



## TOURISM

Since December 2009, tourism policy has had its own legal basis. However, it still does not have a separate budget under the new multiannual financial framework (2014-2020).

### LEGAL BASIS

Article 6(d) and Title XXII, Article 195, TFEU.

### OBJECTIVES

The EU's tourism industry in the strict sense of the term (traditional providers of holidays and tourism services) is made up of 1.8 million companies, primarily small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It contributes 5% to EU GDP and accounts for 5.2% of the total labour force (which equates to some 9.7 million jobs). When its close links with other economic sectors are taken into account, these figures increase significantly (10% of GDP and 12% of total employment, which equates to 13 million workers).

In 2014, the number of international tourist arrivals reached 1.133 billion worldwide (+4.3%), 582 million of which, or 51% of the market (+3%), were in Europe. Europe has thus cemented its position as the world's No 1 tourist destination, with France being the most visited country worldwide. A long-term study by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) forecasts more modest growth in European tourism, to an estimated 744 million tourists (+1.8%), or 41.1% of the market, over the period to 2030.

Tourism policy is also a means which the EU can use to pursue broader employment and growth objectives. Tourism's environmental dimension will also gain in significance over time, and is already reflected in projects involving sustainable, responsible and ethical tourism.

### RESULTS

#### A. General policy

Since the European Council of 21 June 1999 on the topic of 'tourism and employment', the EU has paid more attention to tourism's contribution to employment in Europe. In its communication (COM(2001) 665) on 'Working together for the future of European tourism', the Commission proposed an operational framework and measures to boost the EU tourism industry. The Council resolution of 21 May 2002 on the future of tourism endorsed the Commission's approach and, having set the goal of making Europe a top tourist destination, quickly led to closer cooperation between public and private stakeholders in the EU tourism industry.

On that basis the Commission then implemented a wide range of measures. The following are examples of the fruits of this strategy:

- Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA) for each Member State, with the ultimate aim of presenting the first European satellite account;

- the launch of a [portal](#) to promote Europe as a tourist destination;
- the holding, since 2002, of an annual European Tourism Forum (in 2015 the 14th forum was held in Luxembourg, on ‘the digitisation of tourism’).

Between 2001 and February 2014 the Commission published seven communications setting out its policy guidelines for the development of the tourism sector.

- (COM(2007) 621 final) of 19 October 2007 — [Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism](#) — which set out how sustainable development could ensure the long-term competitiveness of tourism and announced a three-yearly set of preparatory activities;
- (COM(2010) 352 final), of 30 June 2010, — [Europe, the world’s No 1 tourist destination — a new political framework for tourism in Europe](#) — which analyses the factors which make the European tourism industry competitive and the obstacles to its sustainable development.
- (COM(2012) 649 final), of 7 November 2012, — [Implementation and development of the common visa policy to spur growth in the EU](#) — which seeks to bring about an increase in the number of tourists from third countries visiting the EU by establishing a common visa policy.
- (COM(2014) 86 final), of 20 February 2014, A European Strategy for More Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism — which seeks to promote sustainable growth and competitiveness in coastal and maritime tourism.

## **B. Special measures**

### **1. In the interests of tourists-travellers and/or holidaymakers**

These measures include steps to make border-crossing easier and protect both the health and safety and the material interests of tourists, such as Council Recommendation 86/666/EEC on fire safety in hotels and a new directive on package travel and related travel services (which will repeal Directive 90/314/EEC<sup>[1]</sup>) and Directive 2008/122/EC on timeshare properties. In addition, regulations have been adopted on passenger rights in all areas of transport (5.6.2). A further example of the connection between tourism and another area of EU competence is provided by Directive 2006/7/EC of 15 February 2006 on the quality of bathing water, which will repeal Directive 76/160/EEC on 31 December 2014, in the interests of target groups or priority subjects.

At Parliament’s request, the Commission has launched initiatives in the form of five preparatory programmes on targeted topical issues for European tourism.

‘[Eden](#)’, which focuses on promoting European tourist destinations of excellence, little-known or emerging destinations which observe with sustainability principles. The funding for this preparatory programme expired in 2011, but the Commission has continued to implement the initiative under the programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME).

‘Calypso’, which focuses on social tourism for senior citizens, underprivileged young people, disadvantaged families and persons with reduced mobility. The aim is to enable as many people as possible to travel, while at the same time helping to even out seasonal imbalances. Given the success of Calypso over a three year period, the Commission began co-financing pilot projects in 2014 with the aim of tackling seasonality by targeting young people and senior citizens (the

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[1]On 27 October 2015, Parliament approved at second reading (without amendment) the common position of the Council with a view to adopting a new directive amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 and Directive 2011/83/EU, and repealing Directive 90/314/EEC.

most recent invitation to tender, led by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, was issued on 30 June 2015).

The ‘Sustainable Tourism’ programme, including ‘the Green Belt’ (6 800 km of paths from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea), the aim of which is to promote the transformation of the former Iron Curtain into a cross-border network of walking and cycle paths. For an assessment of the ‘Eurovelo’ circuits — a network of 14 long-distance ‘veloroutes’ managed by the European Cyclists’ Federation — see the updated version (2012) of Parliament’s study on the network of European cycle paths.

The Commission is also co-financing cross-border sustainable tourism projects to diversify tourism options in Europe. For example, a recent invitation to tender (30 June 2015) was launched under the COSME programme to promote and develop products and services in the sport and wellness sectors as well as Europe’s cultural and industrial heritage.

For a period of 18 months beginning in February 2014, the Commission co-financed accessible route projects as part of a package of products and services intended to benefit the disabled, senior travellers and persons with temporary difficulties under the preparatory action ‘Tourism and accessibility for all’.

Lastly, in the context of the digitisation of travel and tourism, in March 2015 the Commission launched a platform on digital tourism with the aim of enhancing the capacity of SMEs in the tourism industry to innovate and digitise.

## 2. In the interests of the tourist industry and the regions, and for responsible tourism

The regions are ideally placed to develop tourism in a sustainable way and make European destinations more attractive. The Commission also supports the creation of networks between the main European tourist regions. In July 2009, NECSTouR, an open network of European tourist regions, was established to serve as a platform for exchanges of knowledge and innovative solutions in the area of competitive and sustainable tourism. The EU offers a range of sources of funding to help tourism make a contribution to regional development and employment in the regions concerned: the ERDF for sustainable projects linked to tourism, the Interreg programme, the Cohesion Fund for environmental and transport infrastructure, the ESF for employment, the Leonardo da Vinci programme for professional training, the EAFRD for diversification of the rural economy, the EFF for conversion to ecotourism, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the 7th Framework Programme for Research (FP7). In that connection, under the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the period 2014-2020 the COSME programme has taken over from the CIP and Horizon 2020 has taken over from FP7.

Under the new MFF a total of EUR 105.5 million may be allocated as part of the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME). For 2015 the COSME management committee has set a modest budget of EUR 9 million. Harmonised statistics on tourism have been compiled in the EU since 1996. Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 of 6 July 2011 established a common framework for the systematic development, production and dissemination of European statistics on tourism collected in the Member States. In 2013, the Commission created a Virtual Tourism Monitoring Centre to coordinate the collection and storage of data and to guarantee a greater degree of synergy between the levels at which tourism policy decisions are taken. In its communications (COM(96) 547 final) of 27 November 1996 and (COM(1999) 262 final) of 26 May 1999, the Commission announced and developed an EU campaign against sex tourism involving children (for prevention and violations see below).

## ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

As long ago as in December 1996, Parliament lent its backing to an EU tourism measure by approving the first multiannual ‘Philoxenia’ programme (1997-2000), which was later abandoned as a result of the Council’s failure to reach a unanimous decision.

In its resolution of 30 March 2000 on the implementation of measures to combat child sex tourism (COM(1999) 262 final), Parliament called on Member States to introduce universally binding extraterritorial laws which would make it possible to investigate, bring legal proceedings against and punish people who, whilst abroad, commit illegal acts involving the sexual exploitation of children. On 27 October 2011, it adopted a legislative resolution ([P7\\_TA\(2011\)0468](#)) on the proposal for a directive combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children. Under the terms of Directive 2011/93/EU of 13 December 2011<sup>[2]</sup>, child sex tourism is now a criminal offence throughout the EU; in particular, Article 21 of that directive makes provision for national measures to prevent or prohibit the organisation of travel for the purpose of committing this type of offence.

Well before the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, Parliament had adopted a series of resolutions on the Commission guidelines and initiatives concerning tourism, the most noteworthy of which are those of 8 September 2005 on ‘New prospects and new challenges for sustainable European tourism’, of 29 November 2007 on ‘A renewed EU tourism policy: Towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism’, and of 16 December 2008 on the regional development aspects of the impact of tourism on coastal regions. Parliament thus addressed the impact that visa policy has on tourism and supported the promotion of European tourist destinations.

It also proposed the creation of a European Heritage label and the establishment of a cross-border cycle route along the former Iron Curtain, and encouraged the sector to diversify its supply of services in order to respond to seasonal fluctuations in tourist numbers.

After the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force, on 27 September 2011 Parliament adopted resolution [P7\\_TA\(2011\)0407](#), based on an own-initiative report entitled ‘Europe, the world’s No 1 tourist destination’. While supporting the 21-point policy strategy presented by the Commission, Parliament wishes to promote a competitive, modern, high-quality and sustainable tourism that is accessible to all, by focusing on Europe’s multiculturalism. MEPs stressed the importance of measures taken in other sectors, such as employment, taxes or consumer rights, that could have a decisive impact on tourism.

Parliament’s call for a specific programme for tourism under the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework was rejected by the Council, however. Similarly, in December 2014 the Commission was forced to withdraw a recommendation on a set of non-binding European principles on the quality of tourism services, which it had presented to the Council in February 2014. This was despite the fact that it had Parliament’s support for a ‘European tourism quality label’ (paragraph 25 of resolution [P7\\_TA\(2011\)0407](#) and paragraph 53 of resolution ([P8\\_TA\(2015\)0391](#)).

On 27 October 2015, Parliament adopted at second reading a legislative resolution ([P8\\_TA\(2015\)0366](#)) for a new directive which seeks to enhance the protection of travellers undertaking package tours and repeals Directive 90/314/EEC. On 29 October 2015, Parliament adopted a resolution ([P8\\_TA\(2015\)0391](#)) on [new challenges and concepts for the promotion of](#)

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[2]The number of the directive was the subject of a corrigendum, ‘2011/93/EU’ replacing ‘2011/92/EU’ (OJ L 18, 21.1.2012).

[tourism in Europe](#). It concerns the digitisation of distribution channels, the development of the new sharing economy sector, changing consumer behaviour, the need to attract and retain skilled staff, demographic change, and seasonality. In it the EP calls on the Commission to present a new tourism strategy to replace or update the communication of 30 June 2010 entitled ‘Europe, the world’s No 1 tourist destination’; it calls for the creation of a budget line for tourism in the next multiannual financial framework; it also encourages the European executive to work in partnership with the European Travel Commission (ETC) to maintain Europe’s primacy in the tourism industry, potentially through the creation of the label ‘Destination Europe 2020’, which would comprise a series of marketing, branding and promotional initiatives for Europe, thus implementing the long-term strategy launched by the Commission in February 2014 which was then rejected by the Council (see above).

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