



HOTREC and UNWTO stress the potential still to be exploited in tourism

Rome, 10 April 2014 – At the 68th General Assembly of HOTREC, the European business association representing the hospitality industry, Mr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary General of UNWTO (United Nations' World Tourism Organisation) stressed the societal and economic potential still to be exploited in the tourism industry. More than 1 billion people have crossed a border last year to travel for business or leisure and this number will continue to rise, as travel and tourism are one of the big trends of globalisation.

HOTREC and UNWTO agreed that for both organisations it is important to transform tourism into a true and recognised driving force for Europe's welfare and development. Mr. Rifai acknowledged last years' efforts by the European hospitality industry: *"I praise the private sector in Europe for its remarkable capacity to adapt to the changes shaping the market and fort thriving during the challenging times of economic crisis"*.

"Indeed, the hospitality industry was among the few ones in Europe, which continued creating new jobs during the last years difficult financial and economic situation" – added HOTREC President Kent Nyström.

This ability of adaptation should be further enhanced by an appropriate market framework so that the European tourism industry is best prepared to accommodate the forecasted rising demands in international tourism. At the end it shall be the society, the whole economy and the tourism businesses to benefit from the still unrevealed potential in international tourism. The recent initiatives of UNWTO might be an appropriate tool to achieve these goals together.

What is HOTREC?

HOTREC represents the hotel, restaurant and café industry at European level. This industry includes around 1,8 million businesses, of which 99% are small and medium sized enterprises (91% of them micro enterprises, i.e. employing fewer than 10 people). These businesses make up some 59% of industry value added. The hospitality industry provides some 10.2 million jobs in the EU alone. Together with the other tourism industries, the sector is one of the largest industries in Europe. HOTREC brings together 42 national associations representing the sector in 27 different European countries.

For further information: www.hotrec.eu

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