

# Cabinet newsletter

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Dear Reader,

The European Commission has approved the new initiative on tourism introduced by Vice-President Tajani. The aim of this initiative is to keep Europe the world's top tourist destination and to give a boost to the competitiveness of the European tourism sector.

Antonio Preto  
Head of Cabinet



The initiative on tourism, just introduced by Vice-President Tajani, represents one of the main steps towards a renewal of the tourism sector in Europe. This new action plan for tourism at European level aims to make the most of the new EU competence on tourism introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, which mandates the European Union to complement actions of the Member States in the field of tourism.

Last April during the European Tourism Conference in Madrid, Vice-President Tajani had the opportunity to discuss with all public and private players involved and to gather the demands of the European tourism sector.

After the economic crisis and in this current period of recovery, tourism is crucial for the EU objectives in terms of economic growth. As Vice-President Tajani said, it represents a sector where sustainability and growth are values to be promoted and not only objectives to be reached. It is an industry where innovation is crucial, especially regarding ICT.

The initiative is designed to help industry face these new challenges, in order to promote a new concept of tourism based on quality and responsibility and face international competition. It proposes for instance the launch of a joint "ICT tourism platform" among tourism stakeholders in order to foster innovation in the sector and to adapt enterprises, especially SMEs, to new technologies. The initiative promotes the competitiveness of a sustainable, responsible and qualitative tourism, through the establishment of sustainability indicators to evaluate destinations through a system of labelling to increase confidence of consumers by identifying interesting destinations in terms of natural, historical or cultural criteria. Furthermore the initiative suggests some actions to increase the market share of Europe, by attracting tourists from the main emerging countries (China, Russia, India, Brazil) and from Mediterranean

countries. It is also proposed to adapt tourism supply to elderly people's demand: these are tourists with a lot of free time and financial resources. By doing so, the initiative takes into strong account the most recent trends in global market: the increase of middle class in emerging countries and the population ageing.

The European Commission will explore the possibility of financial instruments to strengthen these actions. Actually tourism is interlinked with other economic issues and has a clear transversal aspect which involves other EU policies, such as transports, competition, internal market, environment and consumer protection.

With the adoption of this initiative Vice-President Tajani wants to maximise the potential of the great variety of the European tourism supply. As he pointed out: *"It will be hard work, but it is our aim to keep Europe the world's top tourist destination. Today's communication lays down 21 actions that will thrust Europe's tourism industry to the 21st century"*.