

DECLARATION OF MADRID WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE INFORMAL MINISTERIAL MEETING FOR TOURISM UNDER THE SPANISH PRESIDENCY IN APRIL 2010 IN MADRID UNDER THE MOTTO “TOWARDS A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE TOURISM MODEL”

The entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon represents a landmark for tourism, a key economic sector of the EU, which notably contributes to the EU GDP and generates jobs and wealth in the Member States. The Lisbon Treaty acknowledges the importance of tourism outlining, for the first time, a specific competence for the European Union in this field and allowing for decisions to be taken by qualified majority (Title XXII Tourism, Art. 195). The Lisbon Treaty foresees in its article 195 a) and b) the possibility for the Union to “complement the action of the Member States in the tourism sector, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings in that sector”. By putting in place specific measures aimed at encouraging the creation of a favourable environment for the development of undertakings in this sector and promoting cooperation between the Member States, particularly by the exchange of good practice, the tourism industry can indirectly contribute to the strategy “Europe 2020 – A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” and towards strengthening the concept of European citizenship. In line with the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the particular objectives under the flagship initiative on “an industrial policy for the globalisation era”, it is particularly important to enhance the competitiveness of the tourism sector.

The T20 Ministers’ Meeting of 22-24 February 2010 in Johannesburg, South Africa, emphasised the importance of tourism and its potential contribution to the global agenda, in particular to the process of supporting economic recovery and the transformation towards a greener and more sustainable economy. The final T20 joint communiqué sent a clear message and invitation to reinforced cooperation and joint efforts in order to build a stronger, more sustainable and responsible tourism sector.

In the last few years, tourism has changed significantly due, among other reasons, to the globalization of economy, the transformation of the airline industry with the development of low-cost companies into the European market, the technological revolution linked to the Internet, the increasing importance of the individual organization of trips and the subsequent decrease of mediation in the tourist activity.

The European tourist industry faces the challenge of maintaining and strengthening its position in an increasingly competitive world, with the appearance of really powerful markets such as competitors as well as providers of new visitors.

Tourism is an industry of transverse nature, affected by many Community policies and measures in fields such as transport, environment, new information and communication technologies, rural development, consumer protection, energy or taxation, which have a direct bearing on the tourist industry, although interests of the latter are not always taken into account when taking decisions. A strong coordination of these Community policies and a holistic approach is therefore highly important.

An interaction is produced between tourist activity and the European policies with direct or indirect effect on competitiveness. The European Union must take into account these interactions and back European competitiveness in the globalized world, with the cooperation of the States and through the financial and non-financial instruments of its policies in favour of tourism.

The maintenance of competitiveness in the European tourist industry requires a strategy based on tourist excellence, aided by the creation of networks of experts and destinations to allow the creation, sharing and dissemination of knowledge, innovation, research and technological development.

The tourist industry in Europe is mainly composed by small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), so it is essential to provide the tourist sector with a better access to instruments that can help it to improve its economic results and to strengthen its competitiveness, something that, at the same time, will allow us to increase its contribution to sustainable development, therefore favouring the creation of jobs and wealth; while boosting the active participation of companies and economic and social stakeholders.

Corporate social responsibility is essential in the tourist industry and should be therefore taken into consideration in tourism activities and practices at destination, enterprise and tourist level.

The raising of public awareness and promotion of responsible attitudes of European tourists is also essential in order to increase the demand for responsible tourist products and services in Europe.

With a view to the “Communication on the renewed EU Tourism Policy Framework”, which the Commission is to present before the EU Council, the Tourism Ministers meeting in Madrid wish to invite the Commission to take into consideration the pertinence of:

1. Putting forward a consolidated framework for the EU Tourism policy, according to the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, encouraging the creation of a favourable environment for the development of undertakings in this sector and promoting cooperation between the Member States, particularly, by the exchange of good practice. This framework should aim particularly at supporting, coordinating and

supplementing the measures undertaken in the Member States through initiatives which have a European or at least multinational dimension and a high added value in comparison to purely regional or national initiatives. Therefore, any joint approach towards the coordination of the activities of the Commission and the Member States is to be based on the principle of subsidiarity.

2. Streamlining its efforts in view of mainstreaming tourism in Community policies and ensuring an adequate coordination of the various policy initiatives which may impact on tourism, ensuring also that tourism will be duly taken into consideration in the main EU financial instruments (Structural Funds, European Rural Development Fund, Framework Programme for Research etc.). In addition, the Commission might consider consolidating the current budget lines used for the support and coordination of tourism initiatives, under a coherent and comprehensive financial framework for tourism.
3. Facilitating the access to holidays to groups with impaired mobility or those who are socially and/or economically disadvantaged, promoting at the same time a better and more prolonged use of tourist infrastructures, the maintenance of tourist activity in the regions for longer periods, and a strengthening of the feeling of European citizenship
4. Raising awareness about the importance of innovation, research and information and communication technologies for the competitiveness of the EU tourism industry, especially in the context of a globalized economic environment, characterized by the increasing purchasing capacity of well-informed clients and a vertiginous technological development.
5. Mainstreaming sustainability in the sectors related to tourism (transport, solid waste, water treatment, among others), and the creation of knowledge networks to exchange information, technology and the diffusion of best practices applicable to the tourist industry.
6. Alleviating any possible obstacles to opportunities for the growth of tourism in Europe, related to new issuing markets.
7. Reinforcing Europe's image and visibility in the main third countries, through joint actions which may generate added value to already existing national promotional activities.

The Member States declare their willingness:

1. To take part in the implementation of the new consolidated EU tourism policy framework, to be established in light of the Lisbon Treaty, subject to the principle of subsidiarity.
2. To promote responsible and ethical tourism and, especially, social, environmental, cultural and economic sustainability of tourism.
3. To raise awareness to the importance of knowledge and innovation in tourism, the strengthening of the use of new technologies by the public and private tourism actors, the encouraging of networking and the exchange of best practices, as tools for the competitiveness of European tourism.
4. To support measures and initiatives encouraging the lengthening of the high season in tourism, thus contributing to reduce seasonality and to maintain tourist employment in off-season.