



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing

**Unit F4 – Tourism, Emerging and Creative Industries**

# ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

## BRUSSELS

**15 December 2015, 9:30 to 17:30**

## MINUTES

*Chair of the meeting: Mr Carlo Corazza, Head of Unit and Iuliana Aluas, Deputy Head of Unit, F4 "Tourism, Emerging and Creative Industries", DG GROWTH*

### ***Morning session 9:30-13:00***

The chair welcomed the participants and started the meeting with information on the reorganization of DG GROWTH (Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs) and its impact on tourism related files. Tourism is under the responsibility of:

- **Directorate F:** “Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing”, Director: Mr. Sławomir TOKARSKI
- **Unit F4:** “Tourism, Emerging and Creative Industries”, Head of Unit: Mr. Carlo CORAZZA, Deputy Head of Unit: Ms. Iuliana ALUAS
- **Task Force:** “Services and Self-Regulation” dealing with tourism and Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR) under the lead of Mr. Pedro ORTUN as Principal Adviser.

The chair informed also about the reduction of the unit F4 staff, several policy officers dealing with tourism files have left the unit.

### **1) Approval of the agenda**

Approved.

### **2) Approval of the draft minutes of the meeting of 8 May 2015**

Approved with the correction sent by Finland and Portugal.

### **3) Follow-up of the European Tourism Forum and main priorities for the future EU Tourism policy**

The chair made an explanation about the priorities for the future EU actions on tourism.

After the reorganisation of DG GROWTH, examining comments received from Member States, discussions at the European Tourism Forum, and some recent developments, such as e.g. adoption of the Single Market Strategy, Digital Market Strategy and the Juncker Plan, the priorities of the tourism policy had to be streamlined.

In line with the priorities of the Juncker Commission, the general objective of the tourism policy priority actions is to strengthen the competitiveness of the EU tourism sector and to increase its contribution to economic growth and jobs in the EU. They will be implemented in close cooperation with the industry and the Member States' authorities at all level, in line with the subsidiarity and proportionality principles.

**The chair presented the tourism policy priorities for the coming years, one by one:**

- 1) Attracting new investments and improving the business environment in the tourism sector**
- 2) Joint promotion, particularly towards key third-countries and internationalisation**
- 3) Seizing all the opportunities of the digital revolution**
- 4) Improving skills and competences in order to provide the industry with the skills they need and to improve the quality of jobs**

Replying to TAC members questions, the chair clarified that a new Communication of the Commission is not foreseen for tourism.

### **4) Implementation of the actions for tourism under COSME 2014 & 2015 – questions from TAC members**

The Commission informed Member States that they have received prior to the meeting the following documents:

- an extract from the monitoring report of the implementation of the COSME 2014 with detailed information included on the implementation of the tourism actions.
- a table with general information, available at this stage on the calls for proposals/tenders, and allocation of the 2015 COSME budget for tourism actions

No questions have been raised by TAC members to this point.

### **5) Information and exchange of views on the implementation of the actions for tourism under COSME 2016**

The Commission reminded that TAC members have received a summary of the proposed tourism actions under 2016 COSME budget (4.5 Million EUR), and the actions were presented in detail:

**a) European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN +) selection**

The Commission services explained that due to the budget reduction, a different implementation mode comparing to the past (a call for tender) has been proposed, in order to select next EDEN destinations in a more centralised way. The Commission also put for discussion a possible theme for the next selection.

Many TAC members took the floor (among which: Croatia, France, Hungary, Finland, Ireland, Slovenia, Portugal, Austria and Lithuania).

Many Member States expressed their disappointment about the reduction of the budget for COSME 2016 and for the EDEN action in particular. They expressed their concerns about a new implementation mode proposed (a call for tender and more centralised way of selection) for the EDEN action. Member States have gained already experience at national level to deal with the selection of EDEN destinations through grants and most of them expressed the view that they would prefer to continue as till now, in a decentralised way.

The chair explained that taking into account the reduced budget for the EDEN action under COSME, the grants amounts that the Commission used to allocate to Member States in the past could not be maintained. However taking into account the comments from the TAC members, the Commission decided to propose in the revision of the 2016 COSME budget to increase the EDEN envelop to 450.000 EUR. This would allow to continue the selection of EDEN destinations at national - Member States – level and to keep the selection decentralised as in the past, this time via ad-hoc grants and a reduced EC co- financing rate to 50%.

As for the theme for new selection of EDEN destinations, most Member States were in favour of the theme "cultural tourism". Some other proposals were e.g. "nature tourism".

The Commission services invited all TAC members to send in written their remarks and preferences as for the next selection theme.

**b) Information and awareness raising activities**

The Commission services informed that this budget will cover the organisation of all events (such as European Tourism Day and European Tourism Forum but also workshops, events on specific topics such as digitalisation, skills, use of funds etc.)

The chair announced also that the Commission is planning to organise a high level conference together with the European Parliament on 5th April 2016 with the participation of Commissioner Bieńkowska on attracting new investments in the EU tourism sector. The event will focus in particular on EU funds opportunities and upgrading skills and training mobility in the tourism sector.

**c) Flash Eurobarometer Survey**

The update has been given by the Commission services as for the Flash Eurobarometer Survey 2016. The report should be ready by March 2016.

**d) Ad-hoc grant with OECD**

The Commission services provided TAC members with detailed information about the ad-hoc grant with OECD which will cover the period of 2017-2018 and will contribute to the publication of tourism trends and policies.

**e) Virtual Tourism Observatory (VTO)**

The Commission services gave an update concerning the VTO and about a new section "Policy and legislation" which have been recently enriched by new links.

TAC members have been invited to send studies, reports they find interesting which could be published in the VTO.

**f) Supporting tourism-related businesses to find international business partners in target markets**

The Commission services presented the plans concerning this action and a call for tender to be published in 2016. TAC members requested more detailed information as a big proportion of tourism budget is allocated to this action.

Several Member States (e.g.: Hungary, Austria, the Netherlands) informed that national tourist organisations are doing promotion and also B2B meetings facilitation in third target markets, so more information is needed how this new activity could be coordinated and bring added value.

*Additional information has been sent to TAC members after the meeting.*

**6) The Commission services gave a brief update on the following items "Preparatory Actions and Pilot Projects" (in addition to the informative fiches TAC members received prior to the meeting):**

a) 2015 Preparatory Action "Transnational culture-related European tourism product"(cooperation with UNESCO)

2015 Pilot Project "World-bridging tourism"

b) 2016 Pilot Projects

"Youth on the SPOT" - Special Partnership of Tourism

"Destination Europe Brand - Promoting Europe in the tourism sector"

**7) Presentation by the European Travel Commission (ETC) on the achievements made to promote Europe as a tourist destination thanks to the EC ad-hoc grants and presentation of the European Tourism Manifesto: <http://www.tourismmanifesto.eu/> by Mr Eduardo Santander, Executive Director of the ETC**

*The presentation has been circulated to TAC members after the meeting.*

**8) First exchange of views on the tourism actions under COSME 2017**

Several Member States (Croatia, the Netherlands, Austria, and Cyprus) raised the issue that the proposed budget has to correspond to the priorities and asked for clarifications on the new 4 streamlined priorities. Portugal welcomed the continuation of the grant to support the ETC.

*The additional document explaining the priorities has been circulated to TAC members after the meeting.*

Member States were invited to send their comments, suggestions for the COSME 2017 tourism actions in written by mid - January 2016.

***Afternoon session 14:30-17:00***

**9) Ex-post evaluation of European Regional Development Fund support to culture and tourism 2007- 2013 by the representative of DG REGIO**

The presentation has been made by John Walsh, B2 – Evaluation and European Semester, DG REGIO, which was circulated to TAC members after the meeting.

TAC members were asked to inform DG GROWTH and DG REGIO if they have conducted evaluations on the ERDF use for tourism at national/regional level and if possible to share them with the Commission services.

**10) Tourism statistics - update by EUROSTAT**

August Götzfried, Head of Unit G3: Business cycle, tourism and registers, DG EUROSTAT made a presentation which was circulated to TAC members after the meeting.

TAC members expressed the interest to be informed about the Press Releases issued by Eurostat, when they are published.

**11) Reports and planned initiatives of the Presidencies and of other TAC representatives:**

a) Luxembourgish Presidency

TAC member from Luxembourg thanked other TAC members and the Commission services for the participation at the European Tourism Forum, organised under the EU Presidency in Luxembourg.

b) Dutch Presidency

TAC member from the Netherlands informed about the focus of the Dutch Presidency which will be mainly on "Innovation and creative jobs for Europe".

c) Slovak Presidency

TAC member from Slovakia informed about the European Tourism Forum 2016 which is planned for 10-11 October in Bratislava.

d) other TAC representative

TAC member from Slovenia informed about the planned event for 5-6 September 2016 in Bled organised with cooperation with UNWTO.

## **12) European Charter for a sustainable and responsible tourism**

The Commission services (Mr. Pedro Ortun, Principal Adviser) referred to the UNWTO General Assembly on Tourism Ethics that took place in September 2015 and the idea tabled there by UNWTO of a possible draft Convention on Tourism Ethics. He also informed that the works on the European Charter have been suspended in view of these developments and works on more broader, general Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) action plan. Mr Ortun reminded TAC members that 2017 has been announced as UN International Year for Sustainable Tourism.

Croatia and the Netherlands took the floor. They were flagging difficulties of the private sector to report and requested clarification of the added value of a possible European Charter or the UN Convention to the existing Global Code of Ethics.

## **13) Tourism and sharing (collaborative) economy – information by the Commission on the activities undertaken and exchange of information by TAC members on existing regulations/practices in different Member States.**

The Commission services gave a brief update about the EU actions in the field of sharing/collaborative economy and opened the floor for the exchange of views with Member States.

Several TAC members took the floor (France, Austria, Hungary, Portugal and Croatia) sharing their views about this complex phenomenon in many Member States. They asked about sharing information, best practices between Member States and also to be informed about the work of the DG GROWTH task force on sharing economy and Digital Tourism Network.

The Commission services informed that the Commission is assessing the regulatory framework applicable to sharing economy, which will feed into the actions outlined in the Single Market Strategy and Digital Market Strategy. The Commission invited also TAC members to share information; best practices how this phenomenon is regulated or not in different countries.

## **14) Visa package – update**

The Commission services made a brief update concerning the visa file.

## **15) Member States Annual Reporting**

Member States are supposed to send their Annual Tourism Reports to the Commission on annual basis. For 2014 reports, the Commission has received 19 reports (from 18 Member States and Turkey). For the 2015 reports, the Commission services reminded the usual deadlines for sending the reports: end of February in native language or end of April if in English (year n+1). All reports received are published on the webpage of the Virtual Tourism Observatory (VTO).

## **16) Any other business**

The chair informed TAC members that the Commission has received a copy of the letter circulated by the UK Minister to other EU Ministers in charge of Tourism with a proposal to include in the agenda of next TAC meeting an item about the carbon

monoxide safety in tourist accommodations. The chair asked about the opinion of TAC members if they would be interested this topic is included in the agenda of next TAC meeting. The Commission did not receive any comment from TAC members present.

Some TAC members (Hungary, France and Spain) asked about the New Package Travel Directive and to share information between Member States on its implementation. The Commission services ensured they will circulate information received from DG JUST. *The information has been circulated to TAC members on the first workshop organised by DG JUST in February on the transposition of the revised Directive.*

When concluding the meeting, the chair announced that the next TAC meeting might take place most probably towards the end of May 2016.

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#### **Organisational issue concerning TAC members' mailing list.**

The Commission reminded the request to update the TAC members list (the Commission should have a maximum of 2 persons per country as direct TAC members contacts + in addition max. 1 contact - the MS representation to the EU). TAC members were invited to update the TAC members list when signing the attendance list at the meeting. In case this was not done, TAC members are kindly requested to send the information to the Commission ([GROW-TOURISM-TAC@ec.europa.eu](mailto:GROW-TOURISM-TAC@ec.europa.eu)) with an update of contact persons -TAC members - providing contact details as specified below:

**The members of the TAC are requested to inform the Commission ([GROW-TOURISM-TAC@ec.europa.eu](mailto:GROW-TOURISM-TAC@ec.europa.eu), subject: TAC members) each time a representative is replaced or a contact detail is modified, by using this format:**

**Full Name:**

**Service/Function:**

**Postal address:**

**Telephone number:**

**Fax Number:**

**E-mail:**

#### **General request of the Tourism, Emerging and Creative Industries Unit, in order to keep files up to date:**

The TAC members are kindly requested to inform the Commission each time there are changes in the hierarchy of the national tourism administration (Minister, State Secretary, etc.).