

EU Intelligence Report

June 2016



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Institutional

[Brexit- uncertainties ahead for the EU Single Market](#)

Tourism Policy

[Commission launches campaign to promote tourism in Europe](#)

Taxation and VAT

[Council approves VAT rules on vouchers](#)

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Institutional

Brexit- Uncertainties ahead for the EU Single Market

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

On 23rd June, the British people voted to leave the EU in a historic Referendum by almost 52%. EU law will continue to apply in the UK and the country continues to have its voting right in the Council of Ministers until the exit deal has been negotiated. If there are no direct consequences for the tourism industry, the outcome of the referendum may affect the industry in the long run both in the UK and in the EU, probably also affecting amusement parks. Economic consequences with the devaluation of the pound and political uncertainties in the UK sending negative signals may discourage citizens to travel abroad for leisure.

The procedure for a country to leave the EU is set out in Article 50 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU and will take at least two years. As stated by Prime Minister Cameron who announced his resignation, the procedure will probably be triggered by the future UK Prime Minister to be nominated in October. It seems that the member states led by Chancellor Merkel and the European Council

led by President Tusk are looking to take control over the withdrawal process and limit the role of the Commission to more technical matters. The negotiations for the divorce may take a long time, as over 8000 directives and regulations have to be addressed.

Geo-blocking among priorities of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of Ministers

COUNCIL PARLIAMENT

As of 1st July, the Slovak Republic will take over the [Presidency](#) of the Council of Ministers from The Netherlands until 31st December.

The Slovak Presidency will focus on five main areas:

- Jobs and growth
- Digital Single Market (DSM)
- Energy Union
- Migration
- Enlargement

The final programme will be published on 1 July.

The digital priorities of the Council include regulating geo-blocking. The Commission published a proposal for regulation on 25 May, to ban unjustified geo-blocking and other

discriminations based on nationality, residence or location.

In the Parliament, [MEP Rosa Thun](#) (Centre-right, Poland) was appointed Rapporteur to draft a parliamentary report on the Commission proposal for Regulation on geo-blocking. Work should start right after the summer.

Tourism Policy

Commission launches campaign to promote tourism in Europe

COMMISSION

On 9th June, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW) launched the 'Europe. Wonder is all around' [campaign](#) promoting tourism in Europe. The purpose of this campaign is to demonstrate to Europeans that they don't need to go far away to discover great places. In order to help stakeholders to share the campaign via all possible channels, DG GROW developed a [promotional guide](#) which notably includes social media posts ready to be used on their own channels.

EP CULT Committee amends opinion on Accessibility Act

The European Parliament Committee for cultural affairs (CULT) has published

[amendments](#) to their opinion on the Commission proposal for a European Accessibility Act Directive for products and services. An amendment proposed by [MEP Enrico Gasbarra](#) (Socialists, Italy) highlights that the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires the parties to the Convention to take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have access also to tourist services. The date for adoption in the Parliament has not been published yet. Work on this proposal will continue during the Slovak Presidency.

European Travel Commission publishes report on lifestyle trends & tourism

STAKEHOLDERS

The European Travel Commission published a [report](#) entitled “Lifestyle trends & tourism - How changing consumer behaviour impacts travel to Europe”. The report highlights the challenges that national tourism organisations (NTOs) are facing in the light of changing consumer behaviours. The report lays out the most important consumer changes which impact travel to Europe, particularly from the key markets of China, Brazil, the USA and Canada. If the report does not particularly mention amusement parks, it notably includes a comment from a US citizen, who states that “a

lot of Americans prioritize fun vacations where they can visit theme parks or do activities”.

The ETC also [published](#) a new infographic focused on the comparison between first-time and repeat visitors to Europe, which notably highlights that Europe remains an unexplored destination for many long-haul travelers.

EP Research Service study highlights impact of border controls on tourism

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESEARCH SERVICE

In the [study](#) entitled “Cost of non-Schengen: the impact of border controls within Schengen on the Single Market”, the European Parliament Research Service (EPRS) notably highlights that border controls may lead to a decline in short trips and day visits. High losses are to be predicted for tourism areas close to one or several borders. High costs are also predicted for the whole industry should the EU common visa policy be fragmented, spread throughout all Member States.

In his speech on the anniversary of Schengen, Commissioner Avramopoulos (Migration) reiterated that according to Commission estimates, a full re-establishment of border controls within the Schengen Area would generate immediate direct costs for the EU

economy of between €5 and €18 billion annually.

Commission publishes report on Cohesion Policy programmes in tourism and culture

COMMISSION

The European Commission published the final [report](#) taking stock of the interventions of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF) in tourism and culture in 2007-2013.

Findings notably highlight the importance of public investment in tourism because of the potential of the sector to make a contribution to regional development and the need to address important market failures. Environmental sustainability is a concern in tourism especially for the regions which are highly dependent on the sector. Besides, recent developments such as the digitalisation of tourism generate new challenges that have to be addressed by public policies. Recommendations include that regional and national authorities should more carefully consider the possible contribution of culture and tourism to regional development and define more focused ERDF investment strategies during the programming phase.

Taxation and VAT

Council approves VAT rules on vouchers

COUNCIL

On 27th June, the Council of Ministers approved a Council [directive](#) amending the existing VAT Directive, setting out rules to determine the taxable value of transactions involving vouchers. This directive could impact amusement parks operators in the case they distribute vouchers for goods and services. However, this directive will not affect VAT provisions for admission tickets to amusement parks.

Member States will have until 31 December 2018 to transpose the directive into national laws and provisions should be applied as of 1st January 2019. Provisions will only apply to vouchers issued after that date.

Employment and labour skills

Commission publishes New Skills Agenda

COMMISSION

On 10th June, the European Commission launched a [package](#) which is aimed at improving the quality of skills and their relevance for the European labour market. The proposal has been largely welcomed by MEPs, industry representatives and NGOs. Over the

next two years, the Commission proposes 10 actions to be taken forward. Four of them have already been launched:

- A [Skills Guarantee](#) to help low-skilled adults acquire a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital skills and progress towards an upper secondary qualification;
- A review of the European Qualifications Framework for a better understanding of qualifications and to make better use of all available skills in the European labour market;
- The "[Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition](#)" bringing together Member States and education, employment and industry stakeholders to develop a large digital talent pool and ensure that individuals and the labour force in Europe are equipped with adequate digital skills;
- The '[Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills](#)' to improve skills intelligence and address skills shortages in specific economic sectors.

The remaining actions will be launched later this year and in 2017:

- A "[Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals](#)" to support early identification and profiling of skills and qualifications of

asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants;

- [A revision of the Europass Framework](#), offering people better and easier-to-use tools to present their skills and get useful real-time information on skills needs and trends which can help with career and learning choices;
- [Making Vocational Education and Training \(VET\) a first choice](#) by enhancing opportunities for VET learners to undertake a work based learning experience and promoting greater visibility of good labour market outcomes of VET;
- [A review of the Recommendation on Key Competences](#) to help more people acquire the core set of skills necessary to work and live in the 21st century with a special focus on promoting entrepreneurial and innovation-oriented mind-sets and skills ;
- [An initiative on graduate tracking](#) to improve information on how graduates progress in the labour market;
- [A proposal to further analyse and exchange best practices on effective ways to address brain drain](#);

MEP Questions and Answers

[Commission answers question on new skills in tourism](#)

In her reply to a [question](#) on promoting new skills in tourism, Commissioner Bieńkowska (Internal Market) explained that through the New Skills Agenda, actions will focus on helping people develop and upgrade their skills, supporting the documentation, transparency and comparability of skills and qualifications, and offering better intelligence on skills needs. She reiterated that the Commission was committed to supporting the internationalisation of EU tourism operators.

Maltese [MEP Miriam Dalli \(S&D\)](#) asked the Commission to elaborate further on how the new strategy would promote new skills within the tourism job market. She also asked what kind of action would be taken to reinforce investment in the tourism sector and whether the EU was planning to take the necessary measures to regenerate the European tourism market.

[Commission answers MEP question on support for tourism SMEs](#)

Answering a [question](#) on support for tourism start-ups, Commissioner Bieńkowska underlined that the Commission implemented

specific projects that aim at improving skills and competences, including digital skills, of tourism entrepreneurs. She added that the Commission announced a package of measures to support start-ups' access to finance in the context of the Capital Markets Union. Furthermore, the Single Market Strategy includes a dedicated 'Start-up Initiative', under which a public consultation was launched on 31 March 2016. She concluded by referring to the European Structural and Investment Funds, which support young entrepreneurs in the EU.

In her question, [MEP Deirdre Clune](#) (Centre-right, Ireland) inquired whether the Commission had any plans to support start-up businesses in the tourism sector.

[MEP question on terrorism damages to the tourism sector](#)

In a parliamentary question, [MEP István Ujhelyi](#) (Socialists, Hungary) asked the Commission whether they planned to publish an analysis of the damages caused by terror attacks to the most endangered areas of the tourism sector and on the possibility to compensate them. He inquired how the losses could be compensated for. MEP Ujhelyi called on the Commission to immediately conduct such an analysis.

[MEP question on Commission communication on tourism](#)

French [MEP Renaud Muselier](#) (Centre-right) wondered whether the Commission had carried out a study on the implementation of their communication on tourism. He highlighted that the Parliament had called on the Commission to report back to them in the form of a factual review including an assessment of the effectiveness of actions to promote tourism and to consolidate the competitiveness of the EU tourism sector.

[MEP question on progress made on blue growth](#)

In a parliamentary question, [MEP Claudia Tapardel](#) (Socialists, Romania) asked the Commission how they included sustainable maritime, island and coastal tourism in related programmes such as 'EDEN — European Destinations of Excellence'. She also wondered how the Commission had tried to make tourist activities and employment less seasonal.

Events

June

- [14 June](#): NECSTouR in partnership with VisitScotland and Scotland Europa: [Synergies between Tourism and Cultural](#)

[Heritage for Growth and Jobs](#), In the framework of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

- 29-30 June: [Dutch Presidency Conference Digitalisation Cultural Heritage](#), Amsterdam

September

- 8-9 September: [12th TourMIS Users' Workshop & International Seminar on Consumer Trends & Tourism](#), Vienna, Austria
- 27 September: UNWTO World Tourism Day 2016

October

- 11 October: Slovak Presidency [European Tourism Forum Conference](#)

November/December

- TBC European Tourism Day

December

- 1-2 December: [Digital Tourism Think Tank Global- disrupting the future destination](#), Brussels