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DRAFT REPORT

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

Committee on Transport and Tourism

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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), and in particular Article 195 thereof,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 June 2020 on transport and tourism in 2020 and beyond¹,
- having regard to the adoption of the communication entitled ‘Tourism and transport in 2020 and beyond’ (COM(2020)0550) and the Tourism and Transport Package, on 13 May 2020;
- having regard to its resolution of 24 October 2019 on the negative impact of the bankruptcy of Thomas Cook on EU tourism²;
- 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 its resolution of 14 November 2018 on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 – Parliament’s position with a view to an agreement³,
- having regard to the adoption of the communication of 24 October 2017 entitled ‘A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU’s outermost regions’ (COM(2017)0623),
- having regard to its resolution of 29 October 2015 on new challenges and concepts for the promotion of tourism in Europe (2014/2241(INI))⁴,
- having regard to the Commission communication 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 Europe⁵,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘A European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism’ (COM(2014)0086),
- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2011 on mobility and inclusion of people

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0169.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0047.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0449.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0391.

⁵ OJ C 56 E, 26.2.2013, p. 41.

- with disabilities and the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020⁶,
- having regard to the European Commission report of 11 June 2020 on the EU Blue Economy,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 18 September 2020 entitled ‘Towards more sustainable tourism for EU cities and regions’,
 - having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on tourism and transport in 2020 and beyond,
 - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Culture and Education, and of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A9-0000/2020),
- A. whereas tourism is a cross-cutting economic activity with a wide-ranging impact on regions’ economic growth, employment and social and sustainable development;
- B. whereas the tourism industry employs 22.6 million people, which accounts for 11.2% of total EU employment, and which, in 2019, accounted for 9.5% of EU GDP;
- C. whereas the tourism value chain is complex and made up of the four key vectors of transport, accommodation, experience and intermediation, and whereas the success of the industry lies in the degree of influence between them;
- D. whereas, in 2018, 51.7% of EU tourist accommodation establishments were in coastal areas;
- 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;
- F. whereas Article 195 of the TFEU provides that the Union should coordinate and complement the action of the Member States in tourism;
- G. whereas there is a lack of coordination in the Union with regard to travel, with differing national and regional measures;
- H. whereas the sector is committed to accelerating and implementing measures and actions that make it more sustainable and bring it closer to achieving objectives on ecological footprint reduction;

Rebuild: COVID-19 impact response plans

1. Asks the Member States to apply, without delay, common criteria for travel, in particular tracking forms, which make tracking platforms interoperable, and criteria at transport hubs, and for the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control to publish, in a

⁶ OJ C 131 E, 8.5.2013, p. 9.

timely manner, the map of Union countries and regions, with a view to offering travellers a coordinated and efficient response;

2. Calls on the Member States to apply testing on departure, in order to avoid quarantine periods;
3. Welcomes the ‘Re-open EU’ portal and urges the Member States to send information on the application or lifting of future restrictions on free movement to the Commission on a weekly basis;
4. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to introduce a common colour code and common criteria for third countries for non-essential travel, through mutual recognition of protective measures against COVID-19, especially in the aviation and cruise sectors;
5. Urges the Commission to introduce the EU hygiene certification seal as a European health security mark;
6. Asks the Commission for recommendations for procedures in the post-vaccine period and to explore the need for a digital health passport in the Union;
7. Deplores the fact that Next Generation EU does not include direct financing to the tourism industry and calls on the Member States to include the industry in their recovery plans and in the REACT-EU initiative;
8. Asks the Commission to implement the ‘crisis-management mechanism for tourism’ preparatory action with a view to being ready to cope with future crises;

Refocus: Governance policy within the Union framework

9. Calls on the Commission to establish a new model of governance between institutions, strengthening the organisational, financial and human resources structure of the Tourism, Textiles and Creative Industries Unit within DG GROW, with a view to taking an integrated and efficient approach to tourism;
10. Deplores the fact that the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 does not include a dedicated line for sustainable tourism, which would represent a commitment to implementing the European tourism policy approved by the European Parliament;
11. Calls on the Commission to create a European mechanism to monitor the provision of support to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, focusing on liquidity, lending and transparency;
12. Calls on the Commission to regularly inform Parliament about progress made with the development of pilot projects and preparatory actions, to keep the parliamentary committee responsible involved in the process;
13. Commends the Commission for organising the 2020 Tourism Convention and calls on it to present an action plan later this year and develop, in a timely manner, a new strategy for tourism, to replace the 2010 strategy;

14. Calls on the Commission to include in the funding support guide a link to a national contact point that facilitates access to information for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises;
15. Calls on the Commission to set up a European Agency for Tourism;

Strengthen: Transition to sustainable, responsible and smart tourism

16. Notes that sustainable tourism should take into account current and future economic, social and environmental impact, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and local communities⁷;
17. Calls on the Commission to bring the European Tourism Indicators System into operation, with a permanent governance structure, and to introduce it in destinations, with static indicators and real-time data in order to manage and evaluate them, in partnership with regions;
18. 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 EMAS for tourism, and to establish mechanisms to support those certification schemes;
19. Commends the Commission for setting up the Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG)⁸ and calls on it to resume its work and revise the 2012 European Charter for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism, as a means to encourage participation and the adoption of good practices;
20. Recalls that the lack of metric data on the effects of tourism on sustainability impedes decision-making by public and private actors, and asks Eurostat to establish a frame of reference for the collection of data relating to sustainability, overtourism and undertourism criteria, and calls for the updating of Regulation (EU) No 692/2011;
21. Criticises the fact that the Commission has not included tourism in the European Data Strategy, and calls on it to incorporate tourism in the governance framework for common data spaces, enabling tourism businesses to fully commit to innovation and digitalisation;
22. Notes that tourism is closely linked to mobility and that the Member States must, with EU financial support, invest in the transition to cleaner fuels, and in platforms that guarantee the interoperability and intermodality of ticketing systems;
23. Calls on the Commission to present the results of the Smart Tourism Destinations pilot project and outline how it intends to implement the scheme;
24. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to make the European Capital of Smart Tourism a permanent project with broader and fairer criteria;
25. 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

⁷ UNWTO and UNEP (2005) Making Tourism More Sustainable – A Guide for Policy Makers

⁸ Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG)

to channel financing to infrastructure (ports and marinas), logistical and operational support, and the use of renewable energy;

Rethink: Planning the future of the tourism industry

26. Urges the Commission to present before the end of 2020, an analysis by country of the requests received concerning state aid for the tourism industry and of the Union financing used to tackle the effects of COVID-19, including the applicability of the SURE programme;
27. Calls on the Commission, together with the European Investment Bank, to establish dedicated support for tourism decarbonisation and digitalisation projects, and conditions for access by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to InvestEU, so that new skills can be acquired and more jobs created;
28. Calls on the Commission, together with the Member States, to support, together with existing best practices, the transition to seamless intermodality in transport;
29. 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;
30. Believes that the promotion of the Europe brand in third countries 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;
31. Calls on the Commission to review the Travel Package Directive and the Air Passenger Rights Regulation to take account of the effects of the recent crisis and prevent future legal uncertainty;
32. Calls on the Commission to create literacy programmes for senior executives in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, giving them the skills to optimise their wealth-creating potential;
33. Calls on the Member States to make efforts to implement the European disability card scheme and lay down in law standards that make tourism accessible to all;
34. Calls on the Commission to consider the outermost regions in the formulation and impact of tourism legislation;
35. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

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.