Tourism sector: working together for a sustainable development and employment

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PURPOSE : to create an operational framework for monitoring tourism policies and activities in the EU. CONTENT : the communication is the final milestone of the "tourism and employment" process that was launched four years ago. It is the result of intensive work done since January 2000 with Member States, the industry and major civil society stakeholders, on five key issues: information, training, quality, sustainable development and new technologies. The Commission underlines the importance of exchanging more information and experience among interested parties, to prepare the implementation of the actions recommended in the communication. Some of the key activities advocated in the communication are: - promoting dialogue with the tourism industry and other interested parties by holding an Annual Tourism Forum and extending the remit of the Advisory Committee on Tourism; - fostering networking services and support functions, for instance through competence centres (observations, study and research centres) at national, regional and local levels; - ensuring good use of the EU's financial and non-financial instruments to the benefit of the tourism industry, in co-operation with national ad regional authorities and with operators; - promoting sustainable development by furthering elaborating on an implementing the "Agenda 21" guidelines; - defining and disseminating assessment methods and tools (quality indicators and benchmarking) necessary for monitoring the quality of tourist destinations and services. The Commission and the Member States have co-operated closely on all subjects covered by this communication. Co-operation has been through working groups created under the aegis of the Commission, with the guidance of the Tourism Advisory Committee, to follow-up the conclusions of the Council 21 June 1999. The trade associations and civil society organisations concerned with tourism have also been directly involved. The purpose of this communication is to consolidate this new process by proposing : - an operational framework based on the method of open co-ordination between all the stakeholders concerned developed at the Lisbon European Council. It is in tune with the guidelines of the recent White Paper on European Governance, for which tourism is a suitable area of application: its implementation will require commitment at the relevant high level; - a limited number of measures to be introduced by the various stakeholders in the tourism sector, with the aim of increasing the basic knowledge of this economic activity, increasing the competitiveness of its businesses and improving the sustainable development of tourism in the EU and its contribution to job creation.