

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Committee on Regional Development

2004/2229(INI)

1.6.2005

OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Transport and Tourism

on new prospects and new challenges for sustainable European tourism
(2004/2229(INI))

Draftsman: Margie Sudre

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Notes that European tourism has been subject to increased competition over the past 20 years, resulting in a drop in its share of the European market, and that it is having to meet a number of challenges: outdated facilities; a cross-cutting and therefore complex sector; relative uniformity of the product, which is restricted to certain regions and seasons; damaging effects on often vulnerable sites owing to speculation and lack of planning; lack of training and appropriate publicity surrounding the sector's image;
2. Insists that, if developed in a sustainable manner, tourism should represent a sustainable source of income and employment for local economies, particularly for the less-favoured regions, supporting other economic activities upstream and downstream, protecting and making the most of the landscape as well as the wealth of cultural, historical and environmental features; considers that local communities have an important role to play in this regard; believes that responsibility in this respect naturally lies with the Member States, though the open method of coordination could be useful, while cooperation between States, in the context of the Union's structural policy, could be particularly fruitful;
3. Considers that the European tourist industry makes a major contribution to growth and employment at regional level, and insists that European regulations should create a favourable environment for the industry by bringing about legal and tax harmonisation at European level, in order to stand up to international competition;
4. In creating such a favourable environment it is important that special attention is paid to encouraging the growth and competitiveness of special interest sectors such as the cruise line industry which is a very important sector for island states and other maritime regions generating an estimated EUR 2 000 million in income for EU ports and their hinterlands;
5. Calls attention to the fact that long-term European tourism policy should take into account the priorities of EU and Member States' socio-economic policy, such as maintaining a high rate of economic growth, creating new jobs, stimulating structural change and the latest activities aimed at establishing an information society, facilitating development and meeting the basic everyday needs of residents in all the regions of Europe;
6. Regrets the lack of a specific legal basis in the Treaties, but welcomes the fact that the Constitution marks genuine progress by providing that the European Union may take action in this sector by complementing the action of the Member States;
7. Stresses that the Commission can aid the tourism sector to confront these challenges by improving the coordination of its actions supporting tourism with other related Community policies (regional development, Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, consumers, culture, internal market, rural and agricultural development, environment, transport, employment, education and training, R&D);

8. Encourages the Commission to pursue its measures in support of small and medium-sized enterprises (in particular those starting up new tourist activities, offering new tourist products or entering into activities in new and tourist sectors), in the awareness that these constitute the overwhelming majority in this sector; encourages it also to take new measures to help promote the industry, principally on behalf of enterprises which have a combination of numerous special features (e.g. they operate in remote areas which could still be tourist destinations and promote products of designated origin or apply best practices for the industry); calls on the Commission to define consumers' rights in the field of tourism and to strengthen consumer protection;
9. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote new destinations, such as isolated regions with a high tourist potential (particularly the most remote regions) for which tourism is the main industry and represents a crucial factor in their economic, social and regional development, particularly by carrying out promotion and consumer awareness campaigns;
10. Points out that sustainable forms of tourism, such as hiking, cycling, horse-riding and canoeing, have seen a clear growth in business even though they are located away from popular tourist areas; sees this as an indication that, if regions' cultural and natural features are linked to environmentally sensitive tourist development, new economic potential can be opened up for less-favoured regions as well;
11. Calls on the Commission to pay appropriate attention to the insufficient structures of sustainable transport between the old and new Member States which puts obstacles in the way of the development of sustainable tourism, particularly along the old border areas, often facing general structural difficulties, and for which sustainable tourism represents a potential for self-contained development, notwithstanding its political value for the enlarged Europe;
12. Calls on professionals in the tourist industry to take note of the changing and multi-cultural nature of their customer base, to adapt the services they offer in order to set themselves apart from the competition, to make better use of the diversity of supply in tourism at European level and the links between tourism and high-quality regional products (such as farm produce, crafts, etc.), to enhance the quality of their services and to invest in quality jobs and worker qualification in the industry (professional training, better working conditions, the promotion of stable contractual links, following up complaints, familiarity with customers, etc.);
13. Considers that the Commission, in collaboration with the Member States, should encourage new forms of tourism making it possible to offset the seasonal effect, such as rural tourism, cultural tourism, activity and specialist tourism, health tourism, or tourism aimed at young people, the disabled or pensioners, together with thematic tourism, and should also take account of the specific needs of these categories of tourists by providing appropriate equipment and facilities;
14. Considers it particularly important, in accordance with the conclusions of the recent Council of Competition Ministers (Luxembourg 18 April 2005) that the European institutions, the Member States and the regions should work together to increase the exchange of information between the competent bodies and other organisations involved

with tourism and to facilitate the creation of a network at local, regional, inter-state and international level for the exchange of information concerning initiatives and measures to promote the sustainability of tourism;

15. Calls on the Commission, in collaboration with the Member States, to pursue its efforts in the collection of data with a view to obtaining reliable, harmonised statistics.

PROCEDURE

Title	New prospects and new challenges for sustainable European tourism
Procedure number	2004/2229(INI)
Committee responsible	TRAN
Committee asked for its opinion Date announced in plenary	REGI 18.11.2004
Enhanced cooperation	
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Margie Sudre 14.3.2005
Discussed in committee	21.4.2005
Date suggestions adopted	24.5.2005
Result of final vote	for: 34 against: 8 abstentions: 0
Members present for the final vote	Alfonso Andria, Stavros Arnaoutakis, Elspeth Attwooll, Jean Marie Beaupuy, Rolf Berend, Graham Booth, Bernadette Bourzai, Bairbre de Brún, Gerardo Galeote Quecedo, Iratxe García Pérez, Eugenijus Gentvilas, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Ambroise Guellec, Pedro Guerreiro, Gábor Harangozó, Marian Harkin, Konstantinos Hatzidakis, Jim Higgins, Alain Hutchinson, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Gisela Kallenbach, Tunne Kelam, Constanze Angela Krehl, Sérgio Marques, Yiannakis Matsis, Miroslav Mikolášik, Francesco Musotto, Lambert van Nistelrooij, István Pálfi, Markus Pieper, Francisca Pleguezuelos Aguilar, Elisabeth Schroedter, Alyn Smith, Grażyna Staniszevska, Catherine Stihler, Margie Sudre, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, Oldřich Vlasák, Vladimír Železný
Substitutes present for the final vote	Inés Ayala Sender, Brigitte Douay, Emanuel Jardim Fernandes
Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	