European Economic and Social Committee

INT/529

A new political framework for tourism in Europe

Brussels, 21 September 2011

OPINION

of the

European Economic and Social Committee

on the

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions –
Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination - a new political framework for tourism in Europe
COM(2010) 352 final

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On 30 June 2010, the Commission decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, under Article 304 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, on the

> *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe*
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The Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 30 August 2011.

At its 474th plenary session, held on 21 and 22 September 2011 (meeting of 21 September), the European Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 121 votes to 14 with eight abstentions.

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1. Conclusions and recommendations

1.1 The EESC welcomes the Commission communication addressed to the European Parliament "Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination - a new political framework for tourism in Europe", and notes that, despite certain significant shortcomings, it contains many positive proposals. The EESC would make the following recommendations for strengthening and fleshing out this initiative.

1.2 Given the range of operators (public authorities, organisations, social partners), levels (local, regional, national and European) and domains (transport, housing, ancillary products, etc.) in Europe's tourism sector, all stakeholders must be involved in the planned initiatives. In this connection the EESC again points to the possibility of setting up a European Tourism Agency, which by effectively monitoring information relevant to supporting and promoting the measures outlined would bring together efforts which make real progress towards a global European tourism policy that takes into account the diversity and plurality of Europe's identity as a tourist destination.

1.3 The EESC thinks that the following measures should be prioritised and adopted with the aim of meeting the challenges set in the Communication and realising the specific measures it provides for:

- encourage the setting up of a European gateway in all the EU languages where visitors can post their comments or impressions, for the purpose of ensuring better evaluation and promotion so as to attract tourists more effectively, as well as the opportunity to use new technologies (e-booking);
- be responsible for researching, organising and promoting implementation of specific aspects of the political framework and for managing priorities such as the promotion of intra-European tourism, services and facilities across Europe; encourage authorities and businesses to cooperate with a view to improving services and facilities (e.g. timetables);
- push for improvements to road, rail, air and coastal shipping connections and communications in the EU, and update and present information on the internet, while also dealing with unprofitable lines;
- encourage the promotion of health and wellbeing tourism (including spa tourism), educational tourism, cultural tourism, particularly regional festivals and performances (opera, theatre, dance, concerts, etc.) and cultural events such as exhibitions, congress tourism, wine and food tourism, historical and religious tourism, agri-tourism, and tourism capitalising on the maritime heritage, while promoting and conserving cultural and gastronomic traditions;
- enhance the quality of professional services through training and stable employment;
- encourage the governments of the Member States to support the development of small companies and micro-businesses in the tourism sector that reflect the social, environmental, historical and cultural traditions of their area or region, while improving the management of "all-inclusive" packages;
- encourage the elderly and people who are disabled or have special needs to choose destinations in Europe, by improving infrastructure and services, and more effectively publicising the services available for such people in the EU;
- encourage a policy of subsidising the promotion of destinations in Europe by airline companies, so that consumer prices are not higher than for destinations outside Europe, as well as a policy to support destinations within Europe offered by major tour operators;
- promote and publicise the level of security already provided in the EU, as opposed to other destinations, in relation to travel, lodging, citizens' rights, medical and hospital care, as well as the legal framework;
- help to develop a more sound system of statistical monitoring and standardisation for tourism activities and relevant data without creating additional red tape for companies and citizens;
- call for a common EU advertising strategy;
- improve the quality of professional services through training and stable employment.

1.4 The impact of climate change on tourism needs to be analysed at Member State level and proper adaptation measures adopted in line with the competitiveness implications of climate change forecasts.

1.5 Specific areas of tourism need to be developed further, namely social and cultural tourism, gastronomic tourism and agri-tourism, sports tourism, health tourism, barrier-free tourism, congress tourism and travel for religious purposes, as part of an EU policy to diversify products and take account of new, emerging markets.

1.6 The EESC considers that EU-wide projects such as CALYPSO have demonstrated the effectiveness of cooperation between the European institutions and other levels of government, the social partners and players in the sector, with positive social and economic effects. The EESC urges the Commission and the European Parliament to maintain their commitment, in particular their budgetary commitment, to this type of initiative.

1.7 Whilst keeping in mind the need for security, visas can create problems for tourism originating from countries outside the Schengen agreement. This is sometimes the result of excessively bureaucratic procedures being applied by the individual Member States. The EESC calls on the Commission to take specific measures in order to overcome these obstacles.

1.8 The EESC calls on the national governments to introduce a European Vocational Certificate for tourism professions in the EU that is recognised by all the Member States. The EESC sees a need for the education provided for this industry not only to be recognised across the EU but also to be of a high level to truly build professionals in the industry, in line with European Commission and Cedefop guidelines, with particular emphasis on learning outcomes and accreditation, as well as upgrading of tourism studies at university level where feasible. The tourism sector should be included in the Europe 2020 strategy, with specific reference to the new skills needed for new jobs and to other planned initiatives, e.g. recognition of professional experience and informal and non-formal training, as well as the expected impact on the tourism sector of the Bruges Communiqué on vocational training adopted by the EU Ministers for Education and the social partners.

1.9 The EESC stresses that there is no "one size fits all" in tourism and recognises that different destinations have different needs and attract different niche markets. Hence the tourism policy framework needs to take account of differences such as peripherality, mainland situation, coastal situation, rural situation, insularity, poor soil, etc.

1.10 The purpose is to draw up, realise and implement a strategic plan, at regional level, for a common European tourism policy so as to strengthen the sustainable competitiveness and quality of the sector and ensure a high level of consumer protection, by complementing the activities of the Member States. In addition, owing to the many differences between the Member States, it will be necessary to require each one to submit a strategic programme of its national tourism policy containing specific measures for implementation in each region, with a time horizon of at least ten years.

1.11 The EESC calls on national governments to adjust their municipal taxes and try to reduce VAT charged on tourism products of a social nature so as to make these products more attractive, with the further aim of developing and improving access to tourism services. Local infrastructure and services should be safeguarded so as to offer a high-quality tourism product, which would improve both the quality of life of residents as well as conditions for tourists.

1.12 The EU needs a communication strategy to cultivate a positive image of Europe and its tourism industry, and the problem of negative publicity must be resolved.

1.13 Measures should be taken to avoid structural unemployment in tourism businesses, so as to improve both the quality and the stability of employment and the profitability of companies.

1.14 The Commission should step up its ongoing efforts to communicate the real meaning of high-quality tourism in all its dimensions, as an experience that includes both physical relaxation and mental stimulation through contact with cultural models. Planning should take place at regional level, and promotional and communication activities at regional, national and EU level.

1.15 The EESC notes the absence of a clear reference to a legal framework of consumer rights in the tourism sector and the lack of any justification for the unacceptable delay in the review of Directive 90/314/EEC of 13 June 1990, originally promised for the end of 2010 and then scheduled for the beginning of 2011 in the Commission's Work Programme, and to date not yet presented.

1.16 The EESC welcomes the impetus that the Commission, the European Parliament, and also European social partners, have given to framing a European tourism policy. By the same token, the EESC will continue to be a committed partner in relation to the objective and values it has been setting out in its opinions with a view to achieving a European tourism model.

2. **Introduction**

2.1 The new tourism policy identifies three main goals that constitute the backbone of the new framework. These are:

- competitiveness
- sustainability
- promotion of tourism

If these three pillars are strongly supported with adequate structures and resources, this will guarantee a proper foundation for a very sound and beneficial tourism policy.

2.2 The Commission outlines a number of challenges facing Europe's tourism industry, challenges which have emerged or increased in the last few years. However the main challenges which have been constant over the years are: the seasonality affecting the industry; tourism not being an industry that in practical terms is considered an important growing industry; precarious working conditions for workers in tourism; structural unemployment in tourism; SMEs' lack of access to appropriate financing to adapt to the ever-changing and developing tourism industry; and innovation in the sector. It is imperative that the Commission address these challenges. The EESC has stressed in a number of its opinions the importance of addressing such challenges and the measures to be taken[1].

2.3 Tourism is a key sector with a very positive effect on economic growth, sustainable development and employment in Europe. It plays an important role in European citizens' lives.

2.4 Demand for tourism services has suffered since 2008. If Europe wants to remain the world's No 1 destination and be able to capitalise on its wealth and diversity, it must draw up a common tourism policy.

2.5 If the European Commission intends to promote a new framework for action to increase the competitiveness of tourism in the EU and enhance the Union's capacity for sustainable growth, the EESC believes that the Commission's proposals must be fleshed out, while recognising that all countries have an interest in developing their own tourism model and potential. Given the trans-national nature of the tourism industry there is a clear need for an EU-wide tourism policy framework that still affords full flexibility to EU Member States to develop their own particular national policies. It should be realised that what may happen in one part of the EU can have an impact on tourism in another EU country.

2.6 For example, although the countries of southern Europe were not affected by the closure of European airspace in spring 2010 due to volcanic ash, they experienced a fall in tourist activity owing to gloomy reports that created a negative climate and discouraged people from choosing them as a destination.

2.7 The Committee believes that the political framework for European tourism must be based on a clear legal framework of rights and obligations of the various stakeholders, which is entirely absent from the communication and for which the review of Directive 90/314/EEC of 13 June 1990, originally promised for the end of 2010 and then scheduled for the beginning of 2011 in the Commission's Work Programme, is particularly important. The review has still not been presented, despite the Directive being entirely out of date. This delay leaves consumers seriously unprotected, undermines their confidence and hinders the development of tourism. The review is a crucial element of the legal framework required to give substance to the new EU competences in this field laid down in the Treaty.

1 OJ C 32, 5.2.2004, p. 1.

3. **Specific comments**

3.1 The European Union must contribute to and encourage the framing of a dynamic policy to speed up growth and create the conditions for making tourism more attractive. The development of joint planning with specific actions should no longer be entrusted to the Commission but should be the responsibility of another body with an unambiguous policy that does not just recycle old ideas. The members of this body should represent all stakeholders in the tourism industry, including associations of tourism operators and private organisations associated with tourism professions, trade unions, regions and national tourist boards. A key role in supporting the European institutions could be played here by a European Tourism Agency, as proposed by the EESC in previous opinions.

3.2 It is considered essential that the Commission, as well as the other EU institutions enforce the principle of smart legislation and that all EU legislative proposals include a proper impact assessment of the proposed measures affecting the tourism industry. In the proposed action framework for tourism there is no reference to the need to carry out proper impact assessments to gauge the potential impact on the sector each time an EU legislative proposal is unveiled. This is particularly relevant in a number of cases, for example, the proposed food labelling, passenger and consumer rights legislation.

3.3 Tourism should not be seen as a stand-alone policy but rather as a cross-cutting area influenced by the various other policies adopted in the EU, especially transport, education, employment, research and innovation, climate change, internal market, security, consumer affairs, etc. Hence tourism policy is actually not a competence only of DG Enterprise but should be considered in all EU policies.

3.4 The way that tourist services are currently being promoted and developed throughout the EU is not adequately coordinated and organised, which creates problems for ordinary people who wish to travel. It is complicated to travel by public transport across the EU, requiring coordination between different timetables, trains, ferries, buses, etc., which also makes it impossible to ensure a safe trip.

3.5 The tourism industry faces ever-increasing competition from emerging and developing countries that are attracting ever greater numbers of tourists. Faced with this competition, Europe must offer a sustainable policy and **publicise its many advantages**, such as the security it provides in relation to:

- social and environmental factors
- transport
- accommodation, at all levels
- commercial and bank transactions

- health and healthcare rules
- medicine
- policing and security
- access and infrastructure for people with disabilities and special needs
- care in general
- quality
- professionalism and quality of direct and indirect personal services
- citizens' rights.

3.6 Tourists in the EU easily forget that they enjoy basic amenities, such as being able to drink the water everywhere and eat without getting food poisoning, and to walk along the street and travel unescorted. We must therefore promote these simple advantages that the EU offers tourists. The above-mentioned advantages in particular should be highlighted, as they offer tourists a sense of security and are practically unrivalled by any other leading world tourist destination, while representing a comparative advantage in terms of choice and promotion of destinations.

3.7 Europe must develop and improve its image in global markets and promote cooperation with China, Russia, India, Brazil, Japan and the United States, as well as the Mediterranean countries. But for this to happen, it is necessary to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation, and to enhance the quality of products offered so that the standard of services and facilities keeps up with that of our international competitors'. Seasonality and wide swings in demand must be contained, so as to strengthen and differentiate the supply of tourist services. The EU must enhance and consolidate professional skills with vocational training certificates that are mutually recognised across the EU by all those involved in the tourism industry, with particular emphasis on learning outcomes and their accreditation. Compulsory mutual recognition of qualifications would help both businesses and employees across the EU.

3.8 Current methods of collecting and analysing statistical data are inadequate. These shortcomings are resulting in deficient or wrong decisions when framing guidelines. In this regard, the document underlines the importance of improving statistics and analyses relating to tourism. The Commission considers this as essential, in order to have a better socio-economic knowledge base at European level for tourism. Systematic collection of statistical information will not only underpin knowledge and rational decision-making, but will also promote interdisciplinary research cooperation and exchanges of views and experience. It is essential to improve statistical methods and their impact, while bearing in mind that data collection must not burden companies with too much red tape.

3.9 More than half of EU members have in place a Tourism Satellite Account which has proved to be an extremely effective tool. The Commission should find ways of encouraging and helping the remaining countries to adopt this method, which will also serve the purpose of

benchmarking detailed performances. This is crucial given the significant changes in trends and tourism behavioural patterns Europe is currently experiencing.

3.10 Diversification is the key factor for European tourism. Each country's specific experience is instrumental in attracting tourists to it as a destination. The variety in terms of cultural heritage, natural environment, gastronomy, wine and history means that each country gives its visitors a different experience. It is important to preserve these differences, which represent an important marketing advantage when promoting Europe in the rest of the world.

3.11 Given that small and medium-sized companies make up the bulk of tourism operators, their dynamism must be harnessed and they must be given financial support in developing their business activities, the golden rule being to help preserve cultural heritage and develop local communities. It is SMEs that absorb primary unemployment (economic migrants, unskilled workers, etc.), reducing it substantially by employing a significant part of the workforce, and also reducing social exclusion. The private sector must be involved in areas such as tourism marketing and support for employment, while also promoting networking between tourism businesses.

3.12 Tourism policy is characterised by its cross-cutting nature. It has a particular impact on transport policy (passenger rights and safety and transport quality), state aids, the internal market (freedom of establishment and freedom to provide tourism-related services, promotion of service quality, development of e-commerce) and taxation (often with negative consequences, e.g. tax obstacles to the smooth operation of the internal market, tax treatment of SMEs in the tourism sector, tax breaks). Tourism must therefore be promoted through a targeted funding policy, with tourism businesses for their part making investment commitments and promoting and increasing employment.

3.13 The EESC believes that a mechanism should be promoted for improving and strengthening tourism exchanges between Member States that will enable specific key groups such as young people (with improved coordination of school holidays) or the elderly, people with reduced mobility and low-income families to travel, particularly during the low season. Countries whose economies are not geared to tourism should support those whose economies are, by promoting European destinations with their citizens. European airlines must understand that they are not strengthening tourism or the single market when a ticket to Asia for people from northern Europe is often cheaper than one for south-eastern Europe.

3.14 In the EESC's view, a special ground-breaking common policy should be introduced and a tailor-made tourism product designed specifically for elderly and retired people, who are expected to represent 20% of the population in 2020, and the disabled and people with special needs and reduced mobility recently estimated at 127 million people, with the aim of attracting these groups. Specialist training will be required to meet the needs of these specific categories. Since this population group also consists of individuals with purchasing power, cultural interests and leisure time and represents significant market potential, the common

policy directed at them should be strongly promoted by the EU, with the aim of helping them acquire rights in the tourism sector so that they can enjoy tourist activities without being subject to any type of discrimination. This effort must however also be accompanied by efforts from the private sector to ensure that the right infrastructure is in place to cater for this market.

3.15 The EESC sees a need to encourage cooperation at international level and above all in markets that are important for the EU. The conditions must be created for simplifying the single European visa-issuing process so as to attract more visitors from countries outside the Schengen area. Tourists must be able to move between EU countries and regulations and directives must be simplified to this end.

3.16 Tourism must be given a higher profile at regional level by strengthening and promoting, as a European tourist product, cultural itineraries, contemporary culture, protected natural sites, promoting and protecting traditional buildings and traditional businesses, health and well-being (including spa tourism), educational, wine and food, historical or religious tourism, agri-tourism, or tourism capitalising on the maritime heritage, while promoting and conserving cultural and gastronomic traditions (traditional restaurants and businesses with a direct link to local history), and the sub-aquatic heritage. It is not always necessary to have more beds, but rather to invest in improving the quality of establishments' services and infrastructure, innovating with new products such as spas, well-being centres, etc. Nowhere in the Commission's proposal is it explained how these measures are to be implemented or according to what priorities or, of course, under which plan they would be put into practice in each Member State, while also taking the regions into account, so as to constitute a European tourism policy. Neither is there any provision for a joint approach to publicity, although this is necessary.

3.17 The EESC endorses the introduction of a "European cultural heritage label" and also suggests that a "gastronomic heritage label" be created, with eating establishments being rated, awarded stars under a common, harmonised scheme and accredited. This should be underpinned by appropriate use of various national and European programmes, in parallel with other instruments such as the European Heritage Days and the European Union prize for cultural heritage. The EESC also proposes that the system for awarding stars and accrediting EU hotels should be harmonised. The EESC urges the Commission to continue holding the European Tourism Forum as an occasion when all tourism operators, national officials, local and regional authorities and social partners can meet and discuss issues, in order to promote a European tourism identity that reflects diversity and plurality.

3.18 The framework also proposes the development of a European quality tourism brand and a "Quality Tourism" label, requiring an improvement in standards across the industry, which should be supported. However, quality labelling must also be supported by proper financing mechanisms for tourism operators to be able to improve their product range and invest in upgrading their properties and service standards, as well as in training and re-skilling of staff.

3.19 By linking gastronomy, the restaurant sector and tourism, a clear alternative can be offered of high-quality tourism where tourists directly experience the culinary culture of each Member State. In this way, they can appreciate the service provided. The number of tourists travelling within the EU who are interested in cuisine is continually rising. Cooking is becoming a means of promoting European basic produce and enjoyment of good food. Food and beverages, recipes and "food and wine routes" must be promoted by supporting coordinated cooperative efforts to provide alternative forms of added value that strengthen the link between food and tourism.

3.20 **Training of employees in the tourism sector** certainly represents a massive investment for European tourism, especially for SMEs. The introduction of new technologies and working practices has made it necessary to recruit specialised staff. It is vital to extend EU education and training programmes to workers in the tourism sector, as is already the case for other sectors, as this will facilitate adaptation to the new technologies prevailing in the sector. A European vocational training certificate should be developed based on common "tasks", representing learning outcomes. This could serve (with national or local accreditation procedures) as a discrete and independent certificate while still referring to existing national qualification frameworks. It should be compulsory to provide workers in the tourism sector with training leading to vocational qualifications. The EESC points to the importance, for training in the tourism sector, of the Bruges Communiqué on vocational training in the EU. Stable and good working conditions will make the tourism sector particularly attractive.

3.21 Training and interpersonal skills development should be planned so as to include compulsory foreign language learning for those employed in tourism, always taking account of cultural specificities, accompanied by the granting of vocational training certificates in accordance with EU and Cedefop guidelines. Particular attention should be paid to tourism professionals who are directly concerned with cultural heritage, for instance guides, who should be accredited and demonstrate their ability to highlight the quality of cultural assets, based on a certificate issued by the local authorities testifying to their knowledge of the monuments in the area they are working, even if only on a temporary basis, and compulsory knowledge of the local language and the language of the people they are guiding, accredited by the CEN (CEN EN 13809, 2003) up to 1975, as well as Directive 1975/368/EC and Directive 1992/51/EC. An equivalent certificate must exist for all types of professionals (e.g. waiters, chefs, fitness instructors) who have contact with tourists.

3.22 The EESC believes that the "all-inclusive" approach adopted by many companies in a large number of Member States must be seriously addressed, as it is having completely the opposite effect to the desired one. It is all too clear that the problems for SMEs in regions that are home to all-inclusive clubs and big hotel groups have been exacerbated.

3.23 The fierce climate of competition between major foreign tour operators, and between hotels that make sure to conclude packages with foreign tour operators so that their units are

occupied, has triggered a decline in the quality of services provided, a fact that is also reflected in negative publicity abroad for certain tourist areas. Under such pressure, small businesses are obliged to operate at prices that are below cost, placing them in situations of financial distress and liquidation.

3.24 We should not have to resort to a blanket repudiation of the all-inclusive system, as it may serve and respond to the specific needs of a certain tourist market segment, but like other tourism products this must be on a legal footing and in fair competition with other products; it must also be subject to oversight and be self-funding, with no support from state aids. Revenues from tourism must be distributed as widely as possible so that development spreads in the vicinity of good-quality hotels. Visitors should be able to make spending choices that match their budget, in or outside the hotel. Nevertheless, this is one of the few market segments that registered growth despite a decline in traditional tour operator business over recent years. Whilst quality should never be compromised, it is important to appreciate that there are entire resorts that have been successful in developing this market over the years. What is required is to establish a clear definition of the “all-inclusive market” that reflects a quality product, to wean out inferior products and services that are sold under the guise of all-inclusive brands.

3.25 **The seasonal nature of tourism**, caused by the excessive concentration of tourist demand in the months of July and August, limits its growth potential and the transfer of this potential to the wider economy, which has an impact on income flows and results in less than optimum use of existing infrastructure and personnel. Measures geared to employability and the cost-effectiveness of infrastructure in the low season will promote the development of a more dynamic and productive workforce, while coordination of infrastructure use by certain social groups or in schools, even during "quiet" periods, will substantially lengthen the tourist season, with all the benefits that would entail. A significant contribution to reducing seasonality could be made by staggering the timing of employees' holidays, using appropriate incentives. Better use of existing tourist infrastructure and staff in the low season could enable businesses to capitalise on their infrastructure and improve their productivity, relying on a more stable and motivated workforce. The EESC is pleased that a first step in this direction has already been taken with the CALYPSO initiative, and urges the Commission and the European Parliament to encourage the development of this initiative, specifically by earmarking funding, on account of its social impact and benefits for European tourism.

3.26 The EESC considers tourism to be important for the environment and that the tourism sector has every reason to protect and promote the environment. Tourism does not destroy sites or use up resources, nor does it change natural processes; but it requires good planning and implementation of a proper tourism policy. Tourism has showcased and upgraded entire areas previously considered places to avoid, such as London's Docklands or Barcelona's beach area next to the port, at the same time giving work to millions of people in the EU.

3.27 In the longer term, the challenge of climate change is rightly recognised by the Commission as the driver behind a major restructuring of the travel and accommodation business models. Business operators already discern a paradigm shift in the way tourism products are developed, packaged and marketed, with a shift towards greener practices in the industry. At Member State level, the analysis of the impact of climate change on tourism needs to take off and proper adaptation measures in line with the competitiveness implications of climate change forecasts must be adopted.

3.28 The measures planned by the Commission for diversifying tourism products take into account the dynamics that shape tourism, as an industry that relates directly to people and their manifold requirements. Supporting alternative tourism by promoting it more consistently would automatically lead to better use of the natural features and comparative advantages of a given region.

3.29 The EU must also respond to concerns relating to social issues, as well as territorial cohesion and its preservation.

3.30 Lastly, **measures to support more extensive mobilisation of EU financing** for tourism development will release the potential of the sector, with priority being given to regions whose economies are experiencing de-industrialisation and where there are prospects for growth in tourist activity.

3.31 Maritime and coastal tourism is very important as a catalyst for economic development. Actions should be implemented to encourage its development as part of the EU's integrated maritime policy. Economic diversification into tourism represents a priority for many coastal areas, where the decline in economic activities linked to fisheries, shipbuilding, agriculture and mining in particular have led to a fall in incomes and increased unemployment. Tourism businesses, especially small and medium-sized companies, often operate close to beaches and similar tourist areas, and represent not just business and society, but also long periods of historical importance, often 50 years or more in certain EU countries, and at the same time cultural heritage for the people living in those areas. For this reason, while respecting EU rules and aiming to preserve the cultural heritage, quality and history of each area where these family businesses were set up, we can propose certain initiatives with the aim of maintaining them where they exist.

3.32 The EU must pay attention to what is published about its Member States, as this can generate a negative image and arouse uncertainty among possible visitors from outside the EU, with very damaging repercussions for tourism promotion. The EU should set up a dedicated European tourism crisis communication management team and require all the Member States to set up and operate similar teams.

3.33 European and national tourism policies need to take account of all structural changes, both by taking measures to avert structural unemployment and by ensuring effective distribution of tourism-related investment.

Brussels, 21 September 2011.

The President
of the
European Economic and Social Committee

Staffan Nilsson