

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0049/06
pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure
by Luís Queiró, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
to the Commission

Subject: Measures to promote tourism

The Commission has submitted a Communication, 'A renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism'. On 8 September 2005, the European Parliament adopted by a large majority a resolution on 'new prospects and new challenges for sustainable European tourism'¹. However, this communication shows that the Commission lacks the political will to consult the European Parliament about the formulation at European level of policies and initiatives for this sector, although some proposals have been included, notably adjustments to Community legislation, improved use of the financial resources available and promotion of vocational training. However, we regret the fact that the document does not contain any specific follow-up to the initiatives proposed by Parliament, particularly outstanding European tourist destinations and a European tourism mark, combating seasonality, 'third-age' tourism or safety and security measures relating to the management of health crises, natural disasters or acts of terrorism.

In the fields concerned, Community action could indeed have added value over and above national policies and the efforts of operators, thus bolstering European tourism, its image abroad and the sense of shared identity of its citizens. The fact that Parliament's specific proposals have not been taken up is all the more incomprehensible because the Commission has already put forward other similar initiatives in these fields. Moreover, all these recommendations promote competitiveness and job creation driven by European tourism.

1. Bearing in mind the success of the European Cities of Culture, will the Commission adopt a similar measure to promote outstanding European tourist destinations, as called for by Parliament?
2. Can the Commission explain why it has not acted on Parliament's proposal that it submit an initiative to promote 'third-age' tourism, a sector which has a very promising future in view of the steady ageing of the population, as the Commission itself has repeatedly recognised?
3. Taking account of the various measures taken by the Commission regarding safety and security, why did the Commission not include the proposal to set up a contact group involving Member States and tour operators to coordinate information about the management of health crises, natural disasters or acts of terrorism?
4. Parliament having expressed its interest in being involved in and informed about the work of the Sustainable Tourism Group, why has Parliament been excluded from involvement in this Commission initiative?

Tabled: 10.05.2006

Forwarded: 12.05.2006

Deadline for reply: 19.05.2006

¹ P6_TA(2005)0335 European Parliament resolution on new prospects and new challenges for sustainable European tourism (2004/2229(INI)).