only to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States, EU tourism policy is rather limited, consisting mainly of providing financial support or legislating through other EU policies.

4.1. Tourism in the treaties

The European Union mentioned tourism in the treaties for the first time in 1992. Article 3(t) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) introduced a possibility for the EU to take 'measures in the spheres of energy, civil protection and tourism'. Any action in the sphere of tourism required unanimity in the Council. The declaration attached to the treaty declared the EU's intention to discuss the inclusion of a tourism section in the EU treaty in the future.

In 2007, the EU created a specific section for tourism in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU): Title XXII (Article 195). Here, the EU laid down the objectives of EU tourism policy, by stating that EU action 'shall be aimed at:

- a) encouraging the creation of a favourable environment for the development of undertakings in this sector;
- b) promoting cooperation between the Member States, particularly by the exchange of good practice.'

Article 195 also lays down the procedure for adopting measures in the sphere of tourism. It states that European Parliament and the Council adopt these measures under the ordinary legislative procedure.

The TFEU does not recognise tourism as a stand-alone policy and excludes any harmonisation of laws and regulations of Member States. According to Article 6 TFEU, the EU can only 'support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States' in tourism. However, as tourism is related to many other policy areas (e.g. agriculture, environment, transport, and the area of freedom, security and justice) in which the EU

⁴³ Various future scenarios are described, for instance, in ['Future tourism: political, social and economic challenges'](#), edited by James Leigh et al., 2013.

⁴⁴ ['Unlocking the sharing economy. An independent review'](#), Debbie Wosskow, 2014.

has exclusive or shared competency with Member States, the EU does legislate on issues which affect tourism.

4.2. EU tourism strategy

Subsequent to the adoption of a new legal basis for tourism, the Commission adopted a strategy for tourism in 2010 with a Communication on 'Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe'. The Communication outlined the EU's tourism policy and actions to be implemented jointly by the Commission, Member States and their regions, as well as by industry stakeholders. All these actions were to complement the actions of Member States and regions, helping to tackle the challenges faced by the tourism industry.

The strategy paper identified four priority areas for action:

- simulate competitiveness in the European tourism sector;
- promote the development of sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourism;
- consolidate the image and profile of Europe as a collection of sustainable and high quality destinations;
- maximise the potential of EU financial policies and instruments for developing tourism.

Under these priority areas, the Commission foresaw a number of actions. In the area of **competitiveness**, it proposed, for example, to develop innovation and the use of information and communication technologies, improve professional skills and encourage the extension of the tourist season (e.g. by coordinating school holidays).

In the area of **sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourism**, the Commission proposed to monitor sustainable management of tourism destinations and protect the heritage of tourism destinations. The Commission aimed also to strengthen EU cooperation with emerging countries and Mediterranean countries.

In order to consolidate the **image and profile of Europe**, the Commission proposed to create a 'Europe brand' which could help European destinations to stand out when compared to other international tourist destinations.

Lastly, the Commission stated its intention to ensure better **integration of tourism in other EU policies** and to maximise the potential of **EU financial support** instruments and programmes in favour of tourism.

4.3. Projects and initiatives within the EU tourism strategy

In order to achieve the objectives set in the EU tourism strategy, the Commission has launched numerous projects and initiatives. It has, for example, offered grants, organised events (e.g. the annual European Tourism Forum), competitions and webinars (web seminars on e.g. marketing tourism businesses online), launched websites that provide tourism operators networking opportunities (e.g. www.tourismlink.eu), and published studies and surveys (e.g. Eurobarometer reports on the preferences of Europeans towards tourism).

Usually, these projects and initiatives have a key theme or objective but can also contribute to other objectives. For example, the **Calypso** initiative⁴⁵ and its follow-up **Tourism for Seniors**,⁴⁶ help disadvantaged groups (e.g. seniors, young people, people

⁴⁵ See Commission [website](#) on Calypso.

⁴⁶ See Commission former [website](#) on Tourism for Seniors.

with reduced mobility and low-income families) to visit European destinations. Additional objectives are to promote off-season tourism, regional development, generate economic growth, create longer-lasting jobs in the tourism sector, and strengthen European citizenship. Both initiatives are transnational in nature and encourage cooperation between organisations from different Member States. They also promote the involvement of SMEs and various tourism stakeholders, such as local and regional authorities.

In 2009-11, the EU allocated⁴⁷ €1-1.5 million per year for Calypso projects and for 2012, €450 000. For its senior tourism initiative, the EU allocated €1 million in 2013. In 2014, the Commission extended the scope of the former senior tourism initiative to cover young people too and allocated a budget of €1.8 million. The funding for these projects came, under the 2007-13 financial framework, from the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP),⁴⁸ and since 2014, from the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME).⁴⁹

In order to develop sustainable tourism, the Commission has co-funded the development of **cultural routes** that help European as well as non-European tourists to discover how Europeans have lived since ancient times. It has co-funded, for example, the development of a route of astronomical sites in Europe (in Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Bulgaria). Among other things, the project aimed to create a tour package within the countries involved, incorporate and establish European scientific knowledge in astronomy tourism, strengthen existing partnerships and attract new visitors to the participating astronomical sites. In 2013-15, the EU contributed 75% of the cost of the project, some €200 000 (from the COSME programme).

The Commission has also co-funded the development of several **cycling routes** (e.g. European long distance cycle route network – EuroVelo routes⁵⁰). The European Parliament has supported these routes; initiating some concrete projects or in seeking to improve their financial support. The Parliament initiated, for example, a long distance EuroVelo route – the Iron Curtain Trail which invites tourists to discover the former division of Europe on a 6,800 km cycle track along the length of the former border, combining European culture, history and sustainable tourism. For the period 2014-16, the EU will contribute €2 million (again from the COSME programme) to the development of the Iron Curtain Trail.

Various **prizes** may also be awarded to tourism operators. For instance, routes reserved exclusively for non-motorised journeys can be awarded the European Greenways Award; museums may win the European Museum of the Year Award; and sustainable, little-known tourism destinations the 'European Destinations of Excellence' (EDEN) award.

Furthermore, the EU is taking various measures to **promote destination Europe**. For instance, from 2012 to 2013, the Commission ran a 'Europe, whenever you're ready' campaign that encouraged international tourists (with special focus on Brazil, Russia,

⁴⁷ Data from 2012 [call for proposals](#).

⁴⁸ EIP was one of the specific programmes under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme ([CIP](#)) that aimed to support innovation and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the EU.

⁴⁹ The [COSME](#) programme aims to support SMES in four areas: facilitate SMEs access to finance, improve framework conditions for competitive and sustainable EU enterprises, promote entrepreneurship and improve access to markets.

⁵⁰ <http://www.eurovelo.org/routes/>

India, China, Chile and Argentina) to discover Europe. The initiative highlighted Europe's cultural and natural heritage, and showcased not only popular sights but also 'roads less travelled' in various European destinations. The Commission also promotes Europe among third countries through the visiteurope.com website, administered by a non-profit organisation the European Travel Commission (ETC). The ETC is an international organisation that promotes Europe as a tourist destination. The European Commission has awarded various grants to the ETC (e.g. €830 000 for October 2012 – March 2014) and asked it to develop, in consultation with the industry, a long-term promotion strategy for 'Destination Europe'.

4.4. Tourism in other EU policy areas

As mentioned above, many other European policies, and their legislative and non-legislative initiatives, are relevant to, or impact upon, tourism. They may affect various elements of the tourism system: resources essential to tourism, tourism enterprises, tourism demand, or areas where tourism is an important economic sector. Some policy areas (e.g. transport and consumer protection) impact tourism more through legislative and non-legislative initiatives, others (e.g. industrial and regional policy) more through financial support. Some examples are given below.

4.4.1. Industry and SMEs

EU industry and SME policies are relevant to tourism mostly because of the **financial support** they provide. Under this policy, the European Commission (DG GROW – Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs) has a specific unit dealing with tourism which, inter alia, manages tourism initiatives and projects.

DG GROW implements the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME). Tourism is directly addressed by one of the overall objectives of the COSME programme: to improve framework conditions for the competitiveness and sustainability of EU enterprises, particularly SMEs, including in the tourism sector.

The COSME programme⁵¹ implements the objectives set in the Commission's 2010 tourism strategy, taking into account views expressed in the Council and the European Parliament, as well as input from Member States in the COSME and Tourism Advisory Committees.⁵² For 2015, the COSME programme earmarked €9 million for five operational objectives for tourism:

- 1) increase tourism demand;
- 2) diversify tourism offer;
- 3) enhance tourism quality sustainability, accessibility, skills, information and innovation;
- 4) improve socio-economic knowledge;
- 5) increase the visibility of Europe as a tourist destination as well as the diversity of its destinations.

Under these operational objectives, the Commission regularly publishes calls for proposals⁵³ that allow co-funding of specific projects. The COSME programme is also

⁵¹ The COSME [work programme 2015](#), p. 44.

⁵² Expert groups that assist the Commission in the preparation of legislation or policy related to tourism.

⁵³ Tourism related calls for proposals can be found on European Commission DG GROW [website](#).

used for other measures, e.g. to produce annual Eurobarometer surveys on 'Preferences and Attitudes of Europeans towards tourism' or to cooperate with the ETC and UNWTO.

4.4.2. Consumer protection

EU consumer policy aims to safeguard the health, safety and economic interests of consumers, as well as to promote their right to information, education and to organise themselves.⁵⁴ The EU has adopted several legislative acts that protect tourists as consumers.

An example of a consumer policy Directive that is not specifically addressed to tourism, but which may apply, is Directive 2005/29/EC on **unfair commercial practices**. The Directive outlines commercial practices which are prohibited in the EU, e.g. using misleading marketing techniques and tricking consumers into buying a product they would not have otherwise bought.

Consumers who buy **package holidays** are protected by Directive 90/314/EEC on package travel, package holidays and package tours, currently under revision. Among other measures, the Directive gave package travellers the right to receive all necessary information before signing a contract. It rendered organisers and retailers liable for the performance of all services in the package, and regulated what happens in the event of changes to the package travel contract. Furthermore, it ensured that package travellers are reimbursed and repatriated in the event of organiser and/or retailer insolvency.

In May 2015, the European Parliament and the Council reached provisional agreement over the revision of the Directive on package travel (which still needs to be formally approved).⁵⁵ The aim of the revision was to take the internet era into account, where travellers increasingly directly buy different parts of their trips or put them together from different providers sourced via the internet. The initial Directive either does not cover these situations, or does not mention them explicitly, leaving travellers and traders unsure of their rights and obligations.

According to the provisional agreement, the definition of 'package' would be expanded to include various types of travel arrangements that combine, for example, an airline ticket, hotel accommodation and car hire, so as to protect travellers in the event of problems. The revised Directive also covers travel combining at least two different types of services bought within 24 hours from separate providers using linked booking processes (referred to as assisted travel arrangements or click-through packages). Buyers of these arrangements would be afforded the same liability and insolvency protection as buyers of ready-made (travel agent) packages or combinations of services bought from a single sales outlet.

Other changes concern, for example, the right of the package traveller to cancel a package deal contract if its price rises prior to departure beyond a certain limit, organisers' obligations when, due to unavoidable and unforeseen events (such as natural disasters or terrorist attacks), it is impossible to ensure the traveller's timely return and package travellers' right to information (e.g. the right to receive approximate departure and return times and information on the type of any possible extra costs).

⁵⁴ Article 169 [TFEU](#).

⁵⁵ ['Smooth landing for package travel'](#), Europolitics, 5 May 2015 and ['Package holiday protection: MEPs strike a deal with Council'](#), European Parliament, 5 May 2015.

4.4.3. Transport

Transport is one of the most important policy areas for tourism. Even though the EU's general transport strategy⁵⁶ does not specifically mention tourism, it does highlight the need to better respond to EU citizens' growing demand for travel.

The strategy focuses on several aspects that can improve **travel quality**. The EU aims to make travel more sustainable, safe, secure and efficient. It also aims to link different transport modes, increase the capacity to carry a growing number of passengers and reduce traffic congestion.

The EU is expanding, modernising and streamlining EU-wide **transport infrastructure**, by co-financing the development of the trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). TEN-T funds transport projects of common interest and traffic management systems that facilitate the mobility of goods and passengers within the EU (e.g. projects that connect main airports or seaports to other modes of transports). The preamble to the EU 2013 guidelines for the development of the TEN-T⁵⁷ mentions that projects of common interest should seek synergies with other policies such as tourism, and in particular with EuroVelo cycling routes.

In addition, the EU has adopted regulations on the rights of passengers travelling by air, rail, road, sea and inland waterway. These regulations set out **passenger rights** in the event of a wide range of situations such as delays, cancellations, denied boarding, loss or damage of baggage and accidents. They also give passengers certain rights when it comes to information about the journey, reservations, and ticket fares. Special protection is provided for disabled and reduced-mobility passengers.

4.4.4. Migration and home affairs

Migration and home affairs policies impact upon tourism notably via initiatives under the EU **common visa policy**. Visa policy and tourism are closely linked. When visa procedures are cumbersome, lengthy and costly, they may reduce the number of visitors coming to Europe. This in turn can reduce the tourism contribution to GDP and have wider effects on salaries and employment in the tourism sector.

The EU common visa policy is applied to part of its territory – the Schengen Area.⁵⁸ The EU has removed internal border controls for those travelling within the Schengen Area, but has retained external border controls.⁵⁹ The common visa policy currently comprises common lists of countries whose citizens need a visa when travelling to the Schengen Area and those exempt (see figure 7), rules on the uniform format of Schengen visas and Visa Information System (for the exchange of visa data between Schengen States), a

⁵⁶ Commission 2011 White Paper ['Roadmap to a single European transport area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system'](#).

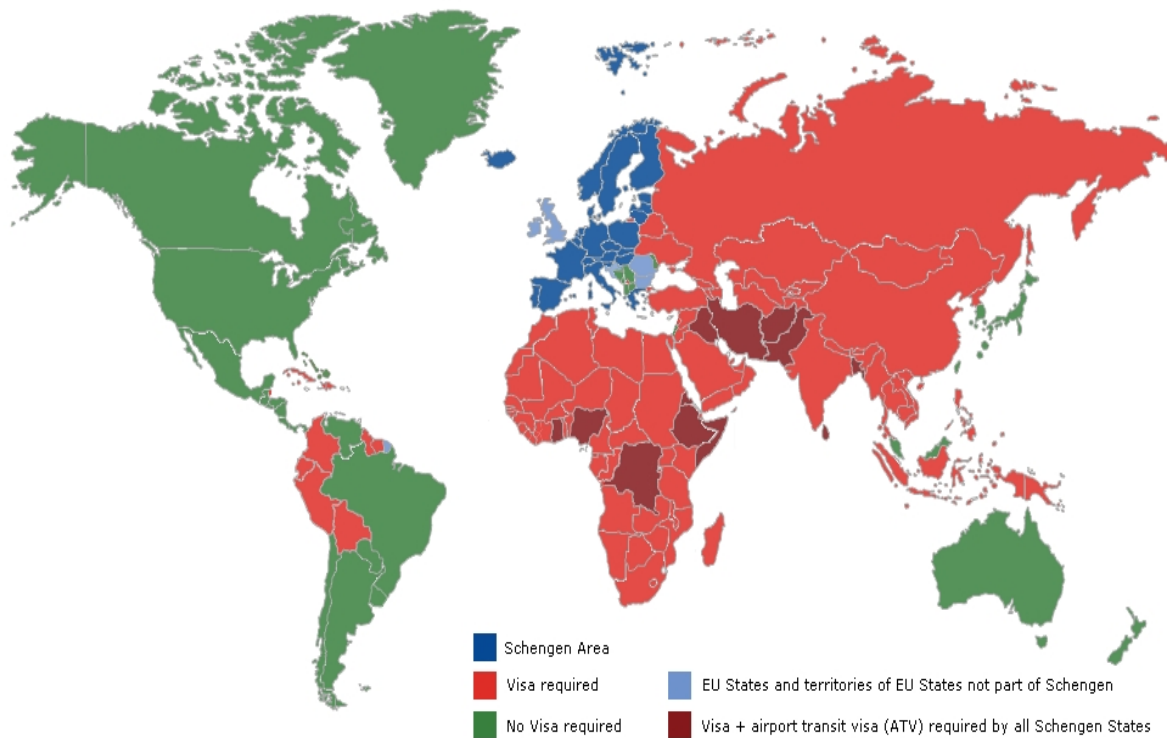
⁵⁷ [Regulation 1315/2013](#) on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, recital 9.

⁵⁸ The [Schengen Area](#) comprises most EU Member States (except for Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Romania and the United Kingdom). Some non-EU countries are also associated (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland).

⁵⁹ However, [police checks](#) at the internal borders and in border areas are still allowed, provided that such checks are not same as border checks. Furthermore, in case of a serious threat to public policy or internal security, a country may exceptionally reintroduce border controls for, in principle, no more than 30 days.

series of international agreements on visa facilitation,⁶⁰ and the visa code. The latter establishes the procedures and conditions for issuing visas for short stays.

Figure 7 – Visa requirements for the Schengen Area



Data source: European Commission, [DG Migration and Home Affairs](#) (last consulted in September 2015). The map is for reference purposes only and is subject to change.

In April 2014, the Commission proposed a package of changes to visa rules which are currently being examined by the Council and the European Parliament. The package included:

- a report 'A smarter visa policy for economic growth', assessing how the current visa code is implemented in the Member States;
- a legislative proposal to amend the Regulation on the visa code;
- a legislative proposal for a Regulation establishing a new type of visa: the touring visa;
- an overview of visa statistics.

The Commission considers that current Schengen visa procedures often hinder legitimate travel to Europe. The new rules would, according to Commission, 'shorten and simplify the procedures for those wanting to come to the EU for short stays, and induce more cost savings and less bureaucracy, whilst maintaining the level of security'.⁶¹ They would, for instance, reduce the decision time on visa applications from 15 to 10 days and give travellers who have lawfully used previously-obtained Schengen visas the possibility to obtain a multiple entry visa.

⁶⁰ International agreements on visa facilitation generally limit visa [processing time](#), reduce visa fees and grant facilitations to specific categories of travellers (e.g. business people, students, relatives), for both EU and non-EU citizens. The full list of visa facilitation agreements is available on the Commission [website](#).

⁶¹ European Commission [press release](#) on changes in visa rules, IP/14/347, 1 April 2014. Procedure files [2014/0094](#) and [2014/0095](#).

Furthermore, current visa rules do not provide, according to the Commission, a system that covers all types of stay. It gives the example of artists who are touring Europe. In some cases, such persons would like to stay longer than 190 days, but often do not meet the requirements to obtain long-stay visas. A touring visa would allow them to travel within the Schengen Area for up to one year (without staying in one country for more than 90 days in any 180 day period). According to estimates presented by the Commission, the direct and indirect gains from establishing a touring visa could amount to between €500 million and €1 billion.

Visa policy impact on tourism was specifically mentioned in the report 'A smarter visa policy for economic growth' and legislative proposal on the visa code. Article 33 of the legislative proposal on the visa code suggests, for example, that allowing Member States to temporarily issue visas at the border would promote short-term tourism.

4.4.5. Regional policy

Regional and cohesion policy provides tourism stakeholders with various financing opportunities. Tourism is an important source of economic growth and job creation in many EU regions. Financial support for tourism under regional policy is mostly provided from the **European Structural and Cohesion Funds**.⁶² For example, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aims to increase economic and social cohesion between EU regions. It can support tourism-related research, tourism-related IT-products (e.g. mobile apps), innovative tourism services in less favoured and peripheral regions, and niche tourism products and services.⁶³ In the 2011-14 period, the EU provided, for instance, funding of more than €2 million (50% of the cost of the project) to the World War II Heritage project: a cultural route that introduces visitors to World War II heritage sites in Europe.⁶⁴

4.5. The European Parliament

The EP generally supports the tourism strategy presented by the European Commission. In its 2011 resolution on the Commission's strategy, Parliament welcomed the initiative as 'a solid basis from which to develop an EU policy on competitive, modern, high-quality, sustainable tourism that is accessible to all'. At the same time, Parliament deplored the lack of coherence among Commission Directorates-General with policy responsibilities related to tourism, and underlined the importance of close cooperation between various authorities and tourism stakeholders. It called for a gradual harmonisation of accommodation classification systems, adoption of standards for accommodation safety, mutual recognition of professional qualifications and adequate financial resources for tourism. Finally, Parliament also underlined the need for a long-term strategy for better coordinated and simplified visa procedures.

The Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) has a **Tourism Task Force** which (within the framework of committee meetings) regularly debates tourism-related issues. In April 2015, the Committee organised a **hearing on tourism**,⁶⁵ in preparation for an own-initiative report on 'New challenges and concepts for the

⁶² European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, Cohesion Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

⁶³ ['Guide on EU funding for the tourism sector \(2014-2020\)'](#), 2015, pp. 5-10.

⁶⁴ *Idem*, p. 9.

⁶⁵ The [presentations](#), [video](#) and [summary](#) (see pp. 5-6) of the hearing are available on the Parliament website.

promotion of Tourism in Europe' (rapporteur Isabella de Monte, S&D, Italy) which, among other issues, aims to highlight some of the new challenges facing the sector, including digitalisation and the rise of the sharing economy. The hearing featured a number of experts who, inter alia, called for regulation of peer-to-peer platforms, promotion of Europe as a collection of various destinations and facilitation of visa procedures. During the debate, members of the Committee noted, among other aspects, the specific needs of senior tourists regarding digital tourism, called for increased free Wi-Fi network in public spaces to facilitate digital tourism, and underlined the importance of developing tourism sustainability indicators.

In the report⁶⁶ published after the hearing, the rapporteur proposes creation of a 'Brand Destination Europe', promotion of sustainable and accessible tourism and help for tourism companies to use digital tools more efficiently. As regards peer-to-peer platforms, the rapporteur notes that public authority reactions to this type of movement (in terms of taxation and regulation) have to be measured and appropriate. The rapporteur also believes that companies facilitating these platforms should inform users offering goods and services on these platforms about their obligations and how to remain fully compliant with local laws. The report is expected to be voted in plenary in October 2015.

5. Outlook for EU tourism policy

The EU is currently reviewing its future actions in support of tourism and preparing a new Communication on tourism (foreseen for late 2015). From 2013 to 2014 it ran a public consultation to gauge tourism sector opinion on 'European tourism of the future' and the 'Regulatory and Administrative Framework on EU Tourism'. The results⁶⁷ revealed that most tourism stakeholders continue to believe that tourism services are 'best regulated nationally, regionally and locally rather than at European level and any proposed European regulations and standards affecting tourism products and services should be the subject of proper consultation with the stakeholders'.

However, in many cases the EU can, in the view of tourism stakeholders, still provide added value. Overall, respondents considered that the EU should support the promotion of tourism products, encourage investment in tourist infrastructure and step up efforts to market Europe as a collection of sustainable and high quality destinations. Furthermore, respondents called on the EU to develop certain common tourism indicators and improve the quality and timeliness of European tourism statistics. They also found that the EU could promote knowledge sharing between researchers and tourism industries, as well as initiatives that help to improve the quality standards of tourism services.

Taking into account the results of the public consultation, the Commission drew up eight key areas for the promotion of tourism in the EU. Presented at Spain Global Tourism Forum on 27 January 2015⁶⁸ and at a meeting with Parliament's Tourism Task Force on 29 January 2015, these were:

⁶⁶ [Report](#) on new challenges and concepts for the promotion of tourism in Europe (procedure file 2014/2241 INI).

⁶⁷ Summary results of the consultation are available on the Commission [website](#).

⁶⁸ See European Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska's [speech](#) at the Spain Global Tourism Forum.

1. simplify and streamline the regulatory and administrative frameworks for tourism;
2. promote the digitalisation of tourism SMEs;
3. improve professional skills in the tourism sector;
4. promote sustainable and responsible tourism;
5. reduce tourism seasonality;
6. promote multimodality and transport connectivity;
7. contribute to the joint promotion of Europe as a tourist destination, in particular in third countries;
8. improve tourism governance.

Many of these actions are a continuation of previous initiatives in tourism – promoting Europe as a tourist destination was already among the 2010 tourism strategy priorities, for example. Others reflect newer trends in society or technology. In an increasingly competitive global environment, EU tourism policy will be judged on its capacity to respond to change and deliver added value to actions at Member State and regional or local level.

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Tourism is the third largest socio-economic activity in the European Union, making an important contribution to the EU economy and to job creation. Europe is the most visited region in the world. However, tourism in other regions is growing faster and Europe's market share, in terms of international tourist arrivals and receipts, is shrinking.

Tourism businesses in the EU are confronted with a number of changes in tourist profile and behaviour, for example in terms of age, country of origin, how they plan and buy their travel, or which mode of transport they use.

Tourism policy remains a competence of the Member States. As the Treaties allow the EU only to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States, EU tourism policy has been rather limited, consisting mainly in providing financial support or legislating through other EU policies. The current framework for tourism policy is based upon a 2010 Communication; a revised strategy is expected to be adopted by the European Commission later in 2015.

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