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*Plenary sitting*

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**A9-0033/2021**

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# **REPORT**

on establishing an EU strategy for sustainable tourism  
(2020/2038(INI))

Committee on Transport and Tourism

Rapporteur: Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on establishing an EU strategy for sustainable tourism (2020/2038(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in particular Article 195 thereof,
- having regard to Article 349 of the TFEU, which establishes a specific regime for the outermost regions,
- having regard to Article 174 of the TFEU,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 June 2020 on transport and tourism in 2020 and beyond<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 13 May 2020 on tourism and transport in 2020 and beyond (COM(2020)0550) and to the adoption of the Tourism and Transport Package,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 27 May 2020 entitled ‘Europe’s moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation’ (COM(2020)0456) and the accompanying staff working document entitled ‘Identifying Europe’s recovery needs’ (SWD(2020)0098),
- having regard to the Commission report of 11 June 2020 on the EU Blue Economy,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 October 2019 on the negative impact of the bankruptcy of Thomas Cook on EU tourism<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 27 May 2019 on the competitiveness of the tourism sector as a driver for sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion in the EU for the next decade,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019)0640),
- having regard to its resolution of 14 November 2018 on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 – Parliament’s position with a view to an agreement<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 22 May 2018 entitled ‘A New

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2020)0169.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2019)0047.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 363, 28.10.2020, p. 179.

European Agenda for Culture’ (COM(2018)0267),

- having regard to the Commission communication of 24 October 2017 on a stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU’s outermost regions (COM(2017)0623),
- having regard to Decision (EU) 2017/864 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on a European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018)<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 February 2014 entitled ‘A European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism’ (COM(2014)0086) and the Commission staff working document of 30 March 2017 on nautical tourism (SWD(2017)0126),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 2 June 2016 on a European agenda for the collaborative economy (COM(2016)0356) and to Parliament’s resolution of 15 June 2017 thereon<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to the Cork 2.0 Declaration of 5 and 6 September 2016,
- having regard to its resolution of 29 October 2015 on new challenges and concepts for the promotion of tourism in Europe<sup>7</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 September 2015 towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe<sup>8</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 30 June 2010 entitled ‘Europe, the world’s No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe’ (COM(2010)0352),
- having regard to its resolution of 27 September 2011 on Europe, the world’s No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe<sup>9</sup>,
- having regard to its resolutions of 25 October 2011 on mobility and inclusion of people with disabilities and the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020<sup>10</sup> and of 18 June 2020 on the European Disability Strategy post-2020<sup>11</sup>,
- having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 18 September 2020

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<sup>4</sup> OJ L 131, 20.5.2017, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 331, 18.9.2018, p. 125.

<sup>6</sup> OJ C 428, 13.12.2017, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> OJ C 355, 20.10.2017, p. 71.

<sup>8</sup> OJ C 316, 22.9.2017, p. 88.

<sup>9</sup> OJ C 56 E, 26.2.2013, p. 41.

<sup>10</sup> OJ C 131 E, 8.5.2013, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2020)0156.

entitled ‘Towards more sustainable tourism for EU cities and regions’,

- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 18 September 2020 on tourism and transport in 2020 and beyond,
  - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Culture and Education and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A9-0033/2021),
- A. whereas tourism is a cross-cutting economic activity with a wide-ranging impact on the environment and climate and on the EU’s economy as a whole, in particular on the regions’ economic growth, employment and social and sustainable development;
- B. whereas the tourism industry directly and indirectly employs 27 million people, which accounts for 11.2 % of total EU employment, and which, in 2019, accounted for 10.3 % of EU gross domestic product (GDP); whereas tourism helps to promote a balanced regional structure, has a positive impact on regional development, and should contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, social welfare, and the economic security of local communities;
- C. whereas the tourism value chain is one of Europe’s main industrial ecosystems identified by the Commission and whereas it is complex and made up of the four closely linked, key vectors of transport, accommodation, experience and intermediation; whereas the success of the industry lies in the degree of influence between these four vectors; whereas tourism has an impact on climate change by contributing to 8 % of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions<sup>12</sup>; whereas the tourism sector encompasses a great diversity of services and professions; whereas the sector is dominated mainly by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), whose activities generate employment and wealth in the regions that depend upon it;
- D. whereas in 2018, 51.7 % of EU tourist accommodation establishments were in coastal and maritime areas, which are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change, while 32.9 % of them were in rural areas; whereas the outermost regions are characterised by their remoteness, insularity and strong economic and social dependence on the tourism and transport sectors, which makes them even more vulnerable to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- E. whereas the tourism and transport industries were among those most affected by COVID-19; whereas at least six million jobs are at risk in the EU, such as seasonal workers and those in vulnerable situations; whereas restrictions on travel introduced in response to the pandemic continue to hit global and European tourism hard, with the latest data from the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) showing a 70 % fall in international tourism arrivals in 2020; whereas in the framework of Next Generation EU, the Commission identified a basic investment need for the tourism ecosystem of EUR 161 billion – 22 % of the total investment gap in the EU; whereas the COVID-19

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<sup>12</sup> ‘The carbon footprint of global tourism’, *Nature Climate Change*, May 2018.

crisis has severely impacted all modes of transport, in particular air connectivity and a decrease in air services, which have in some cases resulted in lost routes; whereas the latter has had a particular impact on the EU's outermost and insular regions, where accessibility and connectivity are crucial; whereas the COVID-19 crisis has left millions of passengers and consumers facing uncertainty over their rights, including complex and often unfulfilled reimbursement claims; whereas rebuilding consumer trust is key to the future of the sector;

- F. whereas Article 195 of the TFEU provides that the Union should coordinate and complement the action of the Member States in tourism, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings in the sector; whereas the Member States face common challenges and opportunities in the tourism sector, such as crisis prevention and management, progress towards the digital and green transition, socioeconomic and environmental sustainability, quality job creation, professional skilling and training of workers, and support for SMEs;
- G. whereas measures to benefit the tourism and travel industry are most effective when taken as part of a coordinated EU strategy while taking national and regional needs and specificities into account;
- H. whereas the sector is committed to accelerating and implementing measures and actions that make it more sustainable and resilient and that bring it closer to achieving objectives on ecological footprint reduction and to meeting the aims of the European Green Deal, notably climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest;
- I. whereas progress is being made in the area of soft mobility and associated routes, which are a response to European consumers' desire for tourist opportunities that are greener and closer to nature;
- J. whereas an efficient, safe, multimodal and sustainable collective transport system would make a positive contribution to the economy in the areas of tourism, leisure travel and hospitality, as it allows sustainable and flexible solutions for mobility right across the EU, helping to preserve natural ecosystems and local urban and natural environments;
- K. whereas the European Year of Rail should represent an ideal framework for initiatives to enhance sustainable tourism in order to increase the attractiveness of tourism destinations;
- L. whereas the development of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and its connections with urban, local and coastal areas will play a crucial role in providing sustainable, alternative and flexible transport solutions for travel and tourism;
- M. whereas new trends in tourism have been emerging, chiefly due to digitalisation, including alternative forms of tourism such as ecotourism, agro- and rural tourism and medical tourism;

***Rebuild: COVID-19 impact response plans***

1. Stresses that the COVID-19 outbreak has paralysed the EU tourism sector, putting its ecosystem under unprecedented pressure; highlights that continued short-term financial

support is essential to the survival of the sector, especially in light of the second and third wave of the pandemic; believes, nonetheless, that the current crisis should lead the Commission and Member States to fully acknowledge the importance of the tourism industry, to fully integrate it into European and national development plans, to enhance the quality of its offer, to make it more sustainable and accessible for all, and to launch long-overdue public and private investment in the digitalisation and overall modernisation of the sector;

2. Asks the Member States to fully implement, without delay, common and coordinated criteria for safe travel, as adopted by the Council in its recommendation on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement<sup>13</sup>, while facilitating the deployment of the EU Passenger Locator Form, digitally where possible, with full respect for data protection rules; stresses the importance of voluntary, interoperable and anonymised tracking, tracing and warning apps, making use of the Commission's interoperability gateway, with none of the data used for other purposes, such as commercial or law enforcement purposes, and of setting common hygiene criteria at the main transports hubs;
3. Calls for the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) to monitor and continue to publish, in a timely manner, the colour coded map of Union countries and regions, including islands – where sufficient information is available – with a view to offering travellers and businesses a coordinated and efficient response; invites the Member States to promote the dissemination of the map through national broadcasters to ensure that it also reaches citizens with little or no broadband access;
4. Calls on the Member States, in line with the Commission's recommendation on COVID-19 testing strategies<sup>14</sup> and the guidelines of the ECDC and the European Aviation Safety Agency, to establish a common and non-discriminatory EU Health Safety Protocol for testing before departure, which should be reliable and affordable, including rapid testing technologies, PCR tests and others; urges that quarantine should remain an instrument of last resort, but where applicable, its duration should be reduced to a minimum number of days, which should be harmonised throughout the Union; stresses that any restriction on freedom of movement must be proportionate, temporary and clearly linked to the COVID-19 pandemic; points out that in order to correctly implement the protocol, all Member States should be supported with EU funding; calls on the Member States to coordinate the management of testing at the different stages during the travel period;
5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop as a matter of priority a common vaccination certificate and a system of mutual recognition of vaccination procedures for medical purposes, which should be rolled out in parallel with the distribution of vaccines, while preserving individuals' rights to privacy and data protection; believes that once vaccines have been made available to the general public and there is sufficient scientific evidence that vaccinated persons do not transmit the

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<sup>13</sup> Council Recommendation (EU) 2020/1475 of 13 October 2020 on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, OJ L 337, 14.10.2020, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Commission Recommendation (EU) 2020/1595 of 28 October 2020 on COVID-19 testing strategies, including the use of rapid antigen tests, OJ L 360, 30.10.2020, p. 43.

virus, the certificate could be considered for travel purposes as an alternative to PCR tests and quarantine requirements, while retaining the need to respect current sanitary measures, such as wearing face masks in public and observing social distancing; stresses that it is necessary and important to re-establish freedom of movement in the EU and ensure a gradual return to normality for the transport and tourism sectors;

6. Welcomes the Re-open EU portal and urges the Member States to provide the Commission with clearly understandable information on the application or lifting of future restrictions on free movement as soon as such changes have been decided in order to ensure that the portal is reliable for travellers; calls on the Commission to present a mobile application in order to better disseminate the information, and to continue providing real-time information on the status of borders and on transport and tourism services available in EU countries, including information on public health and safety measures and other relevant information; considers that Member States should complement this EU portal with information on contact points in the respective destinations, e.g. in the form of a public website and information desk;
7. Calls on the Commission to launch a dedicated EU communication campaign on travel and tourism through an 'EU Tourism Brand' aimed at promoting EU travel and rebuilding citizens' confidence in travel and tourism during COVID-19;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to introduce a common colour coding system and common criteria for travel to third countries through mutual recognition of comparable protective measures against COVID-19 across all modes of travel, but above all in the aviation and maritime sectors; calls on the Commission and the Member States to establish an early alert system that warns tourists through new technologies in a user-friendly way about any potential health threats in a third country destination; asks the Commission and the Member States to support tour operators in the organisation of travel experiences in selected areas in third countries, while fully respecting robust health protocols that minimise the risk of contagion;
9. Urges the Commission to introduce an EU hygiene certification seal, which should be developed jointly by the ECDC and the Member States and should certify touristic activities, ensuring compliance with minimum hygiene standards for the prevention and control of the COVID-19 virus and other possible infections; believes that this seal should aim to set Europe-wide health standards that would help to restore consumer trust in the tourism sector and thus contribute to its revitalisation, while avoiding administrative burdens for micro enterprises and SMEs;
10. Deplores the fact that Next Generation EU does not include direct financing to the tourism industry and calls on the Member States and regional and local authorities to include the tourism and travel sectors in their recovery plans and the REACT-EU initiative, while respecting environmental and social standards; stresses that while it is important that actions under the Recovery and Resilience Facility are retroactively eligible in supporting the sector and preventing bankruptcies, they are not sufficient per se; calls on the Commission to take specific action in relation to European regions in which tourism accounts for a more substantial share of their GDP as well as to islands and outermost regions; stresses, in this context, that financial support from EU funds distributed in the Member States in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic is not



always reaching those tourism operators who are in urgent need of direct funding in order to continue and maintain their economic activities;

11. Calls on the Commission to encourage Member States to temporarily set reduced VAT rates on travel and tourism services, accompanied by a special stimulus package for all micro enterprises and SMEs for the 2020-2024 period, in order to minimise the number of bankruptcies and preserve jobs and workers' rights in the European tourism industry, while utilising investments to foster the transition towards a more digital and sustainable tourism ecosystem;
12. Calls on the Member States and regional authorities to include tourism as a horizontal priority in their operational programmes, smart specialisation strategies and partnership agreements for 2021-2027 in order to finance tourism projects;
13. Asks the Commission to implement the adopted preparatory action 'a European crisis management mechanism for tourism', jointly with Parliament, with a view to being ready to cope with future crises to help tourist destinations establish crisis prevention plans, contingency measures and preparedness plans and actions;
14. Calls on the Commission to regularly inform and cooperate with Parliament about the preparatory work and progress made in the development of pilot projects and preparatory actions and to keep the parliamentary committee responsible and the MEPs who initiated the projects involved in the process;

***Refocus: governance policy within the Union framework***

15. Calls on the Commission to establish a new governance model between the EU Institutions, strengthening the organisational, financial and human resources structure by setting up a dedicated Directorate dealing specifically with tourism, backed by adequate funding, with a view to taking an integrated and efficient approach to tourism, supporting the relaunch of tourism in European regions and helping businesses to implement the measures needed to achieve key objectives in the areas of sustainability and innovation, and increasing their competitiveness and attractiveness;
16. Calls on the Commission, moreover, to take account of the possible synergies between the various Directorates-General in view of the cross-cutting nature of tourism, in fields such as agriculture, transport, culture, maritime, regional development, employment and climate;
17. Calls for a discussion to be initiated at the Conference on the Future of Europe on helping tourism to become a shared competence of the EU, rather than a complementary competence as is currently the case; stresses that the Treaties currently provide significant flexibility for EU policies in the field of tourism, which is not being fully utilised by the Commission; calls on the Commission, therefore, to start making full use of the Treaties to develop a comprehensive European tourism policy;
18. Regrets the fact that the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) does not include a dedicated line for sustainable tourism, which would represent a commitment to implementing the European tourism policy approved by Parliament in its resolution on transport and tourism in 2020 and beyond; notes that this line would not overlap or

replace the financial support that is available to the travel and tourism sector through existing EU funds; regrets the fact that tourism has not yet been included as an independent objective in the regulations for the European Structural and Investment Fund or in the Single Market Programme;

19. Calls on the Commission to create an EU mechanism to monitor the provision of support to micro enterprises and SMEs, focusing on liquidity and delivering EU added value and transparency in order to increase the ability of those enterprises to access and use EU funds and financial instruments to facilitate the modernisation and implementation of innovative and sustainable projects, ensuring accountability and administrative simplification;
20. Commends the Commission for organising the European Tourism Convention in 2020 and calls on it to present an action plan in 2021 and to develop, in a timely manner, an EU strategy for sustainable and strategic tourism aligned with the Digital Agenda, the Green Deal and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, replacing the strategy from 2010, in order to maintain Europe's standing as a leading destination; recalls that in drawing up this strategy there must be a consultation of professionals in the tourism sector; stresses, in this regard, the importance of concrete action to overcome the current crisis and the promotion of alternative forms of tourism such as cultural and sustainable tourism, agrotourism, wildlife tourism, ecotourism and other experiences, which should respect the environment and the cultural heritage of the local population to avoid overtourism;
21. Takes the view that as tourism is a global industry, it is paramount to foster dialogue and cooperation with the UNWTO on the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Parliament and the UNWTO in 2018;
22. Calls on the Commission to update the EU funding support guide and to include therein a link to a national contact point that facilitates access to information for micro enterprises and SMEs, by means of a one-stop shop or online tool with the assistance and guidance of the Member States, whenever needed; calls on the Commission to raise awareness of this guide among companies and SMEs in the tourism sector;
23. Calls on the Commission to set up a European Agency for Tourism in the next MFF and to devise a short-term solution by creating a tourism department in one of the existing executive agencies, in particular the Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME) or the upcoming Health and Digital Executive Agency;

The European Agency for Tourism should be responsible for, inter alia:

- providing the EU and its Member States with a factual overview and data for policymakers, enabling them to devise informed strategies based on collected and analysed tourism data, including on the possible social, economic and environmental impact of these;
- operating a crisis management mechanism to ensure that the tourism sector is adequately prepared for future crises, where national responses have proven to be insufficient;

- providing for technical and administrative support to micro enterprises and SMEs to increase their ability to access and make use of EU funding and financial instruments;
- supporting the tourism ecosystem by, for instance, sharing good practices to make informed decisions about improving tourism policies;
- promoting the European brand in third countries and focusing on the diversification of the European tourism product;

***Strengthen: transition to sustainable, responsible and smart tourism***

24. Notes that sustainable tourism should take account of current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and local communities<sup>15</sup>; recalls that the tourism and travel industry creates an ecological footprint worldwide; highlights the need to devise sustainable and flexible solutions for multimodal transport and to develop policies for preserving natural heritage and biodiversity, respecting the sociocultural authenticity of host communities, ensuring sustainability and delivering socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders;
25. Calls on the Commission to swiftly develop a roadmap for sustainable tourism that includes innovative measures to reduce the climate and environmental footprint of the sector by developing more sustainable forms of tourism, diversifying the offer, boosting new initiatives for cooperation and developing new digital services;
26. Calls on the Member States to devise sustainable tourism action plans at national and regional level in consultation with stakeholders and civil society and in line with a future European roadmap for sustainable tourism, and to make full use of the Next Generation EU funds to finance the tourism transition action plans;
27. Highlights that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a shift in the nature of travellers' demands towards safe, clean and more sustainable tourism; underlines that local craft activities, agrotourism, rural tourism and ecotourism are an integral part of sustainable tourism, with an emphasis on discovering nature and the countryside in Europe via routes suitable for walking, cycling or horseback riding with shared access;
28. Calls on the Commission to bring the European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS) into operation, to equip it with a permanent governance structure and to introduce it in tourism destinations, with static indicators and real-time data for their management and evaluation, in partnership with regions; stresses that the aim of the ETIS scoreboard is to monitor the economic, social and environmental impact of tourism;
29. Calls on the Commission to examine the barriers to obtaining the Ecolabel and to expand its scope to other tourism services, as a complement to the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) for tourism, and to establish mechanisms to support those certification schemes and to promote tourism operators that have obtained those

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<sup>15</sup> UNWTO and UN Environment Programme, *Making Tourism More Sustainable – A Guide for Policy-Makers*, 2005.

schemes;

30. Calls on the Member States, national tourism bodies and the industry to bolster their coordination of the criteria for and application of existing quality labels in the Union, and to encourage the Commission to pursue its coordination role and to support local initiatives;
31. Commends the Commission for setting up the Tourism Sustainability Group and calls on the group to resume its work and to revise the 2012 European Charter for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism as a means to encourage participation and the adoption of good practices at national, regional and local levels; believes that the group can serve as a reference for a European network of stakeholders in the area of sustainable tourism, present new tools and initiatives to assess the economic, social and ecological impact of tourism-related activities, involve travellers and enable both travellers and tourism companies to understand their environmental footprint;
32. Stresses the importance of the UNWTO Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism, which aims to integrate statistics on the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable tourism;
33. Recalls that the lack of accurate quantitative and qualitative metric data on the effects of tourism on sustainability impedes the decision-making of public and private actors; asks Eurostat to establish a frame of reference for the collection of data relating to sustainability, overtourism, undertourism and criteria on working conditions and calls for Regulation (EU) No 692/2011<sup>16</sup> to be updated; stresses the vast potential of big data and up-to-date data, namely in terms of origin and type of bookings, length of stays, average spending broken down by category, and occupancy rate, for understanding the evolution of tourism flows and changes in demand, and for adapting the offer and implementing adequate policies accordingly;
34. Welcomes the European Data Strategy and the Commission's proposal for a Data Governance Act; calls on the Commission to incorporate tourism in the governance framework for common data spaces and to better regulate the activity of online booking platforms and online travel intermediaries, enabling tourism businesses to fully commit to innovation and digitalisation, as the latter are crucial for modernising the entire sector and for developing new services and a broader, high-quality offer; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to promote data pooling for tourism and regional incubators and accelerators for tourism enterprises, harnessing research and innovation to help the many SMEs in the sector collect, process and utilise the data they produce and enable them to fully benefit from the data economy and implement sustainable solutions;
35. Notes that an increasing number of purchases of tourism products and services are taking place online; recognises the enhanced role of collaborative economy platforms as intermediaries and their merits in terms of innovation and sustainability; welcomes the Commission's proposals for a Digital Services Act and a Digital Markets Act and stresses the need to ensure a level playing field between online and offline businesses to

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<sup>16</sup> Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2011 concerning European statistics on tourism and repealing Council Directive 95/57/EC, OJ L 192, 22.7.2011, p. 17.

avoid market distortions and preserve healthy competition, with particular regard to the distinction between peers and professional service providers; highlights, in this changing environment, the impact of online reviews and ratings on tourism experiences;

36. Considers it equally important to ensure cooperation between knowledge and innovation communities in the food and culture sectors; believes that promoting market awareness, better qualifications, increased management efficiency, real-life partnerships and targeted networking opportunities, as well as developing innovative measures for the future, are key success factors for agrotourism; also believes that improved cooperation and coordination between stakeholders, greater involvement of local authorities in tourism and market research and professional communication and marketing strategies are necessary in order to boost the social, economic and environmental performance of agrotourism;
37. Calls on the Commission to respect the right of local authorities to regulate against the harmful impacts of overtourism;
38. Notes that tourism is closely linked to mobility and that Member States must, with financial support from the EU, increase investment in the transition to cleaner fuels, in low and zero-emission vehicles, whenever possible, in more accessible modes of transport, including for disabled people and people with reduced mobility for all modes, and in support for mobility as a service and platforms that guarantee the interoperability and intermodality of ticketing systems to offer transnational and intermodal door-to-door tickets;
39. Believes that tourism mobility should prioritise the use of the most sustainable means of transport, which create a smaller carbon footprint; recalls the necessity for all Member States to have modern, safe and sustainable transport infrastructure in order to facilitate travel across the EU and to make the outermost regions, peripheral and remote areas and islands more accessible for intra-European and international tourism and strengthen territorial cohesion; points out that particular attention should be paid to missing connections across borders, to their completion and to compliance with the TEN-T 2030 and 2050 deadlines;
40. Highlights that the European Year of Rail could present an opportunity to create public awareness of sustainable tourism and the new cross-border routes that European citizens can discover thanks to rail connections; calls on the Commission, therefore, to improve the European railway network; applauds the Union's DiscoverEU initiative, which gives mostly young people the opportunity to discover Europe through learning and cultural experiences and the promotion of local cultural heritage;
41. Underlines the importance of culture and cultural heritage in European tourism; calls on the Member States, therefore, to allocate sufficient funding to culture and cultural heritage sites, without forgetting their intrinsic value as a part of our cultural heritage that needs to be protected, not least from climate change and overtourism;
42. Stresses the need to study the resilience of cultural heritage and notes the liaison between sustainable tourism and cultural heritage; believes that cultural tourism can act as a catalyst for strengthening the mutual understanding of people in the EU by allowing them to discover European cultural heritage in all its diversity; highlights the

need to take into account the lessons learnt from the European Year of Cultural Heritage; recalls that many initiatives have been taken at EU, national and local level to improve sustainable tourism by integrating cultural heritage into environmental, architectural and planning policies; considers the need to protect industrial heritage of regions in transition to enable new economic and professional opportunities in those areas; reiterates the need to raise awareness of heritage protection among all actors, including of the risk of illicit traffic in cultural goods; points out that any reflection on sustainable tourism must also take a another look at works and cultural goods that have been looted, stolen or illegally obtained during wars; encourages the promotion of excellence in sustainable cultural tourism; calls on the Member States to take measures to foster collaboration between experts in cultural tourism and to promote cooperation and exchange of best practices in the sector;

43. Considers that the Cultural Routes programme launched by the Council of Europe will help to highlight Europe's diverse history and promote cultural heritage; notes the importance of connecting tourist attractions; believes that the programme has a high potential for small businesses, intercultural dialogue and transnational cooperation, and it must evolve by increasingly advocating for sustainability in tourism, including protection for cultural heritage;
44. Calls on the Commission to explore possible synergies with EuroVelo and its 17 corridors, notably by increasing financial support, in order to promote cycling tourism in Europe; calls on the Commission to encourage the reconversion of disused railway lines, including by supporting bike-train projects, and to actively support bike-train intermodality; proposes the promotion of cycling packages aimed at tourists combined with other sustainable offers; believes that cross-border routes for outdoor activities including rural, mountain or nautical tourism, promoted through specific networks supported by EU funding, can play a key role in connecting different Member State regions and diverting tourism flows in an efficient manner, while providing opportunities to boost tourism in less developed regions;
45. Urges the Commission to propose a new European inclusive tourism scheme following the model of the Calypso initiative, enabling vulnerable social groups to use national tourist vouchers in associated establishments in other Member States which also offer a social tourism programme to their citizens; notes that many Member States are implementing such programmes with very good results and believes that it would be very positive to make these schemes interoperable at EU level;
46. Calls on the Commission to present the results of the Smart Tourism Destinations pilot project and outline how it intends to implement the scheme, linking innovation with the protection of UNESCO and nature sites and traditional local specialities and centres of culture;
47. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to make the European Capital of Smart Tourism a permanent project with broader and fairer criteria, thereby benefiting the local economy and local supply chains; calls for greater commitment towards a gradual increase in sustainable mobility opportunities throughout Europe;
48. Commends the Commission for the Access City Award and calls for the

implementation of similar initiatives at national and regional levels;

49. Commends the Commission for its work on the 14 actions which make up the Strategy for Coastal and Maritime Tourism, and invites it to present the results, which can be used to channel financing to infrastructure (ports and marinas), logistical and operational support, waste prevention and the use of renewable energy; stresses the need to respect the maritime ecosystem, promote dialogue between Member States, regional and local authorities, stakeholders and civil society, and foster the sustainable development of coastal and maritime tourism; calls on the Commission, in agreement with the Member States, to take measures to support the cruise industry, which continues to be severely damaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to facilitate its operational restart, while respecting social and environmental standards;
50. Calls on the Commission to develop initiatives for nautical and coastal tourism with regard to the recognition of skipper qualifications, VAT rules on boats, marinas and anchorages, to tackle seasonality and promote cross-border routes, such as a network of routes for nautical tourism, and to make public the state of play of the pilot project: charter of good practices for sustainable cruise tourism;
51. Encourages the Commission to include local actors that work in rural and coastal areas in income diversification initiatives through the creation of tourism products, services or experiences, in the design of new initiatives and the search for synergies between existing ones; encourages efforts to involve producers from the primary sector (agriculture, livestock and fisheries) in these initiatives and to explore whether these initiatives could be used as a means of marketing their products and disseminating their cultural or gastronomic traditions;
52. Underlines the potential employment opportunities in rural areas for legally resident third-country nationals, thereby promoting their social and economic inclusion;
53. Highlights the positive contribution of rural tourism in safeguarding small-scale and diverse farming, tackling social inequalities and creating employment opportunities for women, with the proportion of women in the sector in the EU being around 50 %, thereby contributing to generational renewal and reversing depopulation;
54. Stresses the need to include health tourism, in particular spa and wellness tourism, as a separate industry with high competitive and innovative potential in future measures to develop tourism in Europe, in view of demographic changes and increasing public health awareness;

#### ***Rethink: planning the future of the tourism industry***

55. Stresses the need to support the tourism industry in implementing the principles of the circular economy, by for instance boosting the supply of climate-neutral products, using clean energy, reducing the use of harmful chemicals and single-use plastics, improving the energy efficiency of buildings by incentivising the renovation of the tourism building stock, implementing rainwater and domestic wastewater recycling processes, facilitating recycling and preventing waste;
56. Urges the Commission to present an analysis in the first semester of 2021 on the

requests received from each Member State for State aid schemes for the tourism industry and on EU financing used to tackle the effects of COVID-19, including the applicability of the SURE programme; calls on the Commission to consolidate and extend SURE until the end of 2022 in view of the socioeconomic difficulties the Member States are facing;

57. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to address the situation of workers in the tourism sector affected by the COVID-19 crisis and to consider the possibility of establishing a European framework, within the action plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights, across the industry's entire value chain, in close cooperation with social partners and businesses, through a constructive dialogue on the working conditions in the sector, which is characterised by seasonality and part-time and atypical forms of employment; emphasises that access to social protections must be guaranteed;
58. Calls on the Commission, together with the European Investment Bank, to establish sufficient dedicated support for the decarbonisation of the tourism sector, for digitalisation and for innovative projects, and the conditions of access for micro enterprises and SMEs to InvestEU, so that new skills can be acquired and more quality jobs created; stresses the need for better coordination between the EU and the local level in order to solve the issue of access to finance; highlights that new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, robotics and virtual and augmented reality, can have a significant impact on the tourism industry; notes that their uptake requires adequate funding for tourism establishments, in particular micro enterprises and SMEs;
59. Calls on the Commission to propose new programmes to support innovation in the tourism sector through design thinking;
60. Calls on the Commission, together with the Member States, to support the best practices currently employed by national, regional and local authorities, the transition to seamless intermodality in transport, and the development of through-ticketing for rail travel; recalls the importance of modern, seamless TEN-T networks and high-speed cross-border services across Europe for unlocking the potential of international collective sustainable transport to make tourism more sustainable throughout every season of the year; recalls, in this respect, the need to strengthen urban nodes and public transport, which are an important part of tourists' experiences and citizens' everyday lives in tourist destinations;
61. Calls on the Commission to introduce the e-visa, along with the travel visa and other measures that allow visitors to enter the Union lawfully;
62. Believes that the promotion of the European tourism brand in third countries must focus on the diversification of the tourism product to attract a wider range of tourists and increase market share, while promoting key destinations which offer an alternative to areas of mass tourism; highlights the attractiveness of pan-European touristic products and services such as transnational itineraries;
63. Points out the major contribution of sport to European tourism and highlights the opportunities arising from sporting events and activities, while not forgetting the importance of improving the sustainability of major events; underlines the importance of Europe's gastronomy, gastronomic routes and hotel, restaurant and catering (Horeca)



sector for the tourism industry; underlines the importance of health and spa tourism and calls on the Commission to promote tourist initiatives that may help to reduce health costs through preventive measures and lower pharmaceutical consumption; believes that the promotion of the European tourism brand must focus on the diversification of the EU's offering in cultural and natural heritage, food and health, in cooperation with destinations and tour operators;

64. Urges the Commission to submit a proposal on geographical indications for non-agricultural products, not least in the light of the outcome of the 2014 public consultation, which showed that this recognition, in the form of the immediate identification of a product with a territory, would boost the tourism industry;
65. Calls on the Commission to promote artistic and traditional craft professions, which exemplify the excellence of products made in Europe as an expression of the identity and traditions of European territories, including in the context of the tourism industry, through official recognition as part of European cultural heritage;
66. Calls on the Commission to evaluate and, if necessary, to review the Package Travel Directive<sup>17</sup> and to unblock the negotiations in the Council on the revision of Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 on air passenger rights<sup>18</sup> to take account of the effects of the recent crisis, prevent future legal uncertainty and ensure the protection of consumer rights; asks the Commission to analyse the possibility of strengthening the insolvency protection provisions by adding a prevention approach to support companies and SMEs at an earlier stage and in order to protect workers in the event of systemic shocks and/or insolvency;
67. Calls on the Commission to establish a European travel guarantee scheme, based on the experience of the COVID-19 crisis and similar schemes in the Member States, in order to secure financial liquidity for companies and guarantee refunds for travellers as well as repatriation costs, together with fair compensation for any damages incurred in the event of bankruptcy;
68. Calls on the Commission to establish a single platform for the creation of digital innovation literacy programmes for the senior executives of micro enterprises and SMEs, giving them the skills they need to optimise their wealth-creating potential; believes that regular training and the reskilling of the existing workforce in the tourism sector is of the utmost importance, with a specific focus on digital skills and innovative technologies; calls on the Commission to develop an EU roadmap to upskill workers in the sector, including an EU financing scheme to this end;
69. Notes that skills and qualifications are not always harmonised between countries and there is a lack of mutual recognition; calls on the Commission, therefore, to evaluate options for harmonising the rules and legislation in this regard;
70. Urges the Commission to work together with associations in the sector and to use best practices to issue recommendations and provide financial support for the organisation of

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<sup>17</sup> OJ L 326, 11.12.2015, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> OJ L 46, 17.2.2004, p. 1.

trade tourism events, fairs, congresses and tourism related to artistic and entertainment events, such as concerts and festivals;

71. Requests that the Commission publish and share with stakeholders and the Member States good practices for the professional tour guide profession in order to address the problems affecting this sector; considers that professional tour guides play a vital role in promoting cultural heritage in synergy with the local territory, its traditions and its specificities; believes, therefore, that this profession should enjoy adequate protection in the labour market in order to ensure high-quality services while preserving open and fair competition; calls on the Commission to analyse the lack of mutual recognition in the sector in order to ascertain where the Union can make the requisite improvements;
72. Underlines the importance of accessibility of travel and tourism services for all, including for children, elderly people and disabled people, regardless of their economic situation or potential vulnerabilities; calls on the Commission to work to facilitate the possible wider implementation and recognition of the European disability card scheme; highlights that accessible tourism for all can only be achieved with the right combination of legal standards implemented by the Member States, innovation and technological developments, personnel training, awareness-raising, adequate promotion and communication, throughout the supply chain of the tourism offer; stresses, in this regard, the importance of European networks where public and private stakeholders can cooperate and exchange best practices; further calls on the Commission and the Member States to actively drive the ongoing development of the International Organisation for Standardisation standard on accessible tourism services and to ensure its swift and correct implementation once adopted, while also ensuring that service providers respect the relevant accessibility standards already in place or in the process of implementation and provide information on the accessibility of their services;
73. Calls on the Commission to propose a standardised method for collating interactive feedback on the accessibility of destinations by enterprises and tourists and to promote its use to the tourism sector as a whole;
74. Calls on the Commission to consider the special characteristics and additional constraints of the outermost regions when formulating and assessing the impact of tourism legislation, in accordance with Article 349 of the TFEU, as those regions rely heavily on tourism for their economic, social and cultural development; warns, in this context, of the need to ensure proper funding to safeguard the accessibility of the outermost regions; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to take into consideration the climate and digital transition in the outermost regions;
75. Call on the Commission to pay particular attention to mountainous regions, islands and insular regions and rural areas and underlines the importance of well-structured institutional cooperation with all interested regional actors, as well as the Committee of the Regions;
76. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to ensure mobility in territories suffering from double and triple insularity, given the abrupt decline in supply; highlights the possibility of establishing safe travel corridors to and from the outermost regions and islands to help alleviate the permanent constraints they face;

77. Stresses that EU rural development measures contribute to strengthening the EU agrofood sector, environmental sustainability and the well-being of rural areas;

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◦ ◦

78. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, Article 195 of the TFEU acknowledges, for the first time, the importance of tourism in the institutional framework of the Union. In this way, the Union is supplementing the action of Member States by enhancing the competitiveness of businesses in the tourism industry.

This enshrinement enables the Union to act at European level by responding to the common challenges of the industry, providing for the establishment and adaptation of a business environment that paves the way for the economic and social development of destinations while fully complying with and showing due regard for the principle of subsidiarity and the competence of Member States.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting crisis have shown the urgency of doing more at European level and of interpreting and applying Article 195 of the TFEU more broadly.

The tourism and travel industry saw bookings fall sharply, by 92%, between January and August, compared with the previous year, with declines of 85% in accommodation, restaurants, tour operators and long-distance rail passengers and 90% in airlines and cruise lines. Six million jobs are currently at risk in the Union, based on more moderate scenarios.

In 2020, Europe, the world's top tourist destination, welcomed 66% fewer international tourists in the first half of the year, and 97% fewer in the second half. Considering that, in 2019, it employed 22.6 million people, accounting for 11.2% of total EU employment, and accounted for 9.5% of Union GDP, it has been shown that this sharp downturn was due, in part, to a lack of coordination by Member States with regard to travel. The lack of common criteria, alongside differing national and regional measures taken by the governments of each Member State and of the outermost regions, created confusion and distrust among travellers.

Given the international situation and the severe impact of the current crisis on the tourism and travel industry, this own-initiative report intends to focus on four guidelines aimed at: (1) rebuilding the industry with pandemic response plans (2) refocusing governance policy within the framework of the Union (3) strengthening industry initiatives for sustainable, responsible and smart tourism (4) planning the future of the industry and the changes that will take place on the demand side and that may require adaptation of the offering.

The Union needs a common framework for essential and non-essential travel, with clear and transparent criteria, for travellers to make informed choices, enabling the industry to adapt and apply compliant hygiene measures. There should be common criteria for the identification of risk areas and application of the colour code proposed by the Commission, for testing on departure, thereby avoiding quarantines, for the use of masks, and for the harmonisation of tracking forms in all modes of transport to be shared with destination countries, thereby reducing potential burdens. Simultaneously, the imposition of new restrictions, in the event of adverse developments in epidemiological conditions, should not include travellers that are already in the destination. Recognition of these criteria, at Union level, is crucial for openness to third countries through mutual recognition, especially in the aviation and cruise sectors. To that end, it is essential to create a hygiene certification seal for destination EU, with good practices being examples of success in the Member States, for recognition in external countries,

seeking quality and more stringent hygiene standards.

The lack of direct financing to tourism in the Union's proposals is a shortcoming that remains to be remedied in the current financial framework and a commitment that has remained unfulfilled since the last parliamentary term. It is essential and fair to make that financing available for an industry that has provided the European economy with so much growth and development, and that is going through a serious crisis with global characteristics and impacts. This is an opportunity that the Union is missing by not establishing a European Tourism Policy, with financing that would make it possible to directly support businesses, associations and people. The Union leaves Member States to prioritise support to the sector, through Next Generation EU, REACT-EU, SURE and other existing sources of financing, when it could lead by example. The Commission is therefore asked to, together with the Committee on Transport and Tourism, and the Tourism Task Force, make the most of pilot projects and preparatory measures as an additional source of support. To ensure that financing reaches businesses, the rapporteur believes it important to establish a European mechanism to monitor the implementation of support. In parallel, the rapporteur considers it critical for the European Investment Bank, in partnership with the Commission, to establish specific projects and conditions for access to InvestEU for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

It is also time to prepare the sector for the post-vaccine period and, therefore, the rapporteur advises the Commission to explore the possibility of creating a digital health passport in the Union, on the basis of various studies by the WTTC. It is crucial to also prepare the Union for future crises and, therefore, there is an urgent need to support the implementation of the crisis management mechanism for the Union, proposed by the European Parliament.

Given the cross-cutting nature of tourism and travel, the institutional structure of governance in the Union should be enhanced. Synergies and a regular framework for communication between the EU institutions supported by an organisational structure within the Tourism, Textiles and Creative Industries Unit, with more human and financial resources, should be promoted. At the same time, it is essential that there be inter-service coordination within the Commission so as to incorporate the cross-cutting dimension of this sector in the various initiatives. It is time to establish a European Agency for Tourism that supports the industry, either with a data analysis observatory or in the management and implementation of rules.

To ensure that the sector is part of the ecological and digital transition, it is necessary to bring into effect initiatives that the European Commission has already supported financially, in the past, but that were not properly followed up. The European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS) should have a permanent structure supported financially by the European Commission with the support of destinations, and with external control and monitoring. The Tourism Sustainability Group should be resumed with a view to putting the new governance of the ETIS into practice, finding new ways to promote it and other certificates created and issued by the Union, such as the Ecolabel, the scope of which should be expanded to other services and products. The rapporteur believes in the importance of updating and promoting the 2012 European Charter for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism as a means to involve the sector.

For this dual transition to be effective, it is necessary to collect, analyse and understand data. Therefore, the rapporteur considers it important for Eurostat to establish a frame of reference to precisely ascertain the impact of tourism on sustainability, with respect to overtourism and

undertourism, and, if necessary, to update the regulation on European statistics with big data. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises must have access to intelligent data analysis and, therefore, tourism should be part of the governance framework for common data spaces, contrary to the Commission's proposal. Future tourism is dependent on this access to data, which is only possible to achieve as an integrated cluster. To evaluate the innovation and digitalisation of the industry, it makes perfect sense to implement the Smart Destinations preparatory action and to make the European Capital of Tourism a permanent project of the Union, with broader and fairer criteria for the inclusion of more European destinations.

It is important to bolster mobility, interoperability and ticketing systems, and to improve railway infrastructure and bicycle paths, among other things, making it possible to promote domestic and cross-border tourism. However, we have to bear in mind that restricting one mode of transport to the detriment of another is no solution, in particular for many regions and countries on the periphery of the Union.

Coastal, maritime and nautical tourism is of importance in the Union owing to its maritime dimension. In 2018, 51.7% of tourist accommodation establishments in the Union were located in coastal areas and, therefore, it is necessary to examine this segment more closely and to re-evaluate the 14 actions of the Strategy for Coastal and Maritime Transport, the funding guide for the forthcoming MFF and the existing financing for ecological and digital transition. Initiatives already in progress such as the common curriculum for skippers, the manual of good practices for cruises (preparatory actions of the Parliament), VAT rules on vessels and at anchorages, and initiatives to manage seasonality should be the frame of reference for the updating of those 14 actions.

Biodiversity and marine protected areas provide a premium research environment and should therefore foster scientific tourism in regions that attract the most interest from the international scientific community. It is crucial to identify trends relating to future careers in the tourism sector, while teaching and adapting traditional activities, investing in the training and literacy of senior executives in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, giving them the means to optimise their wealth-creating potential.

Planning the future of the tourism industry is an imperative for the present moment. Evaluating trends and demand dynamics, the options for consumer travellers, and the transition to models that consider a cleaner economy must be the Union's priorities for the next decade. Tourism and travel must be part of the solution for the 2050 climate neutrality target and all efforts to this end must be targeted and given financial incentives. Networks must be established between regions, operators and public and private actors to find solutions to common problems. Support should be broken down on the basis of the impact of the industry on GDP, as well as to bear in mind that Europe's outermost regions have permanent and insurmountable constraints that must be taken into account.

We are calling for legislation to be modernised by better equipping it to cope with future crises and enabling it to provide more effectively targeted solutions, achieving a balance between consumer rights and business sustainability.

Innovation is a global imperative that prompts the rapporteur to call for the creation of opportunities that enable travellers to have a seamless experience from choosing to buying

tickets, on the various modes of transport, as well as at the destination itself.

We believe in the need for a European e-visa, and that we must urgently consider opening discussions on the travel visa, presented in the past by the European Commission.

Above all, we need political will and a strategic vision of the future for the tourism and travel industry.

The rapporteur believes that, by the end of the year, an action plan with specific goals and objectives must be presented, and that a European Strategy for Tourism must be developed that creates common solutions that lead to the social and economic development of Europe's regions and tourist destinations.

Tourism shows enormous potential with regard to people's respect for the values, traditions and culture of others, and through this achievement, to achieve stability and peace between peoples, a value that it also shares with the European Union.

4.12.2020

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

for the Committee on Transport and Tourism

on establishing an EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism  
(2020/2038(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Marlene Mortler

### **SUGGESTIONS**

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

1. Welcomes the fact that, more than 10 years ago, following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the Commission drew up a tourism strategy to maintain Europe's status as the world's No 1 tourist destination and tourism as the third largest socio-economic activity, by strengthening its cultural and regional diversity as well as the Schengen cross-border travel area; also welcomes the subsequent agenda for sustainable European tourism, which recalls that rural areas need to invest in tourism in order to increase their attractiveness, diversify their economies and increase their added value, thereby developing a long-term competitive edge;
2. Recalls that according to Eurostat data from 2018, 45 % of EU tourist accommodation capacity was in rural areas; also recalls that tourism activities generate 10-20 % of rural income and employment, double the levels averaged across Europe, and underlines the need to better map the social, economic and environmental impacts of rural tourism;
3. Considers effectively addressing rural abandonment to be a top priority; emphasises that agrotourism makes a significant contribution to the rural economy and growth, especially in regions disadvantaged in terms of natural resources and cultural and social development; stresses that this activity represents an important additional source of income for many farms and offers a wide range of opportunities to maintain the attractiveness of rural areas and create jobs by improving the business environment for the craft sector and rural businesses and by diversifying agricultural holdings;
4. Highlights the positive contribution of rural tourism in safeguarding small-scale and diverse farming, tackling social inequalities and creating employment opportunities for women, with the proportion of women in the sector in the EU being around 50 %, thereby contributing to generational renewal and reversing depopulation;



5. Asks the Commission and the Member States therefore to further promote and support initiatives generating additional income sources in rural areas; emphasises in this regard the importance of separate, up-to-date data on the contribution of rural tourism to economic development and employment;
6. Underlines the potential employment opportunities in rural areas for legally resident third-country nationals, thereby promoting their social and economic inclusion;
7. Points out that the production processes and the wide range of services of general interest provided by agriculture, as well as the diversity of certain activities and facilities, make farms places of discovery and experiences, where people of all ages can discover rural landscapes and the cultural and natural heritage safeguarded by rural communities and can experience farming first hand and gain a better understanding of the responsibilities inherent in dealing with animals and natural resources; stresses in this regard the synergies between rural tourism, environmental protection, biodiversity conservation and animal welfare awareness; notes that sustainable tourism is usually associated with rural tourism;
8. Recalls that tourism activities in rural areas can make a positive contribution to the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals and should promote sustainable and responsible consumption and production, especially in relation to water, food, energy and plastic usage; calls on the Commission and the Member States to support campaigns raising awareness about the positive impact of sustainable ecotourism on the conservation of biodiversity, responsible consumption of natural resources and learning experiences that educate and influence lifestyle choices towards greener and more sustainable living; underlines the need to involve all stakeholders in the development of guidelines to ensure the appropriate balance between tourism and the conservation of biodiversity, agriculture and cultural traditions;
9. Welcomes the growing trend towards local and authentic travel experiences, which can significantly contribute towards reducing the distance travelled by each person and lowering the climate impact, improving environmental tourism management by taking the pressure off overcrowded tourist destinations; considers that farm holidays are the most sustainable and efficient form of rural tourism in Europe, helping to support local businesses and promote agricultural and natural areas; recommends that the Member States ensure that the diversification of agrotourism is optimised, seasonality is reduced and the quality of tourism is increased; underlines the urgent need to invest funds in the architectural preservation of historically and culturally relevant villages;
10. Considers that the integration and interlinking of local production, processing and marketing with tourist accommodation, outdoor activities and the gastronomy sector promotes European cultural heritage and customs, as well as diverse landscapes, traditional agricultural ways of life and working, food culture and gastronomy as a unique experience;
11. Emphasises that tourism makes a significant contribution to promoting regional product brands and brings consumers and producers closer together as advocated by the Farm to Fork Strategy; highlights in this respect the role and potential of European, national, regional and local quality schemes in which representatives of the tourism sector

participate alongside producers, and calls on all competent authorities to encourage such initiatives;

12. Considers it equally important to ensure cooperation between Knowledge and Innovation Communities in the food and culture sectors; believes that promoting market awareness, better qualifications, increased management efficiency, real-life partnerships and targeted networking opportunities, as well as developing innovative measures for the future, are key success factors for agrotourism; also believes that improved cooperation and coordination between stakeholders, greater involvement of local authorities in tourism and market research and professional communication and marketing strategies are necessary in order to boost the social, economic and environmental performance of agrotourism;
13. Underlines the crucial role of ‘culinary and wine tourism’ which is of vital importance to revive rural tourism and support the creation of jobs in both rural and urban areas; outlines in this respect the need to strongly and decisively counter the counterfeit market in food and wine products sold under PDO, PGI, TGS and GI labels in general; also outlines the importance of promoting the short supply chain system to reduce depopulation in rural areas, as well as direct initiatives such as travelling grocery stores and food and wine workshops focused on the production and step-by-step processing of certain agricultural products;
14. Points to the huge potential of modern information technologies in the planning, organisation and deployment of tourism products; welcomes the fact that rural development programmes support smart villages, which contributes to the development of sustainable tourism and influences young people to stay in rural areas; highlights the need for digital investment in agrotourism to make it more attractive, accessible and competitive;
15. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop an effective investment strategy in the rural tourism sector, further develop innovative activities and the use of information and communication technologies in rural and peripheral areas, and improve professional qualifications in this regard; insists specifically on the importance of extending broadband, which is essential for the digital transformation of tourism services and will offer more choices, the better allocation of resources and new ways of managing travel and tourist flows, considering that cottages and farms are not always located in easily accessible places; proposes the creation of assistance services for tourism businesses operating in rural areas, guaranteeing free business consultancy and distributing material to avoid environmental impact;
16. Stresses that EU rural development measures contribute to strengthening the EU agri-food sector, environmental sustainability and the well-being of rural areas;
17. Notes that accessibility and other requirements to increase competitiveness can be supported by the CAP Strategic Plans, the EAFRD fund and LEADER measures to promote targeted local development strategies and boost innovative approaches which because of their very nature are linked to rural communities and contribute to sustainable tourism; calls on the Commission and the Member States to maintain appropriate funding to enhance the competitiveness of agriculture, ensure sustainable

management of natural resources and support the balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities by generating job opportunities and preventing depopulation, as well as exploiting the potential for wealth creation at regional and local level and supporting the preservation of Europe's rural cultural heritage;

18. Stresses that tourism is important for jobs, growth and economic and social cohesion and plays a significant part in economic recovery; notes that the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdowns have strongly hit tourism activities in rural areas and badly affected the revenue thereof; stresses that the sector has proved capable of swiftly adapting to the new conditions imposed by the restrictions; calls on the Commission and the Member States to support sustainable and responsible agrotourism initiatives as part of the recovery plan and to ring-fence a specific allocation.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	1.12.2020						
<b>Result of final vote</b>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">+:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> </tr> </table>	+:	40	-:	0	0:	5
+:	40						
-:	0						
0:	5						
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	<p>Mazaly Aguilar, Clara Aguilera, Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Álvaro Amaro, Attila Ara-Kovács, Carmen Avram, Adrian-Dragoş Benea, Benoît Biteau, Mara Bizzotto, Daniel Buda, Isabel Carvalhais, Asger Christensen, Angelo Ciocca, Ivan David, Paolo De Castro, Jérémy Decerle, Salvatore De Meo, Herbert Dorfmann, Luke Ming Flanagan, Cristian Ghinea, Dino Giarrusso, Francisco Guerreiro, Martin Häusling, Martin Hlaváček, Krzysztof Jurgiel, Jarosław Kalinowski, Elsi Katainen, Gilles Lebreton, Norbert Lins, Chris MacManus, Marlene Mortler, Ulrike Müller, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierno, Maxette Pirbakas, Bronis Ropé, Anne Sander, Petri Sarvamaa, Simone Schmiedtbauer, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Veronika Vrecionová, Sarah Wiener, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez</p>						
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Petros Kokkalis, Ruža Tomašić						

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>40</b>	<b>+</b>
PPE	Álvaro Amaro, Daniel Buda, Salvatore De Meo, Herbert Dorfmann, Jarosław Kalinowski, Norbert Lins, Marlene Mortler, Anne Sander, Petri Sarvamaa, Simone Schmiedtbauer, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
S&D	Clara Aguilera, Attila Ara-Kovács, Carmen Avram, Adrian-Dragoş Benea, Isabel Carvalhais, Paolo De Castro, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierno
Renew	Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Asger Christensen, Jérémy Decerle, Cristian Ghinea, Martin Hlaváček, Elsi Katainen, Ulrike Müller
ID	Mara Bizzotto, Angelo Ciocca, Ivan David, Gilles Lebreton, Maxette Pirbakas
ECR	Mazaly Aguilar, Krzysztof Jurgiel, Ruža Tomašić, Veronika Vrecionová
EUL/NGL	Luke Ming Flanagan, Petros Kokkalis, Chris MacManus
NI	Dino Giarrusso
<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
Greens/EFA	Benoît Bêteau, Francisco Guerreiro, Martin Häusling, Bronis Ropè, Sarah Wiener

**Key to symbols:**

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

29.10.2020

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

for the Committee on Transport and Tourism

on establishing an EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism  
(2020/2038(INI))

Rapporteur: Dace Melbārde

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Transport and Tourism, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Advocates an inclusive view of tourism and acknowledges the need to strike a balance between economic, social, cultural and environmental needs, including the protection of cultural heritage, to comprehensively ensure the mid-term and long-term sustainability of tourism;
2. Recognises that cultural tourism has significant potential to generate growth and jobs in the EU, with as many as four in ten tourists already choosing their destination on the basis of its cultural offering; notes, however, that cultural heritage offerings only recoup a minimal share of the economic value they generate, requiring, therefore, new, alternative and stable sources of funding, in order to continue to serve as the basis for sustainable tourism; notes that some regions in Europe that have a rich cultural offering still have underdeveloped tourism sectors; believes that developing and promoting tourism in such regions would not only broaden the choice for people seeking new destinations and experiences, but could also help reduce tourist flows to excessively visited and popular sites and locations and could help reduce socioeconomic inequalities between the various regions and Member States; calls for instances where the public and private sectors are working together on initiatives to be encouraged and for access for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to the market to be facilitated;
3. Points out that the existence of cultural heritage sites encourages people to travel and learn about different societies and cultures; thus promoting diversity, cohesion, social inclusion, solidarity and shared citizenship, dialogue and mutual understanding; recalls that, according to the Special Eurobarometer 466 report of December 2017 on Cultural Heritage, 72 % of a survey group aged between 15-24 agree that the presence of cultural

heritage can have an influence on their choice of holiday destination<sup>1</sup>; highlights the role that the DiscoverEU initiative can play in this regard; points out that this initiative should be promoted as a complement to the education and training of young people; recalls, however, its position that the continuation of this initiative through Erasmus+ is only possible with adequate funding for the programme in the next multiannual financial framework; notes further that the initiative has not benefited young people equally; calls on the Commission to further improve equal opportunities to its access, with particular attention given to involving young people with fewer opportunities, from rural and remote areas of the Member States, and from Member States without good rail links to other EU countries;

4. Reiterates the positive impact of cultural and creative sectors in the promotion of sustainable tourism and calls on the Commission to further assess ways to support them; recalls the role of the EAFRD and more particularly the LEADER programme; points out that Erasmus+ programmes and the European Solidarity Corps foster intra-European tourism and cultural exchanges and are an opportunity to preserve the EU's cultural values; recognises the key role played by the European Capitals of Culture in the promotion of cities and regions as, by setting their cultural, artistic and social projects within an economic framework, they integrate therein sustainable tourism concepts;
5. Calls on the Member States and other relevant stakeholders to further promote sustainable cultural tourism, which can lead to overall local and regional development, while paying particular attention to local economies, cultures, lifestyles and traditions and ensuring that local communities and industries, SMEs and other relevant stakeholders are closely involved in a participatory and equitable manner; notes the importance of community ownership to improve inclusion of local communities; considers that measures should be put forward for those regions in need in order to transition towards sustainable tourism models;
6. Points to the opportunities provided by new technologies in the promotion of tourism and calls for measures to be taken to speed up the digital transformation in order to be better prepared for future scenarios; highlights the importance of digitalising cultural heritage, both as a source for education and research as well as a tool for preservation; calls on the Commission to encourage and support the use of digital tools in the cultural tourism sector; stresses the role of the Cohesion Funds, and in particular the European Regional Development Fund, in making it possible, using digital means, to fund tourism initiatives and reconstruction and preservation techniques where sites are too fragile to be visited;
7. Believes that tour operators can and must play an increasing role in promoting sustainable tourism by, inter alia, encouraging customers to reduce their waste, promoting sustainable activities and educating them about the places they are visiting, especially the value and protection of cultural heritage; is of the view that professional tourist guides play a vital role in promoting cultural heritage and therefore calls on the

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<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/80882>

Member States to ensure that their profession is properly recognised and enjoys adequate protection in the labour market; stresses the need to promote sustainable tourism not just in the EU, but also in third countries;

8. Takes the view that a holistic approach to sustainable cultural tourism must also include engagement with civil society networks and greater cooperation within and between the Member States and local authorities;
9. Insists on the need, without prejudice to the principle of subsidiarity, to promote and supplement the capacities of the Member States in education and training in the field of sustainable and responsible tourism; calls for investment in educational programmes, including use of virtual technologies, in order to highlight the value of cultural heritage protection; recalls the importance of training skilled craftspeople and the need for European exchanges of ancestral know-how; believes that tailored tourism training and upskilling programmes need to be developed; encourages engagement through volunteering activities via Union programmes and initiatives such as the European Solidarity Corps;
10. Stresses the need to study the resilience of cultural heritage and notes the liaison between sustainable tourism and cultural heritage; believes that cultural tourism can act as a catalyst for strengthening the mutual understanding of people in the EU by allowing them to discover European cultural heritage in all its diversity; highlights the need to take into account the lessons learnt from the European Year of Cultural Heritage; recalls that many initiatives have been taken at EU, national and local level to improve sustainable tourism by integrating cultural heritage into environmental, architectural and planning policies; considers the need to protect industrial heritage of regions in transition to enable new economic and professional opportunities in those areas; reiterates the need to raise awareness of heritage protection among all actors, including of the risk of illicit traffic in cultural goods; points out that any reflection on sustainable tourism must also take a another look at works and cultural goods that have been looted, stolen or illegally obtained during wars; encourages the promotion of excellence in sustainable cultural tourism; calls on the Member States to take measures to foster collaboration between experts in cultural tourism and to promote cooperation and exchange of best practices in the sector;
11. Is concerned about the lack of proper management plans for cultural heritage sites and the impact of poorly managed tourism flows, uncontrolled development and excessive commodification; is further concerned that due to the economic downturn, which may have an impact on funding for culture both at national and EU level, financing for the protection of cultural heritage may be reduced; urges the Member States to put strong mechanisms in place to prevent unsustainable tourism flows; highlights the need for appropriate prevention and adaptation measures to limit the effects of climate change and natural disasters; calls on the Commission to propose specific actions to preserve and protect cultural heritage in the light of these natural and human-made hazards; calls for the most endangered European cultural sites to be identified at EU level; underlines the importance of EU funds in the protection of cultural heritage sites and calls for adequate funding in this regard;
12. Highlights the important role that education and the promotion of EU initiatives can



play in helping to discover and encouraging travel to fewer well-known and popular destinations, such as rural areas, and low-season travel; recommends further efforts to promote sustainability and accessibility in tourism, in particular for the elderly and people with disabilities and in view of the ongoing travel restrictions in the medium term; stresses the importance of initiatives that promote autonomous access to sites for persons with impaired mobility; welcomes the European Smart Tourism Awards with its four specific award categories for accessibility, sustainability, digitalisation and cultural heritage and creativity;

13. Calls on the Commission to further support the development of cultural tourism initiatives in those areas where potential is untapped; notes the importance of promoting environmentally respectful initiatives for sustainable tourism purposes, including cultural and traditional routes and pan-European cultural events, to raise awareness of the significance of European culture;
14. Considers that the Cultural Routes programme launched by the Council of Europe help to highlight Europe's diverse history and promotes cultural heritage; notes the importance of connecting tourist attractions; believes that the programme has a high potential for small businesses, intercultural dialogue and transnational cooperation, and it must evolve by increasingly advocating for sustainability in tourism, including protection for cultural heritage;
15. Highlights the need to help the Member States to promote entrepreneurial spirit in the tourism sector and related industries through the European Structural and Investment Funds; believes that citizens are the best ambassadors for history, cultural wealth and regional traditions; recognises the role of the collaborative economy in the tourism sector and welcomes the conclusion of an agreement between the Commission and the collaborative economy platforms to publish key data on tourism accommodation; stresses the importance of striking a balance between transparency and the protection of privacy while continuing cooperation with platforms to develop evidence-based sustainable tourism policies;
16. Stresses the sector's resilience during the COVID-19 crisis and welcomes the emerging digital cultural tourism offerings, such as online museum tours and virtual guided tours of European cities; is, however, concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on tourism, which is among the hardest-hit sectors due to travel restrictions and closures of various venues and cultural sites; believes that the impact of the COVID-19 may result in a substantial change in tourists' destination choices and behaviour; notes in this regard the importance of promoting a shift from mass tourism to other forms of cultural and sustainable tourism; highlights the importance of a strategy on sustainable tourism that also meets the EU's 2050 climate goals, places people at the heart of it and includes relevant support and recovery measures; stresses the need to include tourism as a priority area in the EU recovery plan with a focus on sustainable tourism and responsible territorial marketing; calls on the Member States to implement tailored support measures for cultural tourism; emphasises the significance of nurturing and keeping active tourism flows between the EU and the UK following the end of the transition period.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	27.10.2020
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 26 -: 1 0: 2
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Isabella Adinolfi, Christine Anderson, Andrea Bocskor, Vlad-Marius Botoş, Ilana Cicurel, Gilbert Collard, Gianantonio Da Re, Laurence Farreng, Tomasz Frankowski, Romeo Franz, Hannes Heide, Irena Joveva, Petra Kammerevert, Niyazi Kizilyürek, Predrag Fred Matić, Dace Melbārde, Victor Negrescu, Niklas Nienaaß, Peter Pollák, Marcos Ros Sempere, Domènec Ruiz Devesa, Andrey Slabakov, Massimiliano Smeriglio, Michaela Šojdrová, Sabine Verheyen, Salima Yenbou, Theodoros Zagorakis, Milan Zver
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Pernando Barrena Arza

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

26	+
PPE	Andrea Bocskor, Tomasz Frankowski, Peter Pollák, Michaela Šojdrová, Sabine Verheyen, Theodoros Zagorakis, Milan Zver
S&D	Hannes Heide, Petra Kammerevert, Predrag Fred Matić, Victor Negrescu, Marcos Ros Sempere, Domènec Ruiz Devesa, Massimiliano Smeriglio
RENEW	Vlad-Marius Botoș, Ilana Cicurel, Laurence Farreng, Irena Joveva
VERTS/ALE	Romeo Franz, Niklas Nienaß, Salima Yenbou
ECR	Dace Melbārde, Andrey Slabakov
GUE/NGL	Pernando Barrena Arza, Niyazi Kizilyürek
NI	Isabella Adinolfi

1	-
ID	Gilbert Collard

2	0
ID	Christine Anderson, Gianantonio Da Re

**Key to symbols:**

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

<b>Date adopted</b>	25.2.2021
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 47 -: 2 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Magdalena Adamowicz, Andris Ameriks, José Ramón Bauzá Díaz, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Marco Campomenosi, Massimo Casanova, Ciarán Cuffe, Jakop G. Dalunde, Andor Deli, Karima Delli, Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg, Ismail Ertug, Gheorghe Falcă, Giuseppe Ferrandino, João Ferreira, Mario Furore, Søren Gade, Isabel García Muñoz, Jens Gieseke, Elsi Katainen, Elena Kountoura, Julie Lechanteux, Bogusław Liberadzki, Peter Lundgren, Benoît Lutgen, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Tilly Metz, Giuseppe Milazzo, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Caroline Nagtegaal, Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Philippe Olivier, Rovana Plumb, Dominique Riquet, Dorien Rookmaker, Massimiliano Salini, Sven Schulze, Vera Tax, Barbara Thaler, István Ujhelyi, Petar Vitanov, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Lucia Vuolo, Roberts Zīle, Kosma Złotowski
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Clare Daly, Carlo Fidanza, Marianne Vind

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

47	+
ECR	Carlo Fidanza, Roberts Zile, Kosma Zlotowski
ID	Marco Campomenosi, Massimo Casanova, Julie Lechanteux, Philippe Olivier, Lucia Vuolo
NI	Mario Furore
PPE	Magdalena Adamowicz, Andor Deli, Gheorghe Falcă, Jens Gieseke, Elzbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Benoît Lutgen, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Giuseppe Milazzo, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Massimiliano Salini, Sven Schulze, Barbara Thaler, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi
Renew	José Ramón Bauzá Díaz, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Søren Gade, Elsi Katainen, Caroline Nagtegaal, Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Dominique Riquet
S&D	Andris Ameriks, Ismail Ertug, Giuseppe Ferrandino, Isabel García Muñoz, Bogusław Liberadzki, Rovana Plumb, Vera Tax, István Ujhelyi, Marianne Vind, Petar Vitanov
The Left	Clare Daly, João Ferreira, Elena Kountoura
Verts/ALE	Ciarán Cuffe, Jakop G. Dalunde, Karima Delli, Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg, Tilly Metz
2	-
ECR	Peter Lundgren
NI	Dorien Rookmaker
0	0

### Key to symbols:

- + : in favour
- : against
- 0 : abstention