



Resolution 1285 (2002)¹

Tapping Europe's tourism potential

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Modern tourism has become an inseparable feature of our lives and a major economic activity. It plays an important role in bringing peoples, countries and regions closer together. In Europe – the world's leading tourism area – it contributes significantly to the European unification process. Against the background of indications that Europe may be losing pace in ever-stiffening international competition, tourism development policies should receive greater political attention at European and national level.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly commends the work of the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), the leading international body in the field of travel and tourism. It in particular welcomes the WTO's most recent achievements in the form of its Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and its Tourism Satellite Account (TSA). It calls on the member states of the Council of Europe to ensure the speedy incorporation of these instruments into national tourism strategies. It also encourages member states of the Council of Europe not yet members of the World Tourism Organisation to consider joining that organisation at their earliest convenience.

3. With unemployment continuing to be of prime concern to European governments, tourism is a job provider of great importance, especially for the more vulnerable groups in society including women, the young and the less skilled. Tourism's role as a catalyst on the labour market is expected to grow still further due to globalisation and structural changes in national economies increasingly geared to services. Heeding policy advice by the European Union and the OECD in support of both tourism and employment, Council of Europe member states should pay particular attention to the training of employees in tourism-related small and medium-sized enterprises, the creation of innovative partnerships between public and private actors in tourism, and the continued lowering of barriers to the free movement of people so as to cope with seasonal and conjectural fluctuations in the demand for jobs in the tourism sector across Europe.

4. The Council of Europe member states need to harmonise methods for the collection and analysis of tourism statistics, in order to better assess the value added to national economies by the tourism sector, to allow more accurate international comparisons and to detect emerging trends earlier. The Assembly believes that a rapid implementation of the World Tourism Organisation's Tourism Satellite Account at national level is essential for developing tourism and the related activities more coherently.

5. Since mass tourism may irreversibly damage the natural and cultural environment, policies for balanced, quality-oriented tourism are needed, emphasising preventive planning, the rehabilitation of sites and monuments, and the diversification of tourism offers. With this in mind, the Assembly invites the member states of the Council of Europe:

to enhance as much as possible in their countries awareness of the World Tourism Organisation's Global Code of Ethics for Tourism;

to contribute to the 2002 International Year of Ecotourism, notably by ensuring that national tourism authorities, together with environmental agencies and other stakeholders, define and strengthen national strategies and programmes for action in favour of sustainable development and ecotourism;

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 29 May 2002 (see [Doc. 9461](#), report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, rapporteur: Mrs Štepcová, and [Doc. 9467](#), opinion of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, rapporteur: Mr O'Hara).



to speed up the implementation of the Council of Europe's Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development adopted in 2000, and to ensure the early signature, ratification and implementation of the European Landscape Convention;

to rapidly conclude negotiations for a European outline convention on mountain regions and to start negotiations for a similar convention on island regions;

to support regional co-operation initiatives and the linking of private and public resources through partnerships for quality tourism;

to promote environmental quality certification schemes ("eco-labels") for tourist products and services.

6. Cultural tourism, including historical towns, events travelling and "culture-art-religion" combinations, is gaining ground in Europe. Considering that tourism can serve effectively to preserve and restore our continent's cultural heritage, and contributes to European unification, the co-ordination of cultural and tourism policies should be a priority for pan-European co-operation. The Assembly therefore calls on the member states of the Council of Europe:

to take advantage of the financing opportunities offered by the Council of Europe Development Bank for the conservation and rehabilitation of their historical heritage, thereby increasing tourism's resources;

to foster the development of local initiatives aimed at conserving the national heritage through tourism projects, as a follow-up to the Council of Europe's campaign, Europe: a Common Heritage and in the context of the project on European cultural itineraries;

to make more active use of tax incentives, grants and other financial instruments to encourage private investment in national heritage and tourism projects.

7. Recognising that the countries of central and eastern Europe face special difficulties in developing their tourism sector, the Assembly:

encourages these countries to invest more in tourism-related regional development, training, communication policies and the creation of public-private partnerships in the tourism sector while at the same time providing tax incentives;

urges any Council of Europe member states that still charge higher prices for foreigners than for their own citizens for services in the tourism sector, such as hotel rooms or visits to cultural events and monuments, to abandon this discriminatory practice as soon as possible;

calls for greater assistance from the European Union and its European Investment Bank, the Council of Europe Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank and others for this purpose.

8. Finally, the Assembly asks all member states to take every precaution to protect tourists against acts of terrorism, primarily for humanitarian reasons but also in recognition that tourists will avoid regions where violence occurs.