

PRESS RELEASE

EUROPE'S TOURISM SECTOR CALLS ON THE LIBE COMMITTEE TO ADOPT A SMART SCHENGEN VISA PACKAGE

The Network for the European Private Sector in Tourism, which gathers the main travel and tourism and trade associations in Europe, is calling on the European Parliament's Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee (LIBE) to adopt a smart Schengen Visa package.

According to UNWTO, Europe has steadily lost market share in world tourism, decreasing from 64% in 1980 to 51% in 2010. If things remain unchanged, as other regions of the world continue to step up their efforts to increase tourism flows, Europe's market share is expected to fall to 41% by 2030¹.

In this context, facilitating the entry of legitimate travellers to Europe by removing red tape from the current Visa Code could to a great extent improve Europe's outlook as a world leader in tourism. The European Commission forecast that the rules within its legislative proposal would strongly facilitate Schengen visa processing, leading to an increase of visitors of up to 60% and generate up to €25 billion in additional revenue for the EU every year².

The LIBE Committee, which is due to hold its vote on the package of measures that the European Commission proposed, therefore has a unique chance to keep Europe as the world's number one tourist destination for years to come.

In particular, NET calls on the LIBE MEPs to vote in favour of the mandatory issuance of multiple-entry visas so as to encourage tourists to repeat visit to Schengen countries and to facilitate the movement of legitimate workers in the EU. In this context, it is important to keep the definition of VIS registered regular traveller flexible, so as to ensure that high numbers of legitimate travellers can opt to apply for multiple-entry visas.

Other high-impact proposals NET supports include: i) the possibility for the traveller to apply for their visa at the consulate that is closer to their place of residence; ii) not make the proof of accommodation compulsory; iii) to give applicants a longer period to lodge their application, in order to allow them to plan their trip; iv) to support a visa fee waiver extension (e.g. for minors); and vi) to include tourists in the scope of touring visa.

Tourism is a key growth and employment driver in Europe, particularly at this crucial time of economic recovery. In 2014, tourism represented the third-largest socio-economic sector within the European Union, generating 10% of GDP and employing 13 million people³, 91% of which are working in small and medium-sized enterprises.

"We count on the European Parliament's support in the adoption of the visa package, which will result in an increase of €130 billion in total direct spending

CLIA Europe

CRUISE COMPANIES OPERATING
IN EUROPE

ECTAA

TRAVEL AGENTS &
TOUR OPERATORS IN EUROPE

EFCO&HPA

CAMPS SITES, HOLIDAY PARKS
& HOLIDAY VILLAGES IN EUROPE

ETOA

EUROPEAN INBOUND TOURISM

HOTREC

HOTELS, RESTAURANTS
& CAFÉS IN EUROPE

IAAPA

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
AMUSEMENT PARKS AND ATTRACTIONS

IRU

BUS, COACH & TAXI OPERATORS
WORLDWIDE

¹ **Tourism Highlights**, UNWTO, 2014 http://dtxtg4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/unwto_highlights14_en_hr_0.pdf

² **Study on the economic impact of short stay visa facilitation on the tourism industry and on the overall economies of EU Member States being part of the Schengen Area**, European Commission, 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/files/visas_study_2013/final_report_visa_facilitation_en.pdf

³ Source: EUROSTAT

over five years and some 1,3 million more jobs, and which won't by any mean undermine the security of European citizens", commented Christian de Barrin, HOTREC CEO.

* * *

NET, the **N**etwork for the **E**uropean Private Sector in **T**ourism is a high-level contact group comprising various trade associations. Its members are [CLIA](#), [ECTAA](#), [EFCO&HPA](#), [ETOA](#), [HOTREC](#), [IAPAA](#), [IRU](#). Our purpose is to develop common goals for industry and work with policy makers and other partners to achieve them. For more information please [email NET](#).