

## PRESS RELEASE

### The European Commission entrusts ISTO and its partners with the implementation of the Web platform Calypso

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The International Social Tourism Organisation (ISTO) and its partners have been chosen by the European Commission to promote social tourism in Europe through the development of a Web platform matching supply with demand.

This decision follows a call for proposals launched last August by the Commission in the framework of the third year of Calypso preparatory action. For the president of ISTO, Jean-Marc Mignon, the Commission thereby shows a genuine mark of confidence in ISTO and its partners. They now have the responsibility to take up this significant challenge for the benefit of European citizens.

This 1,014,525€ project with 75% funding from the European Commission mainly aims at facilitating trans-national tourism exchanges by matching supply with demand. It will therefore make it easier for Calypso's target society groups – youths, families facing difficulties, seniors and people with disabilities – to go on holiday particularly during the low season.

Among the additional objectives pursued by the platform, it is relevant to mention that it will also serve as a support to ensure the continuation of on-going pilot projects in the framework of Calypso. It shall take into accounts the principles of sustainability and accessibility that are applied to tourism centres and will implement a dynamic presentation tool of school holiday calendars in European countries for the use of operators.

The consortium that will be in charge of this 15-month project is led by ISTO and includes the following partners: *Joie et Vacances – FLOREAL CLUB* (Belgium), *Union nationale des associations de tourisme – UNAT* (the French national union of tourism associations, France), the European network for accessible tourism – ENAT, *Lega Nazionale delle Cooperative e Mutue – LEGACOOOP* (the Italian national cooperative federation, Italy), *Consorzio Siena Hotels Promotion* affiliated with Federcultura Turismo Sport – CONFCOOPERATIVE (Italy), and Sociedad estatal para la gestión de la innovación y las tecnologías turísticas – SEGITTUR (Spanish state society dedicated to the management of innovation and tourist technologies, Spain).

In a longer-term perspective, the members of the consortium will also work on a development plan aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the platform beyond the official duration of the project which is set to begin on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012. It also aims at bringing together, within a larger structure, all public or private organisations interested in this initiative. ISTO and its partners are indeed hoping that this future tool can contribute to the further development of social tourism in the EU as a continuation of Calypso.

ISTO is an international non-profit association founded in 1963 which mission is to promote access to leisure, holidays and tourism for all. It brings together some 170 organisations including associations, cooperatives, trade unions, educational institutions, private operators, as well as public authorities competent in the field of tourism in more than 35 countries.

#### Useful links

European Commission: [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/calypso/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/calypso/index_en.htm)

ISTO: [www.oits-isto.org](http://www.oits-isto.org)

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