



EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION
COMMISSION EUROPÉENNE DU TOURISME
Rue du Marché aux Herbes 61 - 1000 Brussels - BELGIUM
tel +32 2 - 548 9000 fax +32 2 - 514 1843
press@visiteurope.com / www.etc-corporate.org

PRESS RELEASE

THE EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION ELECTS A NEW CHAIRMAN FOR ITS MARKET INTELLIGENCE GROUP

Reykjavik, 18 March 2014. The European Travel Commission (ETC) elected Vincent Nijs, Research Manager at Visit Flanders, as the new Chairman of its Marketing Intelligence Group (MIG), the leading European tourism research network, with almost three decades of experience in sharing knowledge and advancing research for the tourism sector.

The election took place at the 28th Annual Meeting of the European Travel Commission's Market Intelligence Group, held between March 12 and 14 in Reykjavik, Iceland. Vincent Nijs, Manager of Visit Flanders' Research Department, was selected as the new Chairman of the expert group. "Joint efforts lead to successful and efficient applications of our collective resources, as well as to a better dialogue amongst tourism professionals", said the newly elected Chairman. "Improving knowledge transfer, by which I mean the process that goes from eliciting information needs into research projects and actionable findings, is the key objective of my term". The Chairman congratulated Emöke Halassy and Tünde Mester, from Hungarian Tourism PLC, and Peter Nash, from Tourism Ireland, for being elected as vice-chairpersons.

The high-level expert group gathered in Reykjavik to take stock of the latest trends in tourism and share knowledge on research-related aspects. The research directors of the ETC member National Tourist Offices, together with representatives of ETC research partners joined the meeting and shared their latest findings and research deliverables. "Tourism in Europe has grown faster than the world average in 2013", said John Kester, Acting Director of the UNWTO Tourism Market Trends Programme. "For 2014 we expect the region to consolidate growth. Most source markets show good prospects, but due to the recent events growth

might soften from the Russian Federation, one of the fastest growing markets for many ETC member destinations recently". "Tourism growth has an enormous value for economies in Europe and around the world", said Rochelle Turner, Head of Research for the World Travel & Tourism Council. "The sector holds real opportunities for job creation, especially in addressing youth unemployment problems faced by countries across the world". "In many countries", she emphasised, "Travel & Tourism provides a much higher proportion of jobs for both women and young people than is represented in the workforce as a whole".

The outcome of the meeting will serve as framework to shape the future research agenda. The research programme drawn by this high-level expert group is designed to help European destinations to increase their individual competitive advantages, while strengthening the overall position of Europe as the World's Number 1 tourism destination. "The European Commission has among its aims the consolidation of the tourism socio-economic knowledge base at European level", said Iuliana Aluas, Policy Officer of the EC. "Socio-economic knowledge is crucial in order to make informed policy decisions, and ETC's studies represent precious sources of data for us".

The ETC Market Intelligence Group is an established and internationally acknowledged Think Tank on tourism research. It serves as an active forum for tourism experts to share knowledge and provide strategic advice on market intelligence. "This is the finest collection of tourism researchers in Europe", ETC President Peter De Wilde said in his opening message to the group. "The evidence-based conclusions and recommendations provided by this group are vital to our organisation to prepare for challenges that lie ahead for Destination Europe".

The meeting was generously hosted by the Icelandic Tourist Board.

For more details on the event please send us your enquiries on info@visiteurope.com.

Note to editors:

The European Travel Commission is an association of National Tourism Organisations (NTOs). It was created in 1948 to promote Europe as a tourism destination to the long-haul markets outside Europe, originally in the USA and later in Canada, Latin America and Asia. It currently has 33 member NTOs, including 8 from outside the European Union.

Europe is the world's No. 1 tourist destination with 535 million international arrivals and more than 50% of the market share of worldwide tourism

Contact: ETC Executive Unit - Rue du Marché aux Herbes 61 - 1000 Brussels - BELGIUM.

T: + 32 2 548 9000 F: + 32 2 514 1843 e-mail: press@visiteurope.com

For further information: ETC's corporate website www.etc-corporate.org is aimed at industry, government and educational personnel interested in tourism to Europe.

Tourists seeking travel-specific information and ideas are directed to ETC's consumer portal www.visiteurope.com.