

EU Intelligence Report

May 2015



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

EU Regulatory Policy

- ❖ [Commission launches Better Regulation agenda](#)

Consumer Issues

- ❖ [Council approves political agreement on the Package Travel Directive](#)
- ❖ [Commission adopts package of measures on the Digital Single Market](#)

CONTENTS

EU regulatory policy

Page 4: Commission launches Better Regulation Agenda

Tourism Policy

Page 4: IAAPA Europe meets with Commission to discuss tourism priorities

Page 4: Commission Directorate responsible for tourism reorganization – update

Taxation/VAT

Page 5: EU and Switzerland sign new agreement on tax transparency

Employment Law/ Labour Skills

Page 5: Report on good employment and social protection practices

Page 5: Council adopts conclusions on reinforcing youth work and discusses future of EU cooperation in education and training

Page 6: EP Tourism Intergroup discusses shortage of skilled labour in tourism sector

Consumer Issues

Page 6: Council approves political agreement over the Package Travel Directive

Page 7: Commission adopts Digital Single Market Package

Page 7: Council Progress report on Air Passenger Rights regulation

Calls for Proposals

Page 7: Supporting competitive and sustainable growth in the tourism sector

MEP Questions and Answers

Page 8: Commission responds to a question on Tourism and people with disabilities

Page 8: Commission responds to a question on the European Strategy for Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism

Page 8: MEP question on violation of EU consumer protection legislation on travel rights

Page 9: MEP question on the Lisbon Tourist tax and foreign citizens

Page 9: MEPs question on a European Tourist Board

Upcoming events

Contents

EU Regulatory Policy

Commission launches Better Regulation Agenda

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Vice-President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, launched on 19th May the much anticipated [Better Regulation](#) agenda, which also kicks off the negotiations with the Parliament and Council on a new Inter-institutional Agreement (IIA), with the rather optimistic goal of reaching agreement by the end of the year.

The aim is to meet the concerns of citizens and business (particularly SMEs) who think that the EU don't always deliver rules that they can understand or apply easily.

This package of reforms covering the entire policy cycle is expected to boost openness and transparency in the EU decision-making process, improve the quality of new laws through better impact assessments of draft legislation and amendments, and promote constant and consistent review of existing EU laws, so that EU policies achieve their

objectives in the most effective and efficient way.

The proposals – which are likely to raise a heated debate - have generally been well received by industry and with scepticism by civil society, who have set up a Better Regulation [Watchdog](#) to ensure this doesn't just lead to de-regulation and a pro-business agenda.

Tourism Policy

IAAPA Europe meets with Commission to discuss tourism priorities

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

On the 7th of May, IAAPA Europe participated in a meeting of the Commission's Tourism Advisory Group to discuss its 2015-2020 Tourism priorities. The Commission's final priorities will be announced to the Tourism Forum on the 17th-18th September in Luxembourg. During the meeting the promotion of brand Europe and regulation and red tape were discussed in some detail.

The full list of priorities are:

- Streamlining the regulatory and administrative framework;

- Digitalization of tourism SMEs;
- Upgrading skills and competences;
- Promoting sustainable tourism, among other through the adoption of a European Charter for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism;
- Promoting tourism in the low and medium seasons, in particular for senior and young tourists;
- Improvement of 'intermodality' and transport connectivity.
- Joint promotion of Europe as a tourist destination.
- Improvement of the governance structure, both within the EU institutions and within the industry.

IAAPA Europe will work with its colleagues in the Tourism industry to put together a coordinated response to the Commission's draft priorities before the summer break

Commission Directorate responsible for tourism reorganization – update

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

As announced, starting from 1st June the Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SME's (DG Grow) will be subject to a restructure, with

Tourism being merged with Textiles and Creative industries.

IAAPA already agreed, in the framework of the Network for the European Private sector in Tourism (NET), to send a letter to the new Head of Unit for tourism Carlo Corazza and the new acting Director Slawomir Tokarski, and invite them to a meeting in September. Carlo Corazza also accepted to address the launch of the IAAPA Digital Skills Network on 30th June.

Regarding other position moves, the current Director Pedro Ortún will lead a special taskforce on tourism services and CSR, while the new role of Francesca Tudini, current Head of Unit, is not clear yet.

Taxation/ VAT

EU and Switzerland sign new agreement on Tax transparency

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

COUNCIL

SWISS SECRETARY OF STATE

On 27th May, Commissioner Pierre Moscovici, the Latvian Minister of Finance Janis Reirs and the Swiss State Secretary for International Financial Matters Jacques

de Watteville signed a new [agreement](#) to fight tax evasion.

Under this agreement, both sides will automatically exchange information on the financial accounts of each other's residents from 2018. Member States will receive, on an annual basis, the names, addresses, tax identification numbers and dates of birth of their residents with accounts in Switzerland, as well as other financial and account balance information. The EU- Swiss agreement is fully in line with the strengthened transparency requirements that Member States agreed amongst themselves [last year](#). It is also consistent with the [new OECD/G20 global standard for the automatic exchange of information](#).

The Commission is currently concluding negotiations for similar agreements with Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino, which are expected to be signed before the end of the year.

Employment Law/ Labour Skills

Report on good employment and social protection practices

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The European Commission recently published a [report](#) in which it monitored

good practices across Europe in the areas of employment, social affairs and inclusion, and suggested policy recommendations.

The report reviews good practice examples of projects supported by the European Programme PROGRESS in the years 2011-2012 and was performed in the context of the EU's [Programme for Employment and Social Innovation \(EaSI\)](#).

The projects covered by this report are good practice examples of public-private partnerships in employment, community involvement and skills forecasting in emerging economy sectors.

Council adopts conclusions on reinforcing youth work and discusses future of EU cooperation in education and training

COUNCIL

On 18 and 19 May, the Education and Youth Council adopted [conclusions](#) on reinforcing youth work, and highlighted its contribution to personal development, social inclusion, cultural diversity and active citizenship. The EU Council presidency also stressed the importance of digital education for young people.

The Council also assessed the achievements of the [European cooperation in the field of education and training](#) (ET 2020) and discussed its future development. ET 2020 is the key European-level framework that helps member states to modernise their education and training systems, thus contributing to the overall political priorities set under the Europe 2020 strategy.

EP Tourism Intergroup discusses shortage of skilled labour in tourism sector

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The last meeting on the European Parliament's Tourism Intergroup (on 13th May) was dedicated to the problem of skilled labour in the tourism sector. The panel included representatives from the European Parliament and Commission, trade unions (EFFAT) and the [Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Service](#). Below you can find the main highlights from the discussion.

- **Claudia Tapardel MEP** (S&D, RO) recognized the contribution of the sector to job creation, particularly for young people and young adult unemployed, **Istvan Ujhelyi MEP**

(S&D, HU) directly called on the industry to lobby the EU Parliament and Commission on the importance of the Tourism sector.

- The **Commission representative** suggested investments in upskilling labour and called on the European Parliament to help Improving the perception of the sector and encouraging new financing mechanisms and a favourable tax environment (including decreasing VAT for labour-intensive activities).
- The **Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services** presented the interim results of the study on education and training supply in EU Member States. Final results will be announced at a dedicated Conference on 21 October in Brussels.
- **Isabel Sobrino from HOTREC** (who represents hotels, restaurant and cafes in Europe) intervened in the discussion to stress that the tourism sector also provides needed jobs for unskilled people. She also highlighted that majority of the companies in the sector are micro-enterprises who need

support from the authorities to invest in training.

Consumer Issues

Council approves political agreement on the Package Travel Directive

COUNCIL

On 28th May, Ministers in the Competitiveness Council reached a [political agreement](#) on new rules that will bring protection for package holidays up to speed with the digital age

The final text extends the scope of consumer laws to include so-called click through combinations of services supplied by two different traders in a targeted way. We are concerned that this may capture banner or targeted behavioural advertising which parks may carry on their website or via direct email marketing with customers requiring them to secure insolvency protection for those transactions.

IAAPA Europe, along with several other associations which may be affected by these changes, wrote to EU ambassadors prior to the 28th May to raise these concerns but it seems that the agreement reached in trilogue will hold.

The European Parliament will vote in Plenary in June to endorse the agreement between the EU institutions. Following publication in the EU's Official Journal Member States will have two years to implement the new rules and traders a further period of 6 months to adapt to the new rules.

Commission adopts Digital Single Market Package

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

On the 6th of May the European Commission adopted its Digital Single Market Package, a major political priority for this Commission. The package will spawn a number of legislative initiatives on copyright, review of audiovisual rules and the E-commerce Directive (see slide). Proposals for revised legislation will be adopted incrementally over the course of 2015-2016.

Of most interest to parks will be Commission work to review consumer rules on the commercial use of websites, a communication on this is likely before the summer.

Council Progress report on Air Passenger Rights regulation

COUNCIL

On 20th May, the Council published a [progress report](#) on the air passenger rights regulation. On 11th May, the working party on Aviation examined the compromise proposals, which divides the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission. The major outstanding issues are on the threshold for compensation after a delay at arrival at the final destination and compensation for connecting flights.

The aim of the proposal is to promote the interest of air passengers by ensuring that air carriers effectively comply with a high level of air passenger protection during travel disruptions. Besides, the proposal intends to take into account the financial implications that passenger rights create for the air transport sector, and thereby ensure that European air carriers operate under harmonised conditions in a liberalised market.

The Latvian Presidency will submit a progress report to the Transport Council on 11th June 2015.

Call for proposals

Supporting competitive and sustainable growth in the tourism sector

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Commission's DG Grow published a new [Call for proposals](#) aimed at strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of the European tourism sector. The Call has three main targets:

- **Extension of the tourism season:** increase tourism flows in the low and medium seasons for the seniors and the youth (15 to 29 year-old);
- **Diversify the European tourism offer** by promoting transnational thematic tourism products in the fields of a) sport and/or wellness and b) cultural or industrial heritage;
- **Enhance tourism accessibility** - improving facilities and services for tourists with special access needs;

Each consortia presenting a proposal should include "an association, a federation or an organization" working in tourism or related fields. Project partnerships in these three areas will be co-funded by the [COSME](#) programme (for the Competitiveness of

SMEs, running 2014-2020). Deadline for application is 30th June 2015.

MEP Questions and Answers

Commission responds to a question on Tourism and people with disabilities

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

On 5 March, MEP [Marlene Mizzi](#) (S&D) [tabled](#) a question on tourism and people with disabilities. She asked the Commission to clarify what measures the EU authorities were taking with a view to increasing tourism mobility for people with disabilities.

Ms Thyssen [replied](#) that the Commission was working to raise awareness about the economic and social benefits that could be obtained by improving the accessibility of all tourism services, in spite of local mobility services falling under the responsibility of the Member States.

According to [two recent studies](#) from the Commission, the offer and the performance of mobility services for tourists with special needs at the destination is unsatisfactory across the EU. Taxis, long-distance coaches, but also parking places, and in general access pathways between facilities and services, are perceived by tourists with

disabilities amongst the most important barriers in their holidays experience, and this regardless of the type of disability.

Commission responds to a question on the European Strategy for Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism

On 7th May, MEP [Patricija Šulin](#) (PPE, SL) [asked](#) the Commission how long it would take to develop the Internet guide with a summary of the main financing possibilities that are available for that sector, especially for SMEs, and if it was possible to say on what timescale it was planned to realise each of the 14 defined activities.

Ms [Bieńkowska](#) replied that the Commission had started to implement the 2014 [Communication Strategy](#) for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism and would continue to do so in the future, in cooperation with Member States, regions and the tourism industry stakeholders, who play a key role in its implementation.

She stated that, capitalising on the Internet guide on EU funding for the tourism sector that the Commission [published](#) in March 2014, the Commission envisaged preparing a specific strand for maritime and coastal tourism by the end of 2015.

She concluded by saying that the Commission was carrying out a study on specific challenges for a sustainable development of coastal and maritime tourism in Europe, including island connectivity, tourism diversification strategies and innovative strategies for the development of marinas. A second study to assess the competitiveness of Europe's nautical sector is also ongoing, which will include an assessment of qualification requirements for professional skippers and recreational boating and of nautical tourism safety equipment requirements.

MEP question on violation of EU consumer protection legislation on travel rights

On 30th April, MEP [Catherine Stihler](#) (S&D, GB) [tabled](#) a question regarding several cases of airlines and train companies, such as Thalys and Eurostar, cancelling tickets bought by EU citizens on the company's website because they were purchased on an EU regional website other than that of the traveller's home country.

Ms Stihler asked the Commission whether it was a violation of EU consumer rights, given that all EU consumers should be entitled to

pay the same price for the same route operated by the same airline/train company. She also asked whether the Commission could confirm that this constitutes a violation of Article 20 of the Services Directive (2006/123/EC) and a direct violation of the Flight Delay Compensation Regulation ((EC) No 261/2004). The Commission should provide an answer within 8 weeks.

MEP question on the Lisbon Tourist tax and foreign citizens

On 7th May, MEP [Nuno Melo](#) (S&D) PUT LINK [tabled](#) a question regarding the introduction of a Tourist tax for foreign citizens by the Lisbon City Council in April 2015.

Mr Melo wanted to know whether the fact that people travelling for reasons other than tourism also had to pay this tax, that the tax is only received by the city council and that no other local authorities will receive a share of this revenue from ANA SA which operates the airport to cover tourist tax receipts for 2015, constituted a breach of competition rules and other European rules. He also wanted to know if it was lawful for the Lisbon City Council to be financed by ANA SA and what sanctions could be imposed on Portugal if the tax was deemed unlawful.

In her [answer](#) to a parliamentary question on the Lisbon City Council's introduction of this tourist tax, Commissioner Vera Jourová indicated that imposing a tax only on foreign citizens could be in violation of EU legislation which 'prohibits discrimination on the basis of nationality'. The Commission should give an answer within 8 weeks.

MEPs question on a European Tourist Board

On 24th April, a coalition of MEPs [tabled](#) a question on the possibility of the establishment of a European Tourist Board. Given the incredibly high unemployment rate in the Mediterranean countries, especially among young people, and in view of the need to strengthen the competitiveness of European tourism, the MEPs wanted to know whether the Commission intended to establish a European Tourist Board. The question should be answered within 8 weeks.

Events

June

- 3-4 June: [3rd UNWTO Conference on Overcoming Seasonality](#), Torremolinos, Spain
- 8-11 June: [11th Annual International Conference on Tourism](#), Athens, Greece
- 22-24 June: [2nd Conference on Destination Management in the Mediterranean](#), Budva, Montenegro
- 30 June - [IAAPA Europe Digital Conference: Making the Digital Single Market Work for Tourism](#), Brussels, Belgium

July

- 13 July: [Local Regulation and Tourism](#), Venice, Italy

September

- 17-18 September: [European Tourism Forum 2015](#), Luxembourg
- 24 September: [6th International Workshop on Human-Computer](#)

[Interaction, Tourism and Cultural Heritage](#), Ravenna, Italy

- 28 Sept- 1 October: [Food-tourism week at EXPO Milan 2015](#), Milan, Italy

October

- 6 October: [5th Annual Tourism Summit in the Alps](#), Lucerne, Switzerland

November

- 16-17 November: [European Tourism Indicators System conference and Accessible Tourism workshop](#), Brussels, Belgium

December

- 16 December: [European Tourism Day 2015](#), Brussels, Belgium

January

- 14 January 2016: [Sustainable Management and Accessible Tourism award ceremony](#), Brussels, Belgium