INT/143
The future of European tourism

Brussels, 18 September 2002

OPINION
of the
Economic and Social Committee
on the
Commission Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Working together for the future of European tourism
(COM(2001) 665 final)

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On 15 November 2001, the European Commission decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 262 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the

> *Commission Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Working together for the future of European tourism*
> (COM(2001) 655 final).

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 11 September 2002. The rapporteur was **Mr Liverani**.

At its 393rd plenary session (meeting of 18 September 2002), the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion with 123 votes in favour and two abstentions.

1. General background: observations on the concept of proximity

1.1 Recent events and the international climate of heightened tension in "high risk" areas of the world since the terrorist attacks of 11 September have provided a dramatic reminder of the extent to which peace, understanding and mutual respect amongst populations and the safety of transport and people influence the tourist industry.

1.1.1 Tourism is highly sensitive to the above values. Absence of these values leads to severe short-term effects on the industry and long-term changes in travel and holiday habits and lifestyles.

1.1.2 Tourism (for leisure and business) thrives in an atmosphere of untroubled international relations and a spirit of friendship, cooperation and exchange amongst different populations and cultures.

1.1.3 A deep-seated wariness is taking root in international relations, generating mistrust that could irretrievably blight relations between people and populations. It is essential to ensure that deep, unbridgeable divides do not open up between north and south or between east and west. Now is the time to build bridges, to revive international relations and restore trust and a sense of security. This is the intelligent and effective response to international terrorism, to the criminals who have sought to sow panic and unrest in people's daily lives.

1.2 However, there is no doubt that long-distance tourism to exotic and faraway places could suffer for some time (through concern about air transport safety, political instability etc.), despite early signs of an upturn. For these reasons, the public will favour destinations closer to home, with the added incentive of the single currency. In this context, there is all the more reason to promote the huge range of destinations and local attractions that Europe has to offer. In this challenging period, European local tourist industries can do much to:

– restore their local community's trust in meeting and mixing with different people and cultures;

– boost market confidence, both within Europe and overseas, that the EU offers safe and peaceful holiday destinations;
– improve the capacity of European destinations, from the largest cities to the smallest villages, to welcome visitors and provide suitable facilities for them;
– exploit the wealth of local identities, cultural and artistic heritage, local products, wine and speciality-food regions, cooking and traditions, social and natural environments, landscapes, lifestyles and customs and extend the horizons of time and space, whilst at the same time conferring a sense of peace, familiarity and reassurance;
– promote employment and, more broadly, other sectors of the economy, by developing a form of tourism that enables visitors to find out about local businesses.

2. The significance and values of tourism: new instruments for governing European tourism

2.1 The importance of the tourist sector for the economic, social and cultural development of Europe is now generally acknowledged. However, this has not yet been backed up by an equal emphasis in EU policies. The Commission has made great efforts to bridge this gap, considering the lack of a clear legal basis.

2.2 The Commission Communication defines a more open strategy and proposes a new Community approach to tourism in the form of ten specific measures. These measures form the basis of a process designed to promote this important economic and social activity in EU programmes. They focus on coordination and cooperation between the various actors involved in tourism policy; harmonising the standards that regulate tourism in the Member States and promoting policies of quality, accessibility and promoting the right for all people to have a holiday; improving research and understanding of the mechanics of tourism on a statistical, economic and social level; encouraging a network culture by creating new networks and exchanging good practices; promoting tourist resorts as a hub for public-private sector interaction and as places where resources are turned into tourism products; and making optimum use of Europe's large and diverse range of tourist destinations, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity.

2.3 Following the conclusions of the June 1999 Council, a period of closer cooperation based on the open coordination method was initiated between the main interested parties (Member States, the tourist industry, civil society, the European Commission). This closer cooperation is in line with the recommendations contained in the Committee's previous opinion on this subject[1].

2.4 This method, as highlighted in the Commission document, is consonant with the guidelines laid down in the recent White Paper on European governance. The complex nature of the tourist industry and the interdependence between the various players make the sector a useful testbed for this.

1 OJ C 75 of 15.3.2000.

2.5 However it is worth underscoring that good governance of the tourism sector implies a bottom-up approach, which means putting the emphasis on local tourist industries as the focus for applying the Commission's guidelines, developing coherent strategies and fostering understanding between local stakeholders. (*See Resolution of the European Parliament A5-0030/2000, point N.*)

2.6 The Commission's strategy respects the conditions and the positions that emerged during the course of the consultations and debates held upon completion of the work carried out by the five working groups. This important work could, however, yield even greater results if the above-mentioned resolution were acted upon, in particular Points G and H: *"whereas the European Parliament has been urging the Council for some considerable time to adopt a multiannual programme on tourism, which is needed on the one hand to improve coordination between the various Community actions and, on the other hand, to reinforce synergies with the Member States' policies on tourism".*

3. Destination Europe

3.1 The "Europe" brand-name (with the diversity and values associated with it) represents added value to the attraction of individual countries, regions and local tourist resorts in the Union.

3.2 The European Community must make itself more competitive and attractive for tourists as a macro tourist region. It can thus attract tourists from other continents to different locations in Europe, thereby boosting the status of these destinations within the internal market.

3.3 The current moves to create a free trade area in the Mediterranean should also promote cooperation projects to develop tourism in the countries on its southern shores, while ensuring these projects comply with EU regulatory standards in the tourist industry and espouse respect for fundamental human rights, the natural environment and local cultures and traditions.

3.4 When considering the European Community's position as a macro tourist region, attention must also be paid to the development and the promotion of the most outlying regions, from the far northern part of the continent to the islands.

4. The centrality of destinations and local identities in the context of cooperation: encouraging the development of local tourist industries

4.1 The Commission Communication defines the specific features of tourism as a factor for local development, correctly identifying the centrality of destinations in the provision of services and tourist attractions: *"The tourist destination is the main place of consumption of tourist services and, therefore, the location and place of activity of tourist businesses. Tourists identify the product with both the businesses providing a service and the destination visited. (...) The destination is the hub of tourist activities and the focus of the tourist image. It is the melting pot where public and private entities interact and where almost all SMEs in the tourist industry are active.*"

This is confirmed by the Council of Ministers Resolution of 21 May 2002.

4.2 The identity of a particular area is the result of a complex combination of unique factors: relics of its past, economic opportunities, networks of relations and services, meeting places, specific features of the urban and rural environment and of the people who live there, landscapes, nature, local products, food, traditions, culture, flavours, encounters and exchanges, art, artists and characters past and present who experienced the atmosphere and described it in their works.

4.3 Identity gives a place its soul (genius loci) - everything that makes it unique and irreplaceable. However, identity is not static and unchangeable, but the result of a continuous process of adapting to different needs, expectations and lifestyles. It is self-awareness when faced with change and relations with others. A place where visitors are always welcome, and where personal relations are the lifeblood, is a place whose structure is constantly in the throes of change, and these changes may be difficult. Such places embrace trends, inspire fashions and offer different and personal experiences to each individual. Welcoming tourists to destinations therefore means promoting the best a place has to offer and building distinctive itineraries *based upon exchange and sharing.*

4.4 Promoting destinations provides an opportunity to highlight the quality of life and relations in a local community. The higher and more authentic this becomes, the more this place becomes attractive and popular for tourists. Tourism policies foster the constant extension and upgrading of infrastructure and service networks with the emphasis on respect for the individual. They can thus create a user-friendly system of relations and services designed to ensure a pleasant stay, albeit temporary, for people who visit an area for culture, business or leisure.

4.5 In the final analysis, what makes a tourist destination attractive is the system of values it stands for. While also putting forward minimum standards as regards quality, EU tourism policy should foster the development of local identity and produce and the creation of a network of local theme-based tourist routes. These would pool common values (hospitality, providing common experiences, history, art, culture, monuments, architecture, lifestyle, nature, traditions, gastronomy and so on) as well as highlighting the main attraction of each place (with particular attention to niche markets). This could lead to the creation of a "catalogue of good practice, hospitality and the promotion of local identity". The catalogue could key into and stimulate demand, which is increasingly adventurous and attentive to local values and specific features. It could also be made available on an interactive European tourism website. In this context, attention should be given to the needs of those who travel for business or conferences who, together with holidaymakers and cultural tourists, account for the bulk of European tourism.

4.6 The Committee believes that a culture of tourism should be encouraged, based upon:

a) the key notions of respect and the individual;
b) self-awareness and identity;
c) the principles of responsibility and sustainability;
d) hospitality.

4.7 There is a clear reference here to the code of ethics for tourism drawn up by the World Tourism Organisation. This could, however, be supplemented with the approval and distribution of a European charter of the principles and values of tourism in the European Union, which could preface a quality charter for Europe's tourist destinations (see point 9.4). A working group made up of experts nominated by the Member States could be set up to draft such a charter. The results of this working group could then be discussed with European interest groups from the tourist industry during one of the forthcoming European forums on tourism.

5. The Tourism and Employment process: stance and thoughts of the Committee

5.1 The Commission has focused on many of the points made in the Committee's previous opinion[2], and has incorporated them into interesting proposals, but some issues have yet to be explored in depth. In particular, the matter of restructuring holiday periods should be subject to further analysis with a view to reducing the concentration of tourist activity during peak periods. This would help optimise business activity and improve working conditions in the industry. Certain forms of tourism are particularly well suited to this type of seasonality, for example tourism for schools and for older people. Another factor to bear in mind is the drive within European society to reorganise working time by reducing working hours and introducing new forms of flexibility ("vertical" part-time spread throughout the year, temporary work etc.). In other words, an increase in free time (or non-working time) does not always equate with a desire to visit new places, seek out new opportunities etc. It could be said, therefore, that the conditions are in place in society today for reorganising the tourist season and transcending past models born out of the Fordist approach to work.

5.2 The Committee underscores the importance of effective action to support SMEs in the tourism sector in the process of completing the Single Market. Measures to ensure convergence and transparency should be stepped up in order to avoid inequality, market distortion and unfair competition practices.

5.3 Whilst endorsing the horizontal and inter-sectoral approach to ensure a coherent use of Community programmes to support tourism, the Committee underscores the objective difficulty of putting the general guidelines into practice. For example, the Commission document mentions that 2003 is the European Year of People with Disabilities, but the Council Decision of 3 December 2001 on the European Year of People with Disabilities[3] does not contain specific goals on tourism for people with special needs.

6. Employment in the tourist industry

6.1 The Tourism-Employment process forms the hub of all EU policies on tourism. A modern tourism policy fosters the creation of new jobs, new businesses and professions and reinvents existing professions in both the public and private sector. However, when considering the

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2 OJ C 75 of 15.3.2000.

3 OJ L 335 of 19.12.2001.

development of employment in tourism, it is important to reflect not only on how many new jobs can be created but also which new professions and trades will be needed, by either restructuring or even replacing current forms of professions. In this context the Committee particularly supports the Commission proposal on "Learning Areas".

6.2 Tourism is characterised by close interpersonal relations. This means that the value of human input is paramount, and difficult to replace with technology. Policies fostering employment in tourism should be closely linked to measures targeting training. Hospitality policies and services promoting the cultural and natural heritage of Europe's tourist destinations can generate new skilled employment opportunities.

6.3 Such policies should aim to correct the precarious nature of employment in this sector (characterised by seasonality, low skills, illegal unemployment, insecure working conditions etc.) and foster horizontal and vertical mobility in the tourist sector, inter alia by applying the directives to promote equal opportunities and to combat child labour and the exploitation of minors.

6.4 Promoting new forms of cultural, environmental, rural, conference and sport-related tourism, and tourism for young people, students and older people, can help prolong the peak season for businesses and thus increase the number of working days and provide more long-term employment.

6.5 The Committee endorses the priorities identified by Working Group B which focus on the need to:

a) attract skilled labour into the sector;
b) encourage them to stay in the sector and develop their skills;
c) support micro-enterprises at regional and local level to boost their competitiveness.

6.6 It would also be useful to devise actions to improve working conditions in tourism, taking care not to mistake job insecurity for flexibility. Firstly working conditions could be improved by developing innovative organisational methods and offering incentives (tax or contribution-related benefits, etc.) to SMEs that meet the pre-defined goals.

6.7 Lastly, the status of professional qualifications should be harmonised and upgraded by improving social representation and the status of professions and trades in the tourist industry (e.g. by means of awareness-raising campaigns).

7. Training human resources

7.1 A network of training centres should be set up, and universities and research centres should be encouraged to monitor the changing face of tourism and hone the mechanisms needed to adapt the sector.

7.2 In order to offer the best possible advice for young people entering the job market and promote tourism professions, there must be an effective link set up between schools and employment. Ongoing training facilities and career guidance should be made available and should focus in particular on vocational skills and refresher courses.

7.2.1 Training standards should be laid down in accordance with the requirements of the various tourism-related vocations. In addition to the relevant technical skills, training curricula in the Community should also cover language skills, the development of communication skills and practical work experience, where possible acquired in the Member States, and curricula should be coordinated. In this connection, there should be mutual recognition of vocational qualifications and diplomas[4].

These training measures can both improve worker mobility and in the longer term also raise quality standards in European tourism.

7.3 It must be emphasised that training programmes (for workers, entrepreneurs and managerial staff) should be of a permanent nature to create the conditions to support the development of quality employment. A concerted drive to boost training would encourage the hand-over of businesses to the next generation and would truly modernise the sector by building up human and technical assets in the context of sustainable tourism development.

7.4 Continuing training should be geared towards:

a) creating new professions;
b) defining new roles;
c) creating new opportunities for employment;
d) creating a European, national, regional and local network of institutional and social partners designed to promote innovation in training and research into sustainable development of tourism;
e) coordination of basic, specialist and vocational training, to help devise new curricula to equip students with the skills needed in the tourist industry.

8. SMEs in tourism

8.1 The overwhelming majority of European businesses operating in the tourist industry are small (if not very small) or medium-sized. Many of them are also characterised by traditional structures in the way they both manufacture and provide services. It is therefore necessary to put SMEs in the tourist industry on the same footing as those operating in other sectors of the economy, while respecting their specific features.

8.2 The strategic importance of SMEs in European tourism is not confined to their economic value and substantial potential to boost employment. They also underpin the stability and prosperity of local communities, safeguarding the values of hospitality and local identity that are the hallmark of tourism in Europe's regions.

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4 Opinion CES 1020/2002

8.3 Globalisation of the economy and society can represent an opportunity but also a risk for SMEs in the tourist industry as they are exposed to the dangers inherent in the concentration of world markets. Therefore, policies designed to boost the competitiveness of such SMEs should encourage ways in which tourist businesses can work together, including in consortia or cooperatives.

8.4 The EU must therefore step up its action to support SMEs in the tourist industry by implementing the action lines drawn up at the Llandudno conference (Wales, UK) in May 1998, which were further developed at the conferences held in Lille (F) in 2000 and Bruges (B) in 2001.

8.5 Tourism SMEs must be provided with the information and advice needed to access the opportunities available through Community programmes. Here the Committee would draw attention to the paragraph on creating TICP networks (Tourist information and consultancy points).

8.6 In addition, incentives must be put in place to enhance the quality of tourism SMEs by widespread use of comparative certification tools such as ISO and EFQM and by developing ad hoc measures in the framework of EU programmes and funding for SMEs.

8.7 Changing tourism demand and the emergence of new needs bring a call for new and original businesses. Setting up companies should be made easier, especially for young people and women, by establishing consultancy and assistance mechanisms during the planning and "start-up" phases. At the same time, it is necessary to foster the adoption of structures designed to improve working conditions, increase added value and boost creativity. Credit facilities to support innovation and retraining could be a means by which to achieve this.

9. The host city: quality of services and interpersonal relations: a quality charter for European tourist destinations

9.1 The tourism product is a combination of goods, services and experiences provided by businesses and public entities in a given location. There is an ongoing exchange of values between business and the local area. The tourism product relies on the added value gained from its particular geographical identity and context.

9.2 Tourist destinations are thus testbeds for the tourism product. The quality of a tourist resort is measured against its ability to coordinate the public and private sector, which together help determine its attraction and facilities. Quality is a pervasive factor across the whole spectrum of tourist services. The primary goal of providing goods, services and experiences is to satisfy those who in one way or another buy into the tourist experience.

9.3 These concepts can be summarised by two words: *responsibility* and *hospitality*. Whilst *responsibility* denotes a new selling and purchasing ethic (conscious consumption), *hospitality* broadens the conception of relations between places and peoples, if only temporarily. In other words, new strategies must be devised to improve the role of tourist resorts as host cities/towns and to

regularly monitor processes by piloting specific programmes and initiatives to foster a culture of quality. (*The quality system applied to tourist resorts.)*

9.4 All factors determining quality and their relative indicators, together with the principles and values of hospitality (*vision of the host city*), should form part of the **Quality charter for Europe's tourist destinations**. The charter, adopted by European tourist destinations on a voluntary basis, would form a **quality pact** between the various local operators (public and private) and between operators and tourists. It would underpin the Europe brand-name, provide added value for individual resorts and form the basis of a European benchmarking system. Point 11 of the Resolution of the EU Council of Ministers of 21 May 2002 specifically refers to this matter in its call to: "*promote actively the use of quality indicators of tourist destinations on the basis of a European manual agreed by all Member States*" and "*work towards tools and an approach of quality benchmarking and their implementation on a voluntary basis …*".

9.5 The interaction between *providers* and *users* in the tourist industry is particularly intense. The pact regulating relations is a veritable citizenship pact (the tourist being a temporary citizen with full rights and duties).

9.6 For this reason, the content of the pact must be publicised and accessible to tourists and must provide them with a clear yardstick.

9.7 Quality factors and indicators can be used to benchmark the *overall quality of a tourist resort* and at the same time to provide a "dynamic map of progress" that will be useful both for tourists and local operators (public or private) in the tourist industry. To a large extent, this will tie in with the methods used to measure the quality of places and quality of life of inhabitants. It is no coincidence that the most popular local tourist resorts and areas also offer the highest quality of life.

9.8 The challenge faced by local resorts is now greater than ever. Destinations must maintain a high level of awareness and respond to changes on several levels, in particular by strengthening the identity and authenticity of their products, forming alliances to provide joint initiatives and networks, cooperating, improving the quality of supply and the culture of service provision and ensuring that customers remain the focus of their efforts.

10. Tourism for all and the accessibility of services and sites

10.1 Everybody has the right to a holiday. However, physical, social and economic limitations mean that only just over half of Europe's population is currently able to take full advantage of this right. In particular, it should be emphasised that the number of people with special needs is rising significantly, due to the spread of particular incapacitating diseases, temporary and permanent disabilities etc., in part linked to an ageing population.

10.2 Tourist destinations and businesses must be able to respond effectively to the requirements of people with special needs, and not treat them as second-class citizens.

10.3 Opting to provide tourism for all upgrades a tourist resort and is based on important ethical reasons. However, considering the large number of people with special needs, it is also significant in market terms.

10.4 The European Union must take a leading role in stimulating and encouraging the removal of physical, cultural and social obstacles to the full enjoyment of tourist resources.

10.5 Programmes under preparation for the 2003 Year of People with Disabilities represent an important opportunity to define strategies in support of tourism for all.

11. Tourism and the environment: impact and sustainability of developing tourism

11.1 The concept of sustainability in developing tourism covers not only the safeguard and renewability of natural resources but also the analysis and management of the social and cultural impact on tourist resorts and on the fundamental values of the local community.

11.2 Poorly-managed mass tourism has a negative, and at times even devastating impact upon the social and natural environment of the tourist destination, and can lead to an emergence of anti-tourist sentiment and behaviour amongst local residents.

11.3 The process of drawing up a European Agenda 21 for tourism should be accelerated.

12. Tourism and culture

12.1 A modern vision of tourism must draw on the full range of cultural resources in a given place, including its historical, artistic, environmental, gastronomic, industrial and craft heritage and local traditions.

12.2 Sustainable and responsible tourism is a cultural phenomenon in itself, as it encourages understanding and exchange between peoples and is a key factor in the development of conscience, European citizenship and feelings of belonging to a common community. Conversely, if tourism development is left unchecked, speculative and profit-driven factors will prevail, wreaking serious consequences on the natural and social environment.

12.3 Cultural events encourage mobility of people and the spread of tourist seasons. They represent a means by which to promote local identity and diversity, increasing awareness of Europe's rich cultural heritage, in both its diversity and its unity.

13. A new approach to free time and the tourist season in the context of restructuring working time

13.1 Modern society has reached a turning point: for the first time in the history of mankind, work is no longer the main factor determining the role of individuals and groups. Free time

and the ability to make the most of it is the real factor which shapes the cultural and indeed economic destiny of individuals.

13.2 The reorganisation of work will increasingly lead to more free time. At the same time, the fact that, on average, people are living longer and that increasing numbers of active and energetic people are no longer directly involved in production will lead to a restructuring of society and of leisure time.

13.3 To make use of this surplus of free time and to transform it into responsible tourism, the tourism product should be made more meaningful and authentic, bringing it closer to daily life and striving to make it available throughout the calendar year.

13.4 EU action could play a part in alleviating the seasonal nature of tourism, which is a serious obstacle to the full development of the sector. This could be achieved by encouraging the creation of new forms of tourism that can be enjoyed all year round (for schools, older people, cultural and sport tourism, active holidays etc.) and diversifying supply. This will help relieve the pressure faced by tourist resorts in peak seasons and give a greater degree of stability to employment and business activity. The Committee underscores the need to make this matter a priority in European tourism policy.

14. Increasing analysis of tourism by stimulating and supporting research

14.1 Available EU data to assess the contribution of tourism to national and regional economies are qualitatively and quantitatively insufficient. The Committee therefore endorses the proposal to create a European tourism observatory as the end product of coordinated action between a network of research centres and other relevant bodies on a European level.

14.2 The observatory should provide statistical and economic data, including data on the effects of national tourism policies, while also ascertaining the impact of Community programmes in support of tourism.

14.3 Satellite accounts are the best tool for assessing the economic and social impact of tourism.

15. Tourism as a testing ground for the use of new communication technologies

15.1 Tourism provides an ideal testing ground to experiment and put into practice the new opportunities presented by the information society.

15.2 New communication and information technologies offer increased scope for self-tuition for tourist operators and businesses, who can try out new methods of exchanging information and marketing their products.

15.3 The Committee welcomes the research carried out by Working Group E and its conclusions identifying the services that can be exchanged via the network and the consequent actions for B2B and B2C relations.

15.4 The Committee considers that the 6th RTD framework programme should include tourism measures open to businesses and destinations.

16. **The complexity and horizontal nature of providing services and tourist experiences: creating a European network of Tourist information and consultancy points (TICP)**

16.1 Tourism is a particularly complex industry, and the various links of the chain are closely interconnected. The provision of services and tourist experiences is particularly sensitive to critical elements which may only be apparent in one link of the chain.

16.2 In the provision of tourist experiences, the site of production and consumption coincide in both time and space. This distinguishes tourism from other industries and emphasises the importance of local infrastructure and local features and the need for coordinated action between the public and private sector.

16.3 The various public and private operators should therefore be encouraged to join forces in a drive to promote a network of coordinated action.

16.4 In addition there is an urgent need to foster convergence on a European level of the legal and fiscal rules governing tourism and related professions, thereby achieving a real single market in tourism.

16.5 The Committee believes it essential to encourage the access of tourist operators to information on the support available to them through Community programmes. In practice, this means providing operators with basic advice on accessing Community opportunities. To this end, it would be useful to set up a European network of Tourism information and consultancy points (TICP) for businesses and operators in the sector, using the existing network of Infopoints with TICPs set up preferably in the most popular European tourist locations.

17. **Conclusions and proposals**

Reiterating the points made in previous paragraphs and in accordance with its previous opinions on tourism, the Committee:

17.1 endorses the Commission Communication and applauds the method used and the content of the work carried out hitherto, considering it a sound basis upon which to consolidate EU policies on tourism;

17.2 endorses the conclusions and proposals put forward by the five working groups composed of international experts appointed by the Member States, and associations of operators in the industry and civil society;

17.3 welcomes the Council of Ministers Resolution of 21 May 2002 on the Commission Communication as a further sign of political will to set up a programming structure for European tourism;

17.4 therefore calls on the Commission and especially the Council to identify the legal basis needed to strengthen Community strategies on tourism. This is all the more urgent given the economic and social importance of this sector in Europe, the consolidation of the European economic area, the process under way to reunify Europe and the project to create a free trade area in the Mediterranean.

17.5 A legal basis would foster the full development of the sector and facilitate the establishment of a framework programme for tourism that could harness Community programmes and initiatives in other policy areas in support of tourism, where relevant. Organised civil society, the social partners and national and Community institutions must all be closely involved in defining such strategies and measures during the annual European forums organised by the Commission.

17.6 As its specific contribution to the first European Forum on tourism scheduled to be held in Brussels in December 2002, the Committee highlights the need for action to:

a) temporarily boost the financial and human resources available to the Commission's Tourism Division, pending the definition of a wider Community policy on tourism;
b) **create a basic network of Tourism information and consultancy points (TICP)**;
c) set up a group of experts to develop a **Quality charter for Europe's tourist destinations** and coordinate its application.

Brussels, 18 September 2002

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of the
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Göke Frerichs

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Patrick Venturini