

OVER 30 EUROPEAN TOURISM BODIES GATHER IN PRAGUE TO DISCUSS CHALLENGING WINTER AHEAD

- Global economic uncertainty and cost-of-living crisis front of mind for tourism leaders in Europe this winter
- Leaders reflect on impact of Ukraine war on uneven tourism recovery across Europe

Brussels/ Prague, 16 November: Today, the heads of Europe’s national tourism boards convened in Prague for the General Meeting of the European Travel Commission (ETC). This meeting, which was hosted by CzechTourism, brought together over 30 CEOs of national tourism authorities (NTOs) from across Europe and ETC associate members from private industry to discuss the state of play for Europe’s tourism sector. The meeting took place alongside the European Tourism Forum organised by the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU. ‘

ETC’s newest member, the State Agency for Tourism Development of Ukraine (SATD), was in attendance for the first time. This gave an opportunity for the NTOs in attendance to hear first-hand how the Ukrainian tourism sector is coping with the war.

The gathering followed a successful summer for tourism in Europe. The most recent edition of the [‘European Tourism Trends & Prospects’](#) quarterly report from ETC indicated that travel enthusiasm persisted this summer with over half of reporting destinations recovering to at least 77% of 2019 levels of foreign arrivals. However, a challenging economic backdrop will lead to a difficult winter for the tourism sector, with data for much of the region already indicating the start of a mild recession in Q3.

ETC continues to shine a spotlight on impact of global uncertainty on European travel

ETC predicts that high inflation, a key factor behind the bleak winter outlook will impact the travel recovery on multiple fronts. The NTOs discussed that consumers in key markets are expected to face higher-for-longer inflation levels and rising interest rates. As a result, this will erode disposable income and reduce the scope for discretionary spending, delaying the recovery in travel. At the same time, airlines and hospitality will face continued price pressures through elevated energy prices and higher labour costs, passing this on to consumers via rising fares.

The NTOs in attendance agreed that it is vital now for ETC research reports to closely follow consumer confidence and travel sentiment in Europe and key markets to adapt the tourism offer and promotional activities addressing traveller’s major concerns.

Commenting on the discussions, ETC President Luis Araujo stated: *“It was an honour to be joined in Prague by the best and brightest minds across the European travel sector. Thank you to CzechTourism for being such gracious hosts. It has been humbling to hear how rising inflation is impacting our members across the board. At ETC, we are committed to ensuring the European travel sector successfully weathers the global impacts on the horizon this coming year. Over the course of the pandemic the travel sector proved itself to be resilient and highly adaptable. As it endures new challenges, I have ever faith that European tourism will continue to evolve, embracing new sustainable and digital travel solutions”.*

The NTOs in attendance also took the opportunity to discuss how the conflict in Ukraine has caused uneven recovery of tourism across Europe. The sharpest declines in tourist arrivals were recorded in the Baltic States and Eastern European countries bordering Russia or Ukraine, still on the average recording drops of approximately 40% compared to 2019 arrivals. ETC members stressed that the planned joint marketing activities co-funded by the EU showcasing European destinations and tapping into new markets to replace Russian tourists will be the core priority to address this problem.

Commenting on this, Jan Herget, Managing Director at CzechTourism stated: *“It is crucial to commonly address all the difficulties we face at the moment. But it is also important to mention that Europe is by no means an unsafe place for tourists. For example, the Czech Republic was awarded with the title of one of the top 10 safest countries in the world in the past 5 consecutive years. And the joint ETC campaign we will hopefully execute next year together with our CEE partners from Poland, Slovakia and Hungary is a great opportunity to promote Eastern Europe on the U.S. market and show it as the safe and attractive destination it definitely is.”*

Although immediate economic and geo-political risks were rightly front of mind, ETC ensured those in attendance also heard about the latest trends in tourism from ETC associate members including Airbnb, Google, Crowdriff, Sojern and Expedia.

ENDS

[Note to editors](#)

The **European Travel Commission** (ETC) represents the national tourism organisations of Europe. Established in 1948, ETC's mission is to strengthen the sustainable development of Europe as a tourist destination and to promote Europe in third markets. Its 35-member tourism boards work together to build the value of tourism for all the diverse European destinations through cooperation in sharing best practice, market intelligence and promotion. For more information, visit www.etc-corporate.org and follow [@ETC_Corporate](#).

Media contact

Shane Bradley
Hume Brophy Communications
etc@humbrophy.com
Ph: +32 (0)2 234 6860