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PRESS RELEASE

BRANDING EUROPE - MARKETING A GREAT DESTINATION !

10 April 2008. BLED, Slovenia. “Speaking of Europe, the idea at the core of the European Travel Commission (ETC) is that “Destination Europe” can be more effective as a whole. That we *can achieve more, be more successful together than we can on our own*”, said Dr Arthur Oberascher, President of the European Travel Commission, at a Press Conference in Bled Slovenia during the ETC’s 74th General Meeting.

“We are not only older than the European Union - ETC was founded sixty years ago this year, in 1948 - but we also have more members.

He continued: “So, what we have achieved over the last few years is really remarkable, even “historic”. Our research shows us that our culture is what potential guests overseas think is unique about Europe. “Europe the origin” - the origin of so many things, past and present, that have shaped our world. Based on this positioning we gave Europe, the world’s leading tourist destination, *for the very first time*, a logo and slogan, “Europe - The Never-Ending Journey”.

“This is what “Brand Europe” is supposed to do: To complement, enhance and energise each national brand. It is a European platform on which we can all position ourselves more effectively in the global marketplace - a market that is not only growing, but growing more challenging for Europe and all of our individual national destinations year by year.

Another major achievement of the ETC in marketing “Europe as a whole” is our joint European tourism portal, visiteurope.com. visiteurope.com was the first time the European Commission invested money in promoting tourism. The website really gives us the means to market Europe as a whole globally: in traditional markets like the US, Canada and Japan as well as in emerging markets like China, India and Russia. We already have a Japanese version, and the Chinese version is due to be launched later this year.

Tourism is a global growth industry. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) predicts that by 2020 there will be almost 1.6 billion arrivals. But Europe’s market share is declining: in 1990 it stood at 61.5%. By last year it was just over 53.5%. And by 2020 the UNWTO says that our market share will slip to just short of 46%.

We always have to remember that the relationship with the guest is at the core of the tourism business. A hotel booking is just one step in a chain of decisions.

More...

We have to examine our mission both as national tourism organisations and as ETC: We have to move from one “P” to four “Ps”. That is, we have to shift from centring on one “P”, promotion - from organisations that focus on advertising and communications - to knowledge-focused organisations that provide expertise for product and service design, price strategies and placement, as well as the fourth “P” promotion.

We need to raise awareness of the interrelationships between tourism and other sectors of the economy, and also between tourism’s development across national and regional boundaries, and for us NTOs that means collaborating more closely.”

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A photo of Arthur Oberascher is available from the ETC Executive Unit.

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 39 member NTOs, including 12 from outside the European Union. ETC is an independent body which is financed entirely by annual membership contributions and partnership funding.

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