

EUROPEAN TOURISM SET TO GROW FOR THE FIFTH YEAR IN A ROW

Brussels, 15 May 2014. Early results provide optimism for another strong year for European tourism. In its latest quarterly “European Tourism 2014 – Trends & Prospects” the European Travel Commission (ETC) reports about Europe’s sustained growth for the fifth year in a row, an encouraging momentum that calls for bold actions, to strengthen European tourism competitiveness and set Europe on a sustainable path of growth.

According to the European Travel Commission’s (ETC) latest report, results for the first months of the year point to a continuation of growth for European tourism in 2014. Positive prospects come from both intra-regional and long-haul markets, with economic indicators suggesting a strong performance for large outbound markets such as Germany, UK, France and the USA. Industry indicators point steadily upwards and reinforce the positive picture. This encouraging momentum reflects Europe’s far from exhausted appeal, but also calls for bold actions to strengthen European tourism competitiveness further.

Forward momentum for tourism in Europe

Preliminary results point to bullish growth in international arrivals and overnights for destinations in Europe during the first quarter of 2014. Although not representative of full year results, early indicators are directionally significant, and high growth typically bodes for handsome growth throughout the year. The positive picture, reinforced by key indicators from the air travel and accommodation sector, sets Europe to grow on top of a strong performance in 2013 (+5%).

Signs of positive growth come from the weighty intra-regional market. As the crisis' legacy fades and confidence improves, European outbound travel strengthens further, while becoming more balanced across source markets. Economic indicators suggest a strong performance of Germany and the UK in 2014, with private consumption boosted by sustained economic growth. Underlying fundamentals of outbound travel also remain strong for Russia, although trends may change abruptly depending on the evolution of the Ukraine crisis. Travel from Spain, Italy and the Netherlands may rebound this year, although cost-conscious travellers from these markets may give preference to last-minute deals and short trips.

The picture from long-haul markets is mixed. Travel from United States, Europe’s largest long-haul market, is expected to continue growing strongly, in the context of sustained economic growth and acceleration in consumer spending. China is expected to keep on posting two-digit growth, as a reflection of booming demand for travel among its vast middle-class, and

progressively moving from a niche market for Europe into a strategic one. Uncertainty about the Japanese market remains high, while the Brazilian market is expected to remain in low gear in 2014.

Championing growth for Destination Europe

European tourism is experiencing an encouraging momentum. International tourist arrivals point to sustained growth for the fifth year in a row, which reflects Europe's far-from-exhausted tourism potential. The mix of highly attractive tourism offers, short distances, high tolerance and a stable political climate give Europe an unparalleled advantage in the world tourism race. Yet, Europe's leading position is not unassailable, and the European tourism sector should take advantage of good economic times to invest in a sustainable future.

"In long-haul markets, Europe as a whole lacks a clear image as tourism destination," said Peter de Wilde, ETC President. "The lack of a co-ordinated marketing strategy," he continued "undermines the effectiveness of marketing efforts of other actors, as they bring a scattered, disjointed message to potential visitors. Championing tourism growth from long-haul markets requires a co-ordinated branding programme that truly reflects Europe's core values and strengths".

The full report can be downloaded from ETC's corporate website under the following link: www.etc-corporate.org under the category Trends Watch in Research.

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 563 million international arrivals and more than 50% of the market share of worldwide tourism

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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.