



Joint Press Release

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UNWTO and ETC advance cooperation on tourism issues

UNWTO and the European Travel Commission (ETC) have signed an agreement committing to advance their joint efforts to address major issues facing the tourism sector (Berlin, Germany, 7 March 2012).

"Global challenges demand increased cooperation. Today's agreement emphasizes the strong synergy between the work of our two organizations and is a step forward in maximizing our efforts," said UNWTO Secretary-General, Mr. Taleb Rifai. "Since 2001, UNWTO and ETC have been working closely together to monitor trends in the ever changing tourism marketplace and help their Member countries to be more competitive. Under this new agreement, I am confident we can better respond to the needs of our Members and the tourism sector at large."

"We have made significant steps towards increasing competitiveness in tourism over the course of more than ten years of joint research carried out between ETC and UNWTO," says ETC President, Mrs. Petra Hedorfer. "With a shift in global tourism trends fuelled by the emerging BRIC economies, Europe, as the world's most visited travel destination, stands a lot to gain from this partnership. Research and market intelligence is of critical importance now more than ever, and today's agreement not only strengthens the importance of collaboration at European level, but also on a global level."

One of the major initiatives under the new cooperation agreement is the establishment of the Global National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) Think Tank, launched at the ITB Travel Trade Show in Berlin. The Think Tank will provide a forum for the heads of national tourism bodies from all world regions to identify and collaborate on issues of shared interest, from changing market conditions and trends to new technologies and consumer rights. It will further allow NTOs to speak with one voice on issues of common concern, namely travel facilitation.

UNWTO and ETC will also combine efforts on issues such as trends and market research, products and segments, marketing methodologies, benchmarking, sustainability and crisis management. The two parties will continue their on-going series of best-practice handbooks and market studies which, to date, cover the most significant source markets for Europe, including China, India, the USA and the Middle East and the topical issues of branding, e-marketing and product development.

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The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO: www.UNWTO.org), a United Nations specialized agency, is the leading international organization with the decisive and central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how. Its membership includes 155 countries, 7 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 400 Affiliate Members. Follow us on [twitter](#), [vimeo](#) and [flickr](#)

The European Travel Commission is a non-profit organisation headquartered in Brussels. Its role, on behalf of its 33 member National Tourism Organisations, is to market and promote tourism to Europe from long-haul markets, specifically in Brazil, Canada, China and the USA. ETC also conducts a programme of market research and offers a forum for knowledge-sharing and best practice in the field of tourism.