

**Question for written answer E-002989/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 117
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Subject: Using digital data to improve the European tourism industry

As Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier have shown in their study entitled 'Big data: a revolution that will transform how we live, work, and think', in recent years the volume of data stored digitally has increased at a dizzying rate. In 2000, only a quarter of the world's data existed in digital format. By 2013 this proportion had risen to over 98 %, equivalent to an estimated 1 200 exabytes (one exabyte is 10^{18} bytes) of digital data worldwide. The sheer quantity of data now available and the statistical methods and algorithms used to analyse it (thanks to the development of super-powerful computer programs) are making it easier to analyse and predict human behaviour.

The ability to make use of digital data whilst still respecting privacy will be of great strategic and economic importance to the EU in the future, as this data has limitless applications and offers considerable potential for job creation, in particular in the tourism industry. The 'big data' revolution and predictions based on market research are helping the tourism industry to adapt to tourists' changing needs, and this in turn is influencing decisions on scheduling, communication and transport. For instance, when Marseille was the European capital of culture in 2013, the local authorities tested a system which used mobile phone signals to track the number of tourists attending events all over the city and thus monitor tourism trends.

1. Does the Commission intend to use the big data revolution to its advantage and monitor tourism patterns with a view to developing a European tourism strategy?
2. Given the significant cost of collecting raw data, particularly for micro-enterprises operating in the European tourism sector, how will it encourage investment in software capable of processing the data collected?