

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Travel and tourism sector unites behind Tourism for Growth and Jobs Manifesto**

For the first time ever, Europe's public and private tourism actors have come together to call for the European Union to do more for this important industry. Published to coincide with the European Tourism Day on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December, the Tourism for Growth and Jobs Manifesto highlights the key EU policy priorities for the sector in the coming years on topics ranging from skills and qualifications to sustainability and competitiveness of Europe's tourism.

The manifesto was officially launched at an event held at the Confcommercio Delegation to the European Union on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015, which was attended by the MEPs Ana-Claudia Tapardel, Cláudia Monteiro De Aguiar, Isabella De Monte and István Ujhelyi. The European Commission was also represented by Jakub Cebula, Member of the Cabinet of Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska, and Carlo Corazza, Head of Unit - Tourism, Creative and Emerging Industries.

Speaking on behalf of the MEPs, Mr Ujhelyi said that "It is a historical moment from the point of view of the European representatives of the tourism sector. That is why I supported this initiative and encouraged politicians and the tourism stakeholders to sit on the same side of the table. Together, we can convince the institutions here in Brussels, through concrete actions and diplomacy." Mr Corazza meanwhile seemed receptive to the manifesto: "We will try to give appropriate answers to the challenges set out in the manifesto."

Over 20 European organisations have already signed up to the manifesto which seeks to ensure that the continent remains an attractive destination and that the sector continues to make a significant contribution to the EU economy.

Europe is currently the world's number one tourist destination with a market share of 51% in 2014. The tourism industry generates (directly and indirectly) 9.7% of total EU-28 GDP, a figure which is forecasted to rise to 10.4% by 2025.

In the EU, the travel and tourism sector employs almost 25 million people and visitor exports generate 351 billion EUR per year. The role of tourism becomes increasingly important considering that, by nature, it is a labour intensive sector built primarily by SMEs, and it has high female and youth employment ratios.

This sector stimulates economic growth by generating income, employment, investment and exports. It also generates valuable spin-off benefits, including preservation of cultural heritage, improved infrastructure, local community facilities and stronger awareness of European citizenship.

In times when unemployment rates have increased dramatically, evidence indicates that the travel and tourism sector remains one of the leading job creators both in Europe and worldwide.

Quotes from the launch event on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016:

#### MEPs

Ana-Claudia Tapardel: 'This marks an important step to put tourism back on the EU Agenda.'

István Ujhelyi: "It is a historical moment from the point of view of the European representatives of the tourism sector. That is why I supported this initiative and encouraged politicians and the tourism stakeholders to sit on the same side of the table. Together, we can convince the institutions here in Brussels through concrete actions and diplomacy."

Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar: 'This is what we wanted - speaking with a common voice'

Isabella De Monte: 'I am sure we will achieve excellent results if we will all work together'

#### European Commission

Jakub Cebula, Cabinet of Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska: 'We take note of the manifesto and we will work together with all stakeholders closely'

Carlo Corazza, Head of Unit - Tourism, Creative and Emerging Industries: 'We will try to give appropriate answers to the challenges set out in the manifesto'

#### ECTAA – Supporting organisation

Lars Thykier, President: 'The manifesto is important to raise the profile of tourism and giving proper acknowledgement that tourism is one of Europe's most important growth and job creator.'

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About the Manifesto: You can find the full online version here: [www.tourismmanifesto.eu](http://www.tourismmanifesto.eu)

Info: The manifesto contains 8 key points:

- Competitiveness
- Digitalization
- Good governance
- Joint promotion
- Reduce seasonality
- Skills and qualification
- Sustainability
- Transport connectivity

In order to formulate effective tourism policies, a holistic European approach is needed taking into account the multiple impacts of the sector as well as the wide spectrum of stakeholders involved or affected by tourism.

This was recognized by the Treaty of Lisbon, which by article 195 of the TFEU gives to the European Union the responsibility to promote the competitiveness of the European tourism sector by creating a favorable environment for its growth and development and by establishing an integrated approach to the travel and tourism sector.

ECTAA regroups the national associations of travel agents and tour operators of 31 European countries, of which 27 are within the European Union, and represents some 70.000 enterprises.

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