

FULL VISA LIBERALISATION FOR CHINESE TRAVELLERS WILL HELP BOOST EUROPEAN ECONOMY

A full visa liberalisation scenario would generate additional spending of €12.5bn per annum

Brussels, 4 December 2018 - Europe's visa regimes are among the most restrictive in the world according to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) which estimated that 74% of the global population would have required a visa to travel to Europe in 2015. This number largely accounts for visitors from long-haul source markets which are amongst the most valuable as they tend to stay longer and spend more per day than the average visitor.

The European Travel Commission (ETC) has published a report quantifying the potential impacts of visa facilitation for Chinese travellers on European tourism. Presently China is one of the long-haul source markets for which visa-free access to the EU, including the Schengen area, is not available despite the incremental rise in Chinese travel demand to Europe over the last ten years. China is the world's largest outbound travel market, both in terms of generated arrivals and total travel expenditure. To assess the potential impact of visa facilitation, the report first undertakes an analysis of the main benefits and types of visa facilitation policy and then applies them to travel patterns from China to EU 27 (excluding UK) destinations. The results show that visa liberalisation would undoubtedly increase demand from one of the most lucrative source markets and contribute to European GDP and employment growth. The analysis estimates that a full visa liberalisation scenario between China and the EU is likely to increase the average growth of Chinese arrivals from 7% to 18% per year between 2018-2023. This in turn would generate additional inbound spending of €12.5bn per annum and raise total employment level by nearly 1%, creating 237,000 additional jobs, including 120,000 directly within the travel and tourism sector. This would contribute to an increase of Europe's GDP by 1%.

To avoid a greater loss of opportunities, especially from long-haul source markets such as China, it is imperative that the EU's visa policies are modernized and enhanced to further facilitate travel from key markets. Mr. Robert Andrzejczyk, ETC Vice-President and Coordinator of ETC's visa advocacy work, stated that *"liberalisation of Europe's visa regimes for Chinese travellers is essential for the continent to maximise its share of the benefit from the growth of the Chinese travel market in the decades ahead. Now more than ever Europe needs to secure further employment; investing in visa liberalisation targeted at key markets can achieve this aim efficiently and effectively"*.

The report on visa policy on Chinese travel to Europe is publicly available on www.etc-corporate.org.

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[Note to editors - About the European Travel Commission](#)

The European Travel Commission is an association of National Tourism Organisations (NTOs). It was created in 1948 to promote Europe as a tourist destination to the long-haul markets outside of Europe, originally in the USA and later in Canada, Latin America and Asia. It currently has 34 member NTOs, including 8 from outside the European Union. Europe is the world's no. 1 tourist destination with 671 million international arrivals in 2017 and more than 50% of the market share of worldwide tourism.

For further information: ETC's corporate website <http://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 <http://www.visit europe.com>.