



## **Tourism tops HOTREC 70th General Assembly's agenda**

**Luxembourg, 23 April 2015** – On the occasion of HOTREC 70<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, Commissioner Bieńkowska, Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, highlighted the importance of Tourism to the EU economy and presented her priorities towards the tourism sector. MEP Claudia Tapardel, Chair of the Tourism Intergroup in the Parliament, underlined the importance of a straight cooperation with the Commission and HOTREC in order for the Tourism Intergroup to reinforce its role inside the Parliament.

Commissioner Bieńkowska stressed that the hospitality sector, together with the other tourism industries, is the third largest socio-economic activity in Europe and is, therefore, critical for Europe's competitiveness and jobs creation. She mentioned that in the coming months the Commission will be putting forward proposals to reduce the administrative burden on small and medium enterprises, something which will be, in her view, a great benefit to the hospitality industry. She also counts on the continuation of a fruitful cooperation with HOTREC and mentioned that she will prioritise activities such as:

- Promoting the digitalisation of the Tourism SMEs;
- Streamlining the regulatory and administrative framework impacting Tourism;
- Upgrading the skills and competences of the Tourism sector;
- Fostering low and medium season tourism exchanges;
- Promoting sustainable tourism.

MEP Claudia Tapardel reaffirmed her willingness of continuing striving for the interests of the hospitality sector, through the organisation of fruitful discussions at the Tourism Intergroup, at the European Parliament. *"The tourism sector continued creating jobs, even during the time of the crisis. It is a very resilient sector. The intergroup is the voice of the Tourism sector and is there to help bridging Committees on policies directly impacting the SMEs of the tourism sector."* commented MEP Tapardel.

*"The SMEs and microenterprises composing the tourism sector are the backbone of the EU economy and need financial incentive to keep innovative and high quality services. Overall, self-regulation should be promoted, whereas burdensome over-regulation should be avoided. This is the way forward in order for Europe to continue keeping its position as world's number one tourist destination",* said Ms. Susanne Kraus-Winkler, President of HOTREC.

### **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 28 different European countries.

For further information: [www.hotrec.eu](http://www.hotrec.eu)

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