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REPORT

on a renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger partnership for European
Tourism
(2006/2129(INI))

Committee on Transport and Tourism

Rapporteur: Paolo Costa

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on a renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism (2006/2129(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Communication from the Commission of 17 March 2006 entitled ‘A renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism’ (COM(2006)0134),
 - having regard to its resolution of 8 September 2005 on new prospects and new challenges for sustainable European tourism¹,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism and the opinions of the Committee on Culture and Education and the Committee on Regional Development (A6-0399/2007),
- A. whereas tourism is mentioned once in the EC Treaty as an activity that can be subject to "measures" (Article 3 of the Treaty establishing the European Community), but is not understood to fall within the EU's competence or to be EU policy area;
- B. whereas the EC has a competence, however, to take measures to ensure the efficient functioning of the internal market, including tourism services (Article 95 of the Treaty establishing the European Community), the consumer protection approach being a particularly relevant approach in this context;
- C. whereas the tourism sector is at the crossroads of numerous EU policies that have a substantial impact on its efficiency and its capacity to contribute to growth, employment and social and territorial cohesion,
- D. whereas, notwithstanding the fact that Parliament, in its abovementioned resolution, spelled out the guiding principles for a European sustainable tourism policy, some individual aspects of that policy should be stressed to enable them to be translated into reality more speedily;
- E. whereas the Tourism Sustainability Group has recently published a report laying down guidelines that will serve as a basis for the Commission when it draws up the future European tourism sustainability agenda (formerly Agenda 21);
- F. whereas it has not been possible to develop a consistent cross-policy approach to tourism at EU level, resulting in drawbacks and the insufficient development of this sector as well as increasing the risk of Europe losing its market share in this sector;

¹ OJ C 193 E, 17.8.2006, p. 325.

- G. whereas the environmental and social dimension of tourism needs to be strongly emphasised in the interest of sustainability;
- H. whereas the situation in certain popular European tourist destinations is deteriorating and riotous and violent incidents occur in these destinations, which render them less attractive;
- I. whereas steps have been taken by the Member States in the Brussels European Council of 21 and 22 June 2007 to include, in particular, tourism in the next revision of the EC Treaty; insists on the importance of having a new legal basis in primary law in order to address issues affecting this sector throughout Europe;
- J. whereas the important role which tourism can play in promoting the social inclusion and integration of the most disadvantaged population groups should be stressed;

Tourism and EU Visa policy

1. Stresses the importance to Europe of tourism, including tourism from third countries;
2. Highlights in particular the need to simplify visa application procedures on a reciprocal basis and to reduce the costs of tourist visas for entry into any Member State;
3. Highlights the possibility for concerned Member States to use Regulation (EC) No 1931/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 laying down rules on local border traffic at the external land borders of the Member States and amending the provisions of the Schengen Convention¹ as a new tool for facilitating tourism from bordering third countries;
4. Calls on the Member states that are party to the Schengen agreement to establish common consular desks for the grant of visas to non-EU applicants, to ensure that these desks have the same working methods and apply the same visa criteria and to improve the reception given to visa applicants through, for example, the management of appointments, the way in which interviews are carried out and the time limit for processing applications, since this would lead to significant budgetary savings for the Member States;
5. Stresses the need to review, in the Community Code on Visas, the number and type of documents that are requested from visa applicants;
6. Strongly recommends that there should be a presumption in all EU visa policies in favour of issuing multiple-entry visas;
7. Points out that longer-term visas of at least one year's validity are needed by tour operators and transport companies so that they can hire the right personnel to meet the needs of their clients; insists on the need to maintain and enhance the delivery of visas for groups;

¹ OJ L 405, 30.12.2006, p. 1.

8. Calls on the Schengen Member States to simplify Schengen visa application procedures for tourists who have already been issued with visas for non-Schengen EU countries or have already arrived in these countries, and calls on the non-Schengen EU countries to do the same for holders of Schengen visas;
9. Recognises, however, that the simplification and harmonisation of visa application procedures and the general facilitation of access to Europe for tourists from third countries have to be compatible with the security rules required in order to combat illegal immigration, terrorism, and organised crime, especially cross-border crime;

Statistics

10. Recalls that there is an absolute need for adequate, trustworthy, homogeneous and up-to-date information on tourism so that key strategic and management decisions can be taken in the public and private sector, and a need to develop adequate accompanying measures and orientations at EU level, in order to ensure that Europe remains the first destination in international terms and becomes competitive once again;
11. Calls for a review of Council Directive 95/57/EC of 23 November 1995 on the collection of statistical information in the field of tourism¹ so as to ensure better harmonisation of data collection by Member States, in relation to both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the supply of data.
12. Welcomes the initiative to modernise the framework through a new Regulation to be implemented uniformly across the EU; points out that this reform should be carried out swiftly;
13. Calls on the Commission to seek possibilities for implementing in the Member States Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSAs) since such measurements allow tourism to be accurately compared with other economic sectors and can contribute to a better understanding of the true size and value of the tourism industry;
14. Emphasises the need to increase awareness of the importance of tourism to economies and regional development; calls on the Member States to fully adopt TSAs and to update statistics on a yearly basis so as to ensure that timely and adequate data are available to support the complete and sound integration of tourism into economic and employment policies;
15. Urges the Commission to examine the need to collect statistical information and quality data in order to allow for an assessment of the impact of tourism on the economy, the environment and the quality of life of the inhabitants of popular tourist destinations;
16. Calls on the Commission to publish a report on the various national schemes in place for the protection of special natural and historic sites by means of specific town planning and building regulations and, where appropriate, to encourage best practice

¹ OJ L 291, 6.12.1995, p. 32.

in these areas through the publication of guidelines;

17. Calls on the Commission to draw up a harmonised scoreboard describing the condition of natural and historic sites, and in particular the impact of tourists on these sites, with a view to regulating the number of visits and ensuring that they are properly conserved and passed on to future generations;

Harmonisation of quality standards for tourist accommodation in Europe

18. Notes the multiplicity of classification schemes in the Member States and considers that this situation, from the point of view of the consumer, has a negative impact on the industry's reliability and on transparency;
19. Notes that consumers regard the system of classification as an important instrument for choosing a hotel or other accommodation: it is therefore important that accurate information on the meaning of the classification in the different countries be easily available to consumers and that it take their needs into close consideration;
20. Considers it advisable and possible to establish a common ground and common criteria for customers in order that they be able to make a choice, on the basis of clear and verifiable classification criteria, when they decide to travel abroad,;
21. Notes, in this respect, that, given the great number of criteria in certain national and regional systems, the simplification of current standards would achieve the aim of clarifying and facilitating information for the consumer and would also ensure better levels of transparency with regard to tourist accommodation;
22. Calls on the European hospitality industry to:
 - continue its benchmarking of the key aspects of the various classification systems and pursue its efforts to bring these systems closer to one another, without disruption to existing systems, which would be to the detriment of consumers and of industry;
 - pursue its efforts to facilitate the understanding of the meaning of “stars” in the different Member States;
 - inform regularly the Community institutions of progress made;
23. Calls on local, regional and national authorities, whenever making a contribution to systems of classification, to support, within the framework of proper public/private partnerships, the current work of the European hospitality industry in relation to both the transparency and approximation, via benchmarking, of the existing classification systems;
24. Is aware that a common classification system at EU level would be very difficult to achieve given the variety of hotel types and tourist accommodation due to local requirements, cultures and sensitivities, and in view of the very different structures of current classification plans;
25. Considers, however, that a set of guidelines based on common and uniform criteria for the entire EU could take into account the interests of the consumer, while respecting

the environment and local characteristics;

26. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with European hotel and catering organisations, such as HOTREC (Hotels, Restaurants and Cafés in Europe), and with the European consumer protection organisations, to establish a methodology for creating such minimum standards on safety and quality of accommodation services; stresses that such a methodology could include the introduction of an EC mark for accommodation that would encompass pan-European common criteria providing consumers with an assurance as to the minimum level of quality to be expected whatever EU country is visited;

Quality management schemes

27. Calls on the European hospitality industry to pursue its work in relation to the setting up of a European “umbrella” for quality management schemes and to inform regularly the Community institutions of progress made;
28. Encourages stakeholders from the European hospitality industry to further develop European standards with the aim of, inter alia, facilitating the transmission of information to the recipients and improving the quality of service provision; and calls on the Commission and the Member States to support their efforts where necessary;
29. Calls on local, regional and national authorities, whenever involved in quality schemes, to support, within the framework of proper public/private partnerships, the current work of the European hospitality industry in relation to a European “umbrella” for quality management schemes;
30. Welcomes the fact that environmental protection labels are on the increase, but considers that the multiplication of labels at local level can cause confusion for tourists and affect transparency, prompting the need for better information for tourists and a consolidation of current labels for better international recognition;
31. Notes with satisfaction that labels relating to environmental protection are increasing in number;
32. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with HOTREC as the European catering trade association, to promote labelling processes regarding tourist accommodation undertaken in the different Member States and to promote quality models that have proved effective elsewhere (for example the Qualmark in New Zealand) in order to improve visibility;
33. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and stakeholders to contribute to the enhancement of a sustainable labelling process based on environmental and social criteria by showcasing best practice, transfer of best practice and encouraging initiatives by industry leaders;
34. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the use of eco-labels for tourist facilities, sites and services;

Consumer protection

35. Is aware of the fact that more and more tourists are booking their travel (transport, accommodation, etc.) directly using electronic means and avoiding intermediates- tour operators and travel agents- whose market share is diminishing (from 98% in 1997 to 60% in 2007) but who are still subject to legal regimes, such as Council Directive 90/314/EEC of 13 June 1990 on package travel, package holidays and package tours¹; stresses that this anomaly needs to be rectified by incorporating into Directive 90/314/EEC all websites that offer more than one service for sale, such as those offered by low-fare airlines and other actors in this market;
36. To this end Parliament welcomes the recent consultation paper of the Commission of 26 July 2007 on the review of Directive 90/314/EEC which addresses the issues relating to the different regulatory regimes applicable to traditional tour operators and providers of dynamic packages over the Internet;
37. Stresses the increasing role of new technology in the tourist industry, particularly for the marketing of tourist products as well as for the enhancement of cultural goods and events;
38. Considers that this fast development of the use of IT technologies for tourist services requires a consumers and personal data protection framework for electronic bookings, which might be based on a prior analysis of this market by the Commission; believes that such a framework should ensure that online consumer rights and personal data are protected and that consumers receive information that is true, not deceptive, up-to-date and unambiguous; therefore recommends, in the interests of consumer protection, the certification of sites that provide information and offer tourist services (reservation and payment) of an electronic nature;
39. Stresses the positive role played in this area by organisations working in the field of social tourism, whose activities should be encouraged and supported;
40. Welcomes the Commission proposal of 7 June 2007 for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of consumers in respect of certain aspects of timeshare, long-term holiday products, resale and exchange (COM(2007)0303), aimed at extending the scope of the existing regulatory framework so as to include new long-term holiday products that have emerged on the market over the last years and certain transactions, such as resale and exchange, related to timeshare; considers that the proposal will enhance consumer protection in the tourism sector and create a level playing field protecting the honest timeshare industry from unfair competition;
41. Regrets the absence of a specific legal instrument covering the safety of services, which is crucial in the tourism sector and calls on the Commission and on the Member States to evaluate the possibility of tackling this issue in order to address the concerns expressed by several Members of Parliament.

¹ OJ L 158, 23.6.1990, p. 59.

42. Calls on the Commission to conduct a European promotional campaign on road safety, drawing attention to new common control measures, in order to inform tourists of the various regulations that apply in Member States other than their own country of residence;
43. Calls on the Commission to simplify procedures for hazard analysis critical control points (HACCP) and to take account of the needs of small businesses, with particular regard to micro-businesses;

Health tourism

44. Stresses the importance of using all available Community programmes, including the Second Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health, in order to promote health-related tourism;
45. Stresses that businesses in the insurance sector must play a greater role in supporting health-related tourism; in addition, emphasises that businesses in the insurance sector should be given support in relation to finding solutions for trans-boundary cooperation to finance health-related tourism.
46. Considers, in view of the decline in health tourism, that there is a need for the adoption of a specific Community directive to define the recognition and use of hydro-thermal resorts and, more generally, the role of health tourism and thermal cures in connection with tourist facilities in the various Member States – apart from the health, social security and insurance aspects – by also making available sufficient financial resources to enable a strategically important sector of the Member States' economy to embark on a suitable development process, so as to significantly increase new direct and indirect employment;

Accessible tourism

47. Welcomes initiatives to coordinate at European level the information on accessible tourism that would allow tourists with reduced mobility and their families to find information about the accessibility of tourist destinations; calls on all Member States, tourism providers and national and local tourist organisations to join and/or to support this kind of initiative;
48. At the same time, calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider the feasibility of drawing up a charter of the rights and obligations of European tourists, in view of the riotous and violent incidents caused by European tourists in European tourist destinations, and also a European code of conduct for tourist businesses;
49. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to initialise an "Access for all" EC label that would guarantee core accessibility facilities for tourists with reduced mobility and would cover offers such as accommodation, restaurants, leisure and natural sites, auditoriums, monuments, museums, etc.;
50. Stresses, furthermore, the need to protect, conserve and restore the European cultural heritage; and calls for more stringent management of such sites and of the conditions

under which they are visited, and for greater efforts to improve access for people with disabilities, growing numbers of whom now travel for leisure purposes;

51. Calls on the Commission to draft a Communication with an action plan on the enhancement of such a label based on the work it has already carried out , on experiences and best practices at national and local level and taking stock of what has been achieved at EU level in the transport field;
52. Notes that the accessibility of tourist destinations is a matter that also has to do with the transport services provided or available; calls, therefore, on the Commission, for the purposes of the new European tourism policy and of developing European transport policy, to take due account of the accessibility handicap affecting regions with specific natural or geographical characteristics, such as the outermost regions, island and mountain regions, and the sparsely populated northernmost regions;

Socially, economically and environmentally sustainable tourism

53. Points to the need for the new tourism policy to make European tourism sustainable in economic, social, territorial, environmental, and cultural terms; accordingly endorses the specific steps to be taken by the Commission to promote the economic and social sustainability of European tourism; and applauds the Commission for taking the initiative of drawing up an Agenda 21 for European tourism; further looks forward to the submission of the proposal in question, which is due to occur this year;
54. Welcomes the fact that the Commission, in its abovementioned communication, expressly calls for the promotion of sustainability in tourism, and stresses that social, economic and environmental sustainability is a fundamental prerequisite for the development and maintenance of any tourist activity;
55. Insists on the need to support and promote more sustainable and socially responsible practices in the tourist industry and to evaluate their effectiveness, so that the industry receives greater prominence in the renewed Lisbon Strategy;
56. Welcomes the Commission's initiative in proposing a European Agenda 21 for Tourism as a basis for tourism policy; calls on the Commission to provide the Member States with a guide making it possible to improve political coordination in the development of tourism at national, regional and local levels and enhance the sustainability of tourist activities;
57. Emphasises that threats to the environment, especially carbon dioxide emissions, require the tourism industry to be involved in the education of tourists regarding environmental issues when drawing up environmental policy;
58. Considers that tourism is partly responsible for the harm caused to the environment, which is related to the increasing amount of journeys made, representatives in the field of tourism should involve themselves in activities which concern issues pertaining to environmental protection and their planning;

Passenger rights

59. Considers that a substantial set of rules exists at EU level for passenger rights in the field of air transport which promote accessibility and offer fair compensation in the event of a delay and cancellation but also in the event of an accident;
60. Stresses the point that Parliament is currently endeavouring to ensure that substantial supplementary provisions are drawn up in order to consolidate such rights for rail and ship passengers so as to guarantee a harmonised scheme at EU level;
61. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the provision of information to passengers, and, in particular, the proper implementation of those passenger rights, and particularly of air passenger rights, and to ensure that easily accessible arbitration mechanisms are provided for by the Member States in situations where a defaulting operator fails to pay damages;
62. Calls on the Commission to reflect on an approach through which the EU could offer protection to passengers that have been left behind by a defaulting charter operator, intermediates or scheduled carriers as a result of bankruptcy or intentional abuse; suggests that an EU-wide blacklist of such operators be established, on the basis of criteria clearly defined by the Commission, following consultations with transport and/or tourism operators and consumer protection organisations;

Promotion of European tourist destinations

63. Welcomes the fact that the European Tourist Destinations Portal has been set up with the aid of Commission funding; calls on the Commission to continue to help promote Europe as a tourist destination or a collection of attractive tourist destinations, for instance by introducing and publicising a 'Europe' label and organising arrangements and channels for gathering information on European tourist destinations and subsequently circulating it to those working in the tourism industry outside Europe;
64. Welcomes the implementation of a selection process for a yearly 'European destination of excellence', as proposed in its abovementioned resolution of 8 September 2005; considers that those initiatives are valuable in that they make more visible the variety and wealth of European destinations; stresses the point that, wherever possible, the EU should promote those less known destinations, particularly in the new Member States;
65. Advocates, in view of the need to protect the quality of tourism in popular European tourist destinations, that this programme be used to develop responsible and sustainable tourism in all tourist regions of the EU;
66. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, given that cross-border infrastructure is essential for the European tourism sector, to improve such infrastructures, including recreational (inland) waterways;
67. Calls upon the Commission to promote more vigorously Europe's transport and industrial heritage;

68. Encourages, therefore, initiatives seeking to enhance the European cultural heritage, such as the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes, and urges that their profile be raised; proposes, to that end, that support be given for the creation of a European Heritage label aimed at highlighting the European dimension of the EU's sites and monuments;
69. Stresses the urgency of protecting traditional culture, and in particular endangered folk arts, crafts, trades and knowledge, which are essential for the preservation of national identity and the attractiveness of rural areas for tourists;
70. Calls on the Commission to promote European destinations in those countries whose peak seasons coincide with the European low seasons and to look into the possibility of endorsing agreements, such as Memorandums of Understanding, with these third countries in order to develop tourist fluxes with an optimised seasonal spread;
71. Calls on the Commission to highlight the cultural dimension of European tourism by promoting European UNESCO world heritage sites as testimonies of European culture.
72. Urges the Commission to promote the cross-border memorial cycle route along the former Iron Curtain as an example of "gentle mobility" in tourism and as a symbol for the reunification of Europe;

Tourism development

73. Urges the Commission, the Member States, the regions, local authorities, and the tourism industry to coordinate the policies with a direct or indirect impact on tourism, cooperate more closely among themselves, and make better use of the European financial instruments available in the period from 2007 to 2013 with a view to developing European tourism, focusing on the competitiveness of the tourism industry and tourist destinations, the development of tourism enterprises, services, and facilities, job creation, mobility, and vocational training in the tourism sector, and economic diversification and the development of Europe's regions, in particular the less-favoured regions;
74. Calls on the Commission to draw up a report in order to take into account the impact that actions and proposals in the area of Community policies are likely to have on the tourist industry;
75. Invites all stakeholders to promote tourist destinations in accession countries but insists on the need to link any EU funding related to tourism to the promotion of high quality standards in the provision of tourist services;
76. Is aware of the benefit of coach holidays for tourists with lower incomes and for the development of tourism in regions which are not serviced by regional airports or railways; draws attention to the special situation of the small and medium-sized coach companies vis-à-vis the Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 on the harmonisation of certain social legislation

relating to road transport¹, particularly for roundtrips; calls on the Commission to address this particular issue by examining possibilities of postponing the rest period after roundtrips (not exceeding 12 days);

77. Stresses that SMEs should have greater involvement in tourism-related entrepreneurship and that possibilities for simplifying procedures to obtain financial support should be found; further stresses that EU sponsored training and best practice adoption courses should be introduced in regions, especially in countries that joined the EU after 2004;
78. Suggests that the Commission study the possibility of a “Youth Transport Pass” for young Europeans receiving Erasmus, Leonardo or Comenius grants or carrying out voluntary civilian service in the EU, so as to make it easier for them to travel and familiarise themselves with their host country;
79. Stresses that, on the basis that the Leonardo da Vinci programme is one of a kind in the tourism sector of numerous countries, these opportunities should be developed and promoted; emphasises that this would lead to a vast improvement in the educational programme; highlights that, in addition to the implementation of the programme, research into results achieved should be carried out ;

Miscellaneous

80. Draws attention once more, given the scale of forthcoming change in the demographic structure of the EU, to the need to implement a European tourist programme for retired people out of season, which would improve the quality of life of senior citizens in the EU, create employment and generate greater demand and growth in the European economy; believes that this could be called the Ulysses Programme;
81. Calls on the Commission to request that an overall impact assessment be carried out in relation to the idea of staggering European holidays in terms of dates and on a regional basis;
82. Stresses the need for Community assistance for Member States whose tourist sector has been affected by natural disasters;
83. Stresses the importance of multilingualism in tourism policy and recommends that information be provided, in as many Member State languages as possible, on sites which can be visited.

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84. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

¹ OJ L 102, 11.4.2006, p. 1.

29.3.2007

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION

for the Committee on Transport and Tourism

on a renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger Partnership for European Tourism
(2006/2129 (INI))

Draftswoman: Marie-Hélène Descamps

SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Recalls that tourism plays a vital role in all Member States and that it contributes greatly to economic growth and job creation, particularly for young people;
2. Stresses that, in order to be sustainable, tourism must improve the quality of life of the local populace, protect the environment and support the local economy (local products, cultural heritage of the region, etc.);
3. Notes, moreover, that tourism promotes mobility, European integration, the dialogue between peoples and knowledge of each other's cultures, and thus helps in the development of a sense of European citizenship, notably among the young;
4. Considers it necessary to promote the European Union as a preferred destination in order to strengthen the activities and competitiveness of its tourism sector on a global level;
5. Therefore calls on the Member States and on local and regional authorities to render themselves more attractive by developing cultural tourism and to take account of the emergence of new forms of tourism – such as rural tourism, agritourism, wine- and gastronomy-related tourism, spiritual and historical tourism, recreational tourism and foreign-language learning holidays – and to adapt to the needs of new types of clientele whilst stressing the importance of encouraging European tourism throughout the year;
6. Stresses the need for Community assistance for Member States whose tourist sector has been affected by natural disaster;
7. Welcomes all initiatives seeking to bring together the peoples of Europe, such as

European social, rural and cultural tourist networks, and accordingly seeks greater media coverage for such initiatives;

8. Thus encourages initiatives aiming to harness Europe's cultural heritage, such as the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes, and to raise their profile; proposes, to this end, supporting the creation of a European Cultural Heritage label to highlight the European dimension of sites and monuments in the European Union;
9. Recognises the importance to tourism of Community programmes such as the European Capital of Culture, as well as of all kinds of cultural events such as music, theatre and folklore festivals which help strengthen the identity of peoples;
10. Proposes that a common list be drawn up of monuments and sites having been awarded the European cultural heritage label, available for consultation through all available media;
11. Stresses the urgent need to conserve traditional culture, in particular popular and artistic crafts, trades and skills which are in the process of disappearing and are essential in order to conserve national identity and the attraction of rural areas for tourists;
12. Insists, moreover, on the need to protect, preserve and restore European cultural heritage assets and calls for more rigorous management of cultural sites and their visiting arrangements, as well as for greater efforts to improve access for disabled people, an increasing number of whom are travelling for tourist purposes;
13. Considers it necessary to ensure the conservation of cultural heritage and the protection of its natural location, setting and environment;
14. Furthermore, calls on the Member States and on local and regional authorities to focus on sustainable, high-quality tourism;
15. To this end, encourages the exchange and dissemination of good practice regarding vocational training and recommends a standardised hotel classification system;
16. Stresses the growing role of new technologies in the tourism sector, notably in the marketing of tourism-related products and in making the most of cultural assets and events in particular;
17. In this connection, welcomes the creation by the Commission of the 'visiteurope.com' portal, which will help to promote European tourist destinations and encourage Member States to inventory their cultural heritage and make that information available online;
18. Considers that, in order to encourage the mobility of European citizens, it is necessary to facilitate communications, and accordingly welcomes the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council seeking a reduction in international roaming charges within the Community;
19. Recommends that those involved in tourism should have better access to information on the available arrangements for European funding – such as the structural funds – and on how to make use of them;

20. Stresses the need for better and more effective coordination between all the Member States regarding the professional activities of guides resident in a Member State other than their own;
21. Calls on the Member States to acknowledge the increasing significance of national and international sports events in the tourist sector and to develop sports tourism, focusing in particular on its importance with regard to the health benefits it brings;
22. Stresses the importance of multilingualism in tourism policy and recommends that information be provided on sites which can be visited in the largest possible number of Member-State languages.

PROCEDURE

Title	A renewed EU Tourism Policy: towards a stronger partnership for European tourism
Procedure number	2006/2129(INI)
Committee responsible	TRAN
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	CULT 15.6.2006
Enhanced cooperation – Date announced in plenary	
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Marie-Hélène Descamps 18.12.2006
Previous drafts(wo)man	
Discussed in committee	29.1.2007 27.2.2007
Date adopted	22.3.2007
Result of final vote	+: 28 –: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Maria Badia I Cutchet, Ivo Belet, Giovanni Berlinguer, Marie-Hélène Descamps, Jolanta Dičkutė, Věra Flasarová, Milan Gaľa, Viorica-Pompilia-Georgeta Moisuc, Vasco Graça Moura, Lissy Gröner, Luis Herrero-Tejedor, Ruth Hieronymi, Bernat Joan i Mari, Sándor Kónya-Hamar, Manolis Mavrommatis, Marianne Mikko, Ljudmila Novak, Zdzisław Zbigniew Podkański, Christa Prets, Pál Schmitt, Gheorghe Vergil Șerbu, Nikolaos Sifunakis, Thomas Wise, Tomáš Zatloukal
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Giusto Catania, Michael Cramer, Mario Mauro, Nina Škottová
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	
Comments (available in one language only)	...

3.7.2007

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

for the Committee on Transport and Tourism

on a renewed EU tourism policy: towards a stronger partnership for European tourism
(2006/2129(INI))

Draftsman: Stavros Arnaoutakis

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:

- having regard to the regulatory provisions governing the Structural Funds for the 2007-2013 period,
 - having regard the Council Decision of 6 October 2006 on Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013,
- A. whereas the ERDF regulation for the programming period 2007-2013 makes specific reference to the important role of tourism for sustainable, integrated regional and local development,
- B. whereas tourism is an intersectoral activity comprising a wide range of services and involving various professions, while the sector is mostly managed by family businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises,
1. Emphasizes the potential of the tourism sector for growth and employment, having a concrete impact on the economic, social and territorial cohesion of all Member States, while representing for some areas (in particular rural and declining areas, as well as outermost regions, islands and coastal areas, especially those depending upon fishing) the primary resource and having a direct influence on the growth of other sectors; underlines the contribution of the tourism sector in bringing the economies of those areas to the average level of Community development;
 2. Welcomes the fact that in its Communication, the Commission recognises the need to prepare a European Agenda 21 for tourism, and expressly calls for sustainability to be

promoted in the tourism sector; emphasises that sustainability as well as better policy coordination at national, regional and local level are basic preconditions for an effective development of tourism activities, avoiding any excessive concentration of those activities;

3. Strongly believes that natural, historic and cultural heritages linked with the preservation of the environment are essential for building Europe's competitive advantage in the field of tourism while guaranteeing sustainable development of European regions, cities, countryside and coastal areas;
4. Considers that the Commission, together with the Member States and regions should encourage and financially support new forms of tourism (such as eco-tourism, agricultural tourism, social tourism, health tourism, and others) as means to create employment, to overcome the effects of seasonal tourism as well as to generate economic growth respecting the natural resources and cultural heritage of regions; considers it necessary to strengthen infrastructures and services provided for specific forms of tourism, providing adequate and sustainable transport links and integrating high-quality regional products into the development and marketing of tourism products and services;
5. Believes that the certification of quality for products and services, including shared classification criteria for accommodation and the highest possible degree of harmonization of job profiles, and on the other hand a diversification of the products and services offered are a prerequisite for the expansion of the sector; stresses in this context the importance of human capital and professionalism for all forms of tourism, but especially when care and medical competencies are required; strongly encourages Member States and regions to make use of the vocational training and lifelong learning opportunities offered by the European Social Fund and other EU and national instruments;
6. Believes that the success of the renewed EU tourism policy will depend on the level of response and the degree of active participation on the part of relevant stakeholders at all levels, as well as on their effectiveness in promoting sustainable tourism and in contributing actively to the creation of efficient thematic networks; calls on the Commission, Member States and regions to encourage and support the creation of networks and partnerships for the exchange of experience and best practices in the field of tourism, making sure to learn from past mistakes, so as to avoid similar failures in the future, and explore new fields of cooperation such as twinning and considering the possibility of establishing among others, based on existing Community initiatives and programmes, a specific training network for jobs in tourism which would be capable of interacting with the labour market as well as a knowledge network for sustainable tourism taking particular account of initiatives under the Local Agenda 21;
7. Underlines the role of SMEs (in particular, those starting up in tourism, offering new tourist products or engaged in activities in new tourist areas or sectors) for the economic development of the tourism sector; emphasizes the need to improve their access to information on how they can benefit from available European financial instruments (such as FP7, IST programmes, Community fund programmes, JEREMIE);
8. Underlines the importance of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) as a funding instrument for the development of the tourism sector; calls on the Commission and the Member

States to define more clearly the Community legal framework for PPPs; encourages regional and local authorities to support the development of projects involving both local and regional public funding and private funding and calls for devoting greater attention to the marketing and advertising of individual tourism products;

9. Emphasises the need to increase awareness of the importance of tourism to economies and regional development; calls on Member States to fully adopt Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSAs) and to update statistics on a yearly basis so as to ensure that timely and adequate data are available to support the complete and sound integration of tourism into economic and employment policies;
10. Considers that the development of a new, comprehensive and competitive tourism framework and policy requires an integrated approach and an efficient coordination of local, regional, national and Community measures which have a direct or indirect impact on tourism, observing the subsidiarity principle; calls on the Member States to improve infrastructures, to facilitate access to finance and to contribute to legislative and fiscal harmonisation at European level as a means towards a stable governance for the sector worldwide;
11. Calls once again upon the Commission to put forward proposals which would enable catering (and possibly other tourist services which are not yet eligible for such treatment) to be included on the list of activity sectors which are permanently entitled to a reduced VAT rate, so as to enable sustainable employment in those sectors to be developed, the occupations concerned to be modernised and European tourism to be better positioned vis-à-vis international competition;
12. Recalls that rest and leisure time are rights bestowed on all human beings as stated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and underlines the need for providing suitable responses and better promotion and dissemination means in order to ensure that all citizens' categories (particularly families, the elderly and the disabled) may exercise such rights by benefiting from improved infrastructure and accommodation facilities as well as wider accessibility. To this regard, urges Member States, regional and local authorities to respect the accessibility requirement for disabled persons when spending EU Structural Funds;
13. Welcomes the fact that on 6 July 2006 the EU ratified the Protocol on Tourism to the Alpine Convention, the aim of which is to contribute, through specific measures and recommendations, to sustainable development of the Alpine region and to environmentally-friendly tourism which takes account both of the interests of the local population and of tourists; considers that this protocol should serve as a model for other regions;
14. Believes that the sustainable development of tourism relies on territorial strategies drawn up on the basis of strong partnerships involving public authorities and organised civil society; welcomes the Commission's call for dialogue and involvement of partners; recommends that, in promoting tourism initiatives, the Commission place particular emphasis on involving partners.

PROCEDURE

Title	A renewed EU tourism policy: towards a stronger partnership for European tourism
Procedure number	2006/2129(INI)
Committee responsible	TRAN
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	REGI 15.6.2006
Enhanced cooperation – date announced in plenary	
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Stavros Arnautakis 11.7.2006
Previous drafts(wo)man	
Discussed in committee	2.5.2007
Date adopted	26.6.2007
Result of final vote	+: 40 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Alfonso Andria, Stavros Arnautakis, Elspeth Attwooll, Jean Marie Beaupuy, Jana Bobošíková, Bernadette Bourzai, Wolfgang Bulfon, Antonio De Blasio, Bairbre de Brún, Gerardo Galeote, Iratxe García Pérez, Eugenijus Gentvilas, Marian Harkin, Filiz Hyusmenova, Gisela Kallenbach, Evgeni Kirilov, Miloš Koterec, Constanze Angela Krehl, Jamila Madeira, Mario Mantovani, Yiannakis Matsis, Miroslav Mikolášik, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Maria Petre, Markus Pieper, Elisabeth Schroedter, Grażyna Staniszewska, Catherine Stihler, Margie Sudre, Andrzej Jan Szejna, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, Oldřich Vlasák, Vladimír Železný
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jan Březina, Brigitte Douay, Den Dover, Ovidiu Victor Ganț, Zita Pleštinská, Toomas Savi, László Surján, Nikolaos Vakalis
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	
Comments (available in one language only)	...

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	09.10.2007
Result of final vote	+: 33 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Gabriele Albertini, Inés Ayala Sender, Etelka Barsi-Pataky, Paolo Costa, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Robert Evans, Emanuel Jardim Fernandes, Francesco Ferrari, Mathieu Grosch, Jaromír Kohlíček, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Sepp Kusstatscher, Jörg Leichtfried, Bogusław Liberadzki, Eva Lichtenberger, Erik Meijer, Robert Navarro, Luís Queiró, Reinhard Rack, Luca Romagnoli, Gilles Savary, Brian Simpson, Renate Sommer, Dirk Sterckx, Ulrich Stockmann, Georgios Toussas, Yannick Vaugrenard, Roberts Zīle.
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Aldis Kušķis, Ioan Mircea Pașcu, Leopold Józef Rutowicz.
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Ovidiu Victor Ganț, Bilyana Ilieva Raeva, Olle Schmidt.