Statistics on tourism

2010/0063(COD) - 29/03/2010 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: establish a common framework for the systematic production of the European statistics on tourism.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: the crucial role that tourism plays in generating growth and jobs in the European Union was stressed by the European Council in its Presidency Conclusions of 14 December 2007.

Any appraisal of the competitiveness of the European Union's tourism industry, which occupies an important place in the economy of the Member States with tourist activities representing a large potential source of employment, requires a good knowledge of the volume of tourism, its characteristics, the profile of the tourist and tourism expenditure.

Council Directive 95/57/EC on the collection of statistical information in the field of tourism provided for the establishment of an information system on tourism statistics at European Union level. The Directive has helped create national data collection systems with data on the capacity and occupancy of accommodation establishments from a business perspective, and on tourism demand from a visitors' perspective.

Although this system has been a success, both users and producers of the data have underlined the need for it to be updated. Over the past decade, communications from the Commission and resolutions adopted by the European Parliament have called for changes to the legal basis of tourism statistics.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the Commission looked at two options:

- ***Option 1***: (baseline option, i.e. no new European Union involvement).
- ***Option 2***: (involvement of the European Union, as proposed).

The Commission considers that the proposed framework for European statistics makes the data more comparable and thus more relevant for users at both European and national level. Additionally, the use of common concepts and reporting formats can help to make the collection and use of tourism statistics more efficient, e.g. by not collecting information on the same trip in both the country of residence and the Member State visited.

LEGAL BASE: **Article 338** of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The objectives of the proposal can be better achieved at European Union level on the basis of a European legal act, because only the Commission can coordinate the necessary harmonisation of statistical information at European Union level; the collection of data and compilation of comparable statistics on tourism, on the other hand, can be organised by the Member States. Comparability is a central quality concern for any statistical data. The Member States cannot achieve comparability to the necessary extent without a clear European framework, i.e. European legislation laying down common statistical concepts, reporting formats and quality requirements.

CONTENT: the aim of this proposal is to update and optimise the existing legal framework for European statistics on tourism, namely Council Directive 95/57/EC. Its objective is to establish a common

framework for the systematic production of European statistics on tourism, by means of the collection, compilation, processing and transmission by the Member States of harmonised European statistics on tourism supply and demand.

In line with the requirement that official statistics should be relevant, i.e. that they should satisfy current and potential user needs, the proposal revises such variables as tourist expenditure, and takes into account recent phenomena such as more short trips of less than four overnight stays or the use of the internet for booking trips.

From a supply side perspective, the proposal responds to changes in user needs, e.g. for data on bedroom occupancy. It also updates the deadlines for data transmission.

The proposal further harmonises the variables and concepts and also significantly improves the completeness of tourism statistics, for instance by covering all rented accommodation and including statistics on same-day visitors and non-holiday makers, for which there is heavy demand.

The level of additional requirements, especially information from businesses, is intended to keep the overall burden comparatively stable. As regards the information to be collected from households or tourists, the efficiency of data collection and the respondent burden is monitored by introducing rotating questions for variables that are expected to be of a more structural nature and by introducing the transmission of micro-data for statistics on tourism trips.

BUDGETARY IMPACT: the proposal in itself has no impact on the budget of the European Union. Nevertheless, and subject to the availability of relevant appropriations entered in the budget of the European Union, Member States may receive from the Commission a financial contribution of a maximum of 70% of the costs eligible under the rules on grants in the Financial Regulation, in relation to future possible ad hoc modules as referred to in the proposal.