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Summary Tourism services have traditionally been provided by businesses such as hotels, taxis or tour operators. Recently, a growing number of individuals are proposing to share temporarily with tourists what they own (for example their house or car) or what they do (for example meals or excursions). This type of sharing is referred to as the 'sharing economy'. It is not limited to tourism and can be found in many areas of social and economic activity, although tourism has been one of the sectors most impacted. Sharing goods and services between individuals is nothing new in itself. However, the development of the internet and, as a consequence, the creation of online platforms have made sharing easier than ever. In the past decade, many companies managing such platforms have emerged on the market. A well-known example is a platform on which people can book accommodation (Airbnb). The sharing economy has had a positive impact on tourism as well as a negative one. Its advocates think that it provides easy access to a wide range of services that are often of higher quality and more affordable than those provided by traditional business counterparts. Critics, on the other hand, claim that the sharing economy provides unfair competition, reduces job security, avoids taxes and poses a threat to safety, health and disability compliance standards. The response to the sharing economy remains fragmented in the EU. Some activities or aspects have been regulated at national, regional or local level. In June 2016, the European Commission published a communication on a European agenda for the collaborative economy, to offer some clarification on relevant EU rules and provide public authorities with policy guidance. The European Parliament and advisory committees have also touched upon the issue in various resolutions and opinions. This is an updated edition of a briefing from September 2015.

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