

TOURISM LEADERS DISCUSS THREAT TO EUROPE AS WORLD'S No.1 DESTINATION

Brussels, 22nd October 2014. Tourism represents a major socio-economic activity in the EU with a wide-ranging impact on growth, employment and social development. Its total contribution to the EU's economy is 9% of GDP and 10% of the workforce¹. One in seven enterprises in Europe's non-financial sector is tourism related. These 3.4 million enterprises often serve locals more than they do visitors and they employ 15.2 million people, which equates to 29% of service sector employment.

Europe is the no.1 tourist destination in the world, a position it has held for decades. Europe recorded 563.8 million international tourist arrivals in 2013, representing a market share of almost 52%. More than 432 million arrivals were to the EU-28, representing a global share of almost 40%. In financial terms, Europe's tourism receipts totalled €368.5 billion, corresponding to a share of around 42% of global tourism expenditure (€653.7 billion). Tourism expenditure in the EU-28 was €303.7 billion, representing a global share of almost 35%².

International tourist arrivals to EU destinations are expected to grow by 2.1% or 9 million international arrivals a year on average until 2025, compared with an average of 2.4% in the period 1995-2010, whereas worldwide international arrivals will grow faster by 3.5%. This means that, despite continuous growth, the EU's share of the international tourism market will inevitably decline as a result of tourism growing faster in emerging world regions.

A cocktail of challenges is worrying tourism authorities and the travel industry alike, across the continent. Europe is facing a combination of structural difficulties including an ageing population, the euro crisis, globalisation and growing (youth) unemployment. These are happening in a global context where a new generation of digitally sophisticated travellers are seeking distinct meaningful experiences that appeal to their interests and affirm their status. Additional difficulties hindering Europe's competitiveness include a highly complex and onerous regulatory framework, fiscal and legal handicaps (in the form of visas and taxation), a lack of a clear brand image, insufficient promotional funds and increasing competition from other destinations.

At this year's World Travel Market, taking place 3-6 November in London, a panel of tourism leaders from the public and private sectors will address these challenges and identify what's needed to reverse the trends and shape the future development of tourism in Europe. The panellists are: Pedro Ortún, Director Tourism of the European Commission; Tom Jenkins, CEO of the European Tour Operators Association (ETOA); Martin Craigs, CEO of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and Eduardo Santander, CEO of the European Travel Commission (ETC).

¹ WTTC (2014): European Union Economic Impact Report.

² UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, Volume 12, June 2014

As a first response to these challenges, the ETC will unveil a new communication strategy and a new VisitEurope.com portal at a press conference following the panel discussion.

Media Accreditation and Further Information

- **[Panel Discussion – Europe's Tourism Crisis](#)**
10.30 am, Tuesday 4th November, Room 13-14 (South Gallery)
- **[Press Conference – Visit Europe New Communication Strategy in response to tourism crisis](#)**
12.30 am, Tuesday 4th November, Platinum Suite 6 (Press Centre)

For Media Accreditation: [click here](#)

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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.

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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.