



## **Collaborative Economy Short-Term Accommodation Rental Services**

### **Plenary Launching Series of Workshops**

#### **- Background Paper -**

In its Communication on the European Agenda for the Collaborative Economy adopted in June 2016<sup>1</sup>, the Commission identified lack of clarity on the applicable legislation and regulatory fragmentation as the two main challenges to a balanced development of the collaborative economy in the EU. The Commission therefore provided legal guidance on the application of EU law to the collaborative economy as well as policy recommendations for its balanced development in Europe, considering that at that stage no additional EU rules specifically on the collaborative economy were required.

In its Communication, the Commission announced working with Member States to facilitate the balanced development of the collaborative economy as well as a number of actions to monitor its development<sup>2</sup>. This approach was widely supported by Member States who, at the informal meeting of the Competitiveness Ministers in Amsterdam in January 2016 and at the Competitiveness Council in September 2016, called upon the Commission to facilitate the exchange of best practices among Member States' authorities.

Given the very diverse sectors in which the collaborative economy is emerging, stakeholders and public authorities expressed an interest in a forum to discuss how to translate the general Commission guidance and policy recommendations into more concrete indications for specific services sectors.

In response, and considering that divergent policy approaches continue to fragment the single market for collaborative services, the Commission services are launching a series of workshops for Member States and stakeholders to present and discuss regulatory practices, focusing at this stage on collaborative short-term accommodation rental services. The aim is to identify best practices and, on that basis, produce a set of shared guiding policy principles which Member States could agree to consider when developing policies and regulation in this sector. Stakeholders would also be invited to endorse and implement the policy principles.

Policy principles will be based on existing EU legislation and its application to the collaborative economy, as set out in the June 2016 Commission Communication. The focus will be on the key issues already identified in the June Communication: market access requirements, liability, consumer protection, and taxation.

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2016) 356 final

<sup>2</sup> The Commission has launched a series of studies to this end, looking both at developments and regulation of specific services such as urban passenger transport or tourism accommodation and at horizontal issues such as consumer issues, taxation issues or impacts on employment.

The objective of guiding policy principles would be to reduce regulatory fragmentation in the Single Market, facilitate the implementation of EU legislation and promote best practices. This would make it easier for citizens to provide and/or use collaborative short-term accommodation rental services without favouring one business model over the other. It would help ensure that consumers can benefit from new types of services while enjoying a high level of protection without imposing disproportionate requirements on services providers. It would equally facilitate compliance with existing tax obligations.

The workshops will bring together national administrations, representatives of municipalities and regions as well as industry, consumer and employee associations. The Commission will chair the workshops, the first of which is taking place on 14 February. This project is complementary to other Commission initiatives and does not pre-empt any future steps that the Commission might take to ensure national regulatory frameworks are in line with EU law, where appropriate.