Basic information

2004/2229(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
New prospects and new challenges for sustainable European tourism **Subject** 4.50 Tourism	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
TRAN Transport and Tourism	QUEIRÓ Luís (PPE-DE)	29/09/2004

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
REGI Regional Development	SUDRE Margie (PPE-DE)	14/03/2005
CULT Culture and Education	PODKAŃSKI Zdzisław Zbigniew (PPE-DE)	17/01/2005

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	2653	2005-04-18

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
21/11/2003	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2003)0716	Summary
18/11/2004	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
18/04/2005	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
14/06/2005	Vote in committee		Summary

15/07/2005	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0235/2005	
07/09/2005	Debate in Parliament		
08/09/2005	Decision by Parliament	T6-0335/2005	Summary
08/09/2005	Results of vote in Parliament		
08/09/2005	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2004/2229(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	TRAN/6/24786

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee opinion	CULT	PE355.630	21/04/2005	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE355.727	29/04/2005	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE357.923	18/05/2005	
Committee opinion	REGI	PE355.563	01/06/2005	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0235/2005	15/07/2005	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0335/2005 OJ C 193 17.08.2006, p. 0255-0325 E	08/09/2005	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2003)0716	21/11/2003	Summary

New prospects and new challenges for sustainable European tourism

2004/2229(INI) - 08/09/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted Luis QUIERO's (EPP-ED, PT) own-initiative report on new prospects and new challenges for sustainable European tourism by 471 votes in favour to 54 against and 58 abstentions. The report presents various initiatives, which were considered viable and useful to the central goal of sustainability in tourism EU-wide. (Please see the summary of 14/06/2005.)

Parliament pointed out that Europe is the world's leading tourist destination. Tourist and travel services contribute directly - at a rate of at least 4% - to the EU's GDP and account directly for more than seven million jobs. Furthermore, more than two million businesses, a large majority of which are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), are directly involved in providing tourist services. Whilst tourism does not at present constitute a Community policy, it is nevertheless affected by many policies which do come under the Community's remit and that means that it should be given greater consideration at EU level.

Competitiveness and quality of services: Parliament considered it vitally important to complete the internal market in tourist services and to achieve genuine equality of treatment between tourist operators. It proposed a Community-wide classification of tourist services, with the cooperation of the industry, to be used in particular for the classification of hotel facilities. Measures should also be taken to identify and to harmonise professional profiles in the tourist industry in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and guarantee a more transparent service that does not confuse users. Parliament called on the Council to restart work on the proposed revision of the Council Directive amending Directive 77/388/EEC as regards the special scheme for travel agents (COM(2003)0078). It reiterated its support for the objectives of simplifying this special VAT scheme and maintaining the competitive position of operators established in the EU vis-à-vis operators from third countries. The Council is asked to conclude the decision-making process on the proposal for amending Directive 77/388/EEC (COM(2003)0397), so as to enable all Member States to apply in a structured way reduced VAT rates for restaurants, as already exist for other tourism-related activities, such as holiday accommodation, plots on campsites, hotels and amusement parks.

Parliament went on to state that consumer rights in the tourism sector should be defined and better protected and that this should include identifying new forms of protection such as conciliation services for tourists. It called on the Commission to consider the drafting of a "tourism package" comprising both a review of the existing directives on consumers" rights with regard to tourism and new measures making it possible to improve consumer protection and quality standards in tourist services (particularly in the hotel and touring sectors) while taking account of new trends on the supply side (electronic sales).

Safety and security of tourism: Amongst other recommendations, Parliament tookthe view that the Commission should coordinate the establishment of a network for good practice exchange between high risk sports and leisure organisations and the provision of information on risk prevention and management, in particular for young people. It called on the Commission to investigate the desirability of requiring the maximum possible transparency and professionalism from companies managing this type of high risk leisure activity, asking that they take out compulsory care insurance.

New sustainable tourism activities: The report highlights of the dangers of mass tourism, senior citizens' tourism, and also stressed the need for all parties in the sector to take steps to capture new demand outside the high season, to spread visits over the year and to make better use of hotel and accommodation facilities. Parliament pointed to the positive repercussions of conference and business tourism, medical and thermal tourism, commemorative tourism, cultural tourism in every shape and form, gastronomic, naturalist, sports-based, spiritual, historical and language-related tourism, religious tourism, social tourism and so on.

It also considered that the tourism industry occupies a key place in the economic development of countries in the Mediterranean basin and is a vector for rapprochement in the cultural dialogue. Consideration should be given to the possibility of setting up a training exchange programme for people working in tourism in the Mediterranean regions, within the framework of the Barcelona process.

Knowledge and promotion of European tourism: Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to assess the possibility of a scheme, along the lines of the European Capital of Culture initiative, to designate outstanding European tourist destinations, to allow one or more regions or micro-regions to be selected yearly on the basis of quality indicators linked to the preservation and upgrading of cultural and natural heritage and the development of sustainable tourist services. Accordingly, Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to study the desirability of proposing an EU tourism mark or destination, characterised by tremendous diversity and high social quality and sustainability, and to promote it both within and outside the EU through a suitable communication campaign. Preserving the cultural heritage (in particular that which is designated world heritage by UNESCO) is of major importance to the sustainable development of tourism in the EU. Parliament asked the Commission and the Member States to create the "Iron Curtain Trail", an initiative analogous to the "Boston Freedom Trail" in remembrance of the American Independence War or to the "Berliner Mauerweg" in remembrance of the construction and fall of the Berlin Wall, in order to promote European identity.

Tourism and transport: Transport is essential to tourism, especially in the case of island regions and the most remote regions in general, both as a contribution to the quality of the tourist services chain and in terms of the accessibility of destinations. Parliament emphasised the need to promote combined train and bicycle travel and considers the 'Eurovelo' network to be a good basis for this. It also requested that railway enterprises allow bicycles on trains, including long distance and cross-border trains, as is already the case with the French TGV.

It welcomed the Commission's initiative to establish state-aid guidelines for regional airports and low-cost companies, so as to improve legal certainty and ensure fair competition in favour of tourist accessibility and regional development. Nevertheless, steps should be taken to ensure that the development of low-cost airlines is supervised, so as to avoid a proliferation of air links to specific regions or neighbouring regions, and on the contrary develop to the full the interconnection of air transport and collective land transport. Parliament also hoped for a specific Commission initiative laying down safety standards and monitoring procedures applicable to small carriers, minor airlines and secondary airports. In any case, the activities of the European Aviation Safety Agency must be stepped up and coordination with the Member States' authorities must be improved.

Structural intervention co-funded by the Community: When adopting the new structural policy instruments for 2007-2013, it should be ensured that the strategic guidelines provide for an integrated approach to tourism, allowing the EAFRD and the ERDF actions to be coordinated in a spirit similar to that of the LEADER programme and the Interreg and Urban programmes. This approach should allow the implementation of a genuine regional strategy for sustainable tourism. Parliament called on the Member States to establish objectives within their national strategic frameworks and operating programmes which will enable the regions to set up and fund coherent projects for developing sustainable tourism, tailor-made to local conditions and possibilities, including partnerships between different areas and institutions so as to build up appropriate local tourist systems.

Tourism and coordinating Community legislation: Parliament asked that any draft secondary legislation which has an impact on the tourist sector be identified at the outset of the implementation of the Commission's work programme, and be subject to an impact assessment, with the involvement of bodies representing industry, employees and consumers. It also called on the Commission to consider setting up a network of tourism correspondents/ coordinators in all Commission Directorates whose remit affects tourism activities.

In the debate, however, Commissioner Günther VERHEUGEN told Members that the Commission would not take on board many of their proposals. Consequently, it remains to be seen if proposals such as the introduction of an EU-wide hotel classification system or a European campaign to encourage the development of senior citizens' tourism within the Community will be realized.

New prospects and new challenges for sustainable European tourism

2004/2229(INI) - 18/04/2005

Following a brief exchange of views on the Commission’s communication, the Council adopted conclusions the main points of which were the following:

It noted that the European Union maintains its place as the most important tourism destination in the world, representing a large economic weight and contributing considerably to the employment of the European Union's workforce.

It stressed that the European Union is one of the world's richest and most varied tourist regions, with a huge variety of landscapes and cultures, good-quality infrastructure and a highly professional tourism sector, offering important business opportunities for sustainable growth and employment as well as opportunities for regional development. It takes the view that the rich potential of the new Member States for tourism, which could generate annual earnings of 46 billion euro and support up to 3 million jobs, needs to be fully tapped and notes that the economic development of countries such as China, India, Russia and Brazil will create substantial additional demand, which the European tourism industry needs to be well-positioned to meet.

It takes the view that a number of challenges of an economic and demographic nature, such as the increase in tourists in older age categories, the particular and increasing demands of young tourists, increasing competition from other tourist destinations and the decline foreseen in the European working population from 2010 need to be addressed.

It stresses that the European institutions, the Member States and regions need to continue their cooperation, stimulating the exchange of information among the stakeholders in tourism, in order to develop appropriate policies for sustainable tourism and welcomes the setting up of a Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG) by the Commission, with the task of steering and monitoring the preparation and implementation of a coherent set of actions to be undertaken by the different tourism stakeholders, with a view to the preparation, by 2007, of a "European Agenda 21 for Tourism".

It invites the Member States to:

– participate in the implementation of a cooperative approach between tourism stakeholders with a view to contributing to the work of the TSG;

– encourage the existing bodies specialised in sustainable tourism issues to network at the European level in order to facilitate the exchange of information between tourism destinations.

It invites the European tourism industry and other stakeholders of the tourism sector to:

– participate actively in and support the efforts undertaken by the European Union and the Member States to develop sustainable European tourism, in particular through the work of the TSG.

– contribute to the development of products and services based on sustainable patterns of production and consumption, promote corporate social responsibility and contribute to dialogue and cooperation between public and private stakeholders.

– integrate sustainability, eco-efficiency and exchange of good practices within business strategies and activities in order to strengthen performance and competitiveness in the global market.

It invites the Commission, the Member States and other stakeholders of the tourism sector to:

– work towards the design and use of approaches to and tools for the development and promotion of sustainable patterns of production and consumption with a view to improving the competitiveness, quality and employment potential of the European tourism sector;

– cooperate in favour of the sustainability of tourism destinations, in particular through the protection of natural areas, biodiversity and cultural heritage, which are leading resources and important assets of European tourism;

– make the best possible use of information and communication technologies and environmental technologies for the measures to be developed and implemented;

It further invites the Commission to:

– integrate sustainability concerns into Community policies and initiatives affecting European tourism, in particular by means of its impact assessment tool;

– facilitate the creation of a system to network regional, national, transnational and international bodies and actors so as to cooperate and exchange information on sustainable tourism initiatives;

– inform the Member States about the activities of the TSG in the first half of 2006 and submit a communication on a "European Agenda 21 for Tourism" to the Council before the end of 2007, with recommendations for concrete actions to be implemented by the different public and private stakeholders”.

New prospects and new challenges for sustainable European tourism

2004/2229(INI) - 21/11/2003 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to put forward some basic orientations and to invite the Member States to take action to improve the sustainability of European tourism from an economic, social and environmental point of view.

CONTENT: Ensuring the economic, social and environmental sustainability of European tourism is crucial both as a contribution to sustainable development in Europe and worldwide, and for the viability, continued growth, competitiveness and commercial success of this economically highly important sector. The challenges for sustainable European tourism are linked both to consumption patterns, in particular seasonal spread and travel for the purpose of tourism, and to the sector's production patterns, i.e. the value chain and the tourist destinations. Sustainable tourist behaviour and good public and private governance are key to changing unsustainable tourism patterns.

Stakeholders at all levels have started to prepare the ground for better matching of sustainability requirements in tourism and using its potential for sustainable development. Although not specifically targeting the tourism sector, the European Community contributes significantly to these efforts with a wide range of policies and measures that favour sustainable development, both in its global responsibilities and within the European Union. The Commission, therefore, considers the right pathway to the sustainability of European tourism to be reinforcing the existing framework for action and making best use of it. This means relying mainly on the positive effects of established Community policies and measures, while enhancing them, and on initiatives in favour of the sustainability of tourism that stakeholders other than the Community undertake in this field. Some specific measures to fill gaps should complement this approach. In the international context, the Community approach is thus to continue its policy of promoting the sustainability of tourism as a matter of trade and of assistance to the developing countries. It seeks reinforced co-operation for sustainable tourism with United Nations bodies and other international organisations, in respect of its global responsibility and in Europe. The Commission envisages several measures for strengthening the Community contribution to the sustainability of European tourism. These aim at increasing the benefit from European Governance and from the various Community policies and measures affecting European tourism and its sustainability. The Commission also wants to enhance co-operation with the World Tourism Organization and between all stakeholders of the tourism sector in Europe.

The Commission intends to launch a Tourism Sustainability Group composed of representatives of the various stakeholder categories. This group will have the task of drafting a detailed framework for action, which allocates specific activities to the individual stakeholders and include an agreed timetable for implementation. The Commission is willing to promote and support the implementation of activities defined by the group.

Specific initiatives will concern better monitoring and reporting of the sustainability of tourism, activities that further sustainable tourism consumption patterns by European citizens, and promoting sustainability in the tourism value chain and destinations. The development and use of appropriate information tools and networks will assist these initiatives.

The Commission expects other stakeholders in Europe to contribute significantly to the efforts for implementing sustainable tourism. This concerns European citizens and tourists, private sector enterprises, tourist destinations and public authorities, and civil society stakeholders.

The Commission plans to regularly report back on the progress of implementing these basic orientations.