

# Cabinet newsletter

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Dear Reader,

The European Commission, in collaboration with the Spanish Presidency of the Council organised a European Stakeholders Conference in Madrid, Spain, on the 14 and 15 April. The Conference coincided with an Informal Meeting of Tourism Ministers where the Declaration of Madrid project on the future of European Tourism was adopted. I would like to draw your attention to the outcome of these two important events which represent a first step towards a comprehensive review of European tourism policies.



I hope you will enjoy reading it.

Antonio Preto  
Head of Cabinet

A comprehensive review of European tourism policies should be based on two interrelated assumptions. On one hand the process of review is driven by an internal factor: the Lisbon Treaty foresees a specific competence for the European Union in the field of tourism to complement actions of the Member States. On the other hand by doing so, the Lisbon Treaty acknowledges and emphasises a well established fact: tourism, indeed, accounts for 5% of the EU GDP. When considering the related activities, the contribution of tourism goes up to 10% of EU GDP. The organisation of these two important events in Madrid is a first step in taking into account the importance of tourism industry and in outlining policies in order to anticipate trends and respond to upcoming changes. Bearing in mind the key role of tourism in economy and society, Vice-president Tajani is willing to invest in this sector, giving a strong priority to tourism in his mandate.

Following a coherent approach in setting up and in implementing new policies, the conference was preceded by a discussion with Member States, Candidate countries and industry representatives, at national, European and international level.

The leitmotiv of a political plan to promote tourism should be the right of travelling for tourism. Tourism competitiveness will come first from the accessibility for young people, families facing difficult circumstances and people over 65. Vice-president Tajani pointed out at the Conference: "*I believe that the way we spend our holidays is a formidable indicator of our quality of life*".

Tourism has at least three different dimensions: economic, social and cultural. Vice-president Tajani would like to develop and to involve all these aspects in the same framework for a new EU tourism policy. In boosting the competitiveness of the sector, European Union has to create a favourable environment in order to allow enterprises to seize the opportunity of innovation. Innovation should be in the same time the mean and the result of development and growth in this field. Moreover any action should promote and improve sustainability, considering that the value of tourism can be measured in sustainability.

Policies adopted to improve tourism industry growth have to be aimed at attracting tourist flows from emerging countries. This result could be reached through a special cooperation with third countries and international organisations. When deciding to put in place such measures, information becomes a resource in two ways: information as knowledge of market trends of tourism supply; information as tourism awareness among people.

Addressing to tourism authorities of all EU Member States, the Vice-President pointed out that the European Commission encourages a close cooperation with Member States, at all different territorial levels. However coordination policies at EU level is needed, when considering that the majority of people travelling across Europe are European citizens; hence, the opportunity, through tourism, to strengthen the concept of European citizenship.

The Conference was a chance to exchange ideas and projects between the European Commission and Member States.

After the closing of the Conference, the Vice-President participated to the informal meeting of Tourism Ministers. During this ministerial meeting the Declaration of Madrid project on the future of European Tourism was presented and adopted. This Declaration represents a fundamental result towards the implementation of a European tourism policy, given that through this tool Member States agreed on a series of recommendations to be adopted by the European Commission. The Declaration emphasises the role of innovation and sustainability in tourism industry and takes into account the opportunity, as source of tourism, represented by countries like China, India or Russia. By doing so, this document qualifies the commitment of European Union in a field in which Europe has an evident competitive advantage.