

EU Intelligence Report
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KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Tourism Policy

[IAAPA Europe meets Commissioner Bienkowska to discuss the competitiveness of EU Tourism](#)

[European Parliament adopts report on promotion of tourism in Europe](#)

Consumer issues

Parliament continues calls for action against geo-blocking as the Commission pledges to tackle price discrimination with launch of new Single Market Strategy

[MEPs adopt Package Travel Directive in Plenary](#)

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Regulation

Commission adopts Work Programme 2016

COMMISSION

On the 27th October, the European Commission adopted its [2016 Work Programme](#).

According to the document, the Commission will continue efforts on creating growth, jobs and investment. Amongst the proposals in the document is the front loading of €1 billion to speed up the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative to help up to 650,000 young people find jobs, apprenticeships, traineeships or continued education across Europe. A new skills agenda will be presented to make sure that people find quality jobs in the new Digital era.

The Commission will also press ahead with further progress on corporate taxation. Initiatives to enhance transparency of the corporate tax system and fight tax avoidance are in the pipeline. An action plan for a more efficient VAT regime will also be presented.

As an annex to the new Work Programme, the Commission included among other [new initiatives](#) and [priority pending proposals](#).

No specific action was included on tourism.

Tourism Policy

IAAPA Europe meets Commissioner Bienkowska to discuss the competitiveness of EU Tourism

STAKEHOLDERS

A high level delegation from the Network for the European private sector in Tourism (NET), of which IAAPA Europe is a member, met with the EU Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, Ms Bienkowska, to discuss the main challenges and opportunities within the tourism sector.

Discussions focused on NET suggestions on how to unlock the full potential of tourism to foster innovation, create jobs and stimulate economic growth, particularly in areas like visa policy and taxation.

Bobbejaanland CEO Roland Kleve, who attended the meeting on behalf of IAAPA Europe, commented: "It has been a great

interactive meeting, and Commissioner Bienkowska was open to learn about our industry. Concerns were shared with her in order to work on potential solutions for the future. Our leisure industry is strongly growing in Europe and we are confident that with the cooperation of Governments and the European Union we will continue to contribute to a better EU economic environment."

EP Transport Committee adopts opinion on Visa Code review

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On the 13th of October, the European Parliament Transport and Tourism Committee (TRAN) adopted its [opinion](#) on the Visa Code revision. The work on the Visa code review is led in the European Parliament by the Committee for Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs.

The Visa Code revision is important for the competitiveness of the EU tourism industry and the TRAN opinion includes many proposals supported by IAAPA Europe. The aim of the revision is to simplify the visa application procedure in order to increase the number of third-country tourists coming to Europe.

During the debate the rapporteur on the Visa Code [MEP István Ujhelyi](#) (S&D, HU) referred to a Commission study which found that the current visa system led to the loss of 6.6 million tourists from emerging countries, due to stringent and obsolete Schengen restrictions. According to the study, 130 billion euros would be generated if the visa regulations were made more rational.

European Parliament adopts report on promotion of tourism in Europe

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On 29th October in plenary, the European Parliament [adopted](#) the own-initiative report by MEP [Isabella De Monte](#) (S&D, It) on “New challenges and concepts for the promotion of tourism in Europe”.

The text, adopted by the European Transport Committee in September, stresses several aspects that can positively influence the development of the amusement parks’ industry, such as the need to develop an integrated approach to tourism, the need for a reduction of the disproportionate regulatory burden, the importance of improving skills and

accessibility of the sector, the importance of reducing VAT rates and the suggestion to carry out a study on the impact on Europe’s competitiveness as a destination of taxes and levies raised on tourism products and services. On the negative side, the text calls on the Commission to come forward with proposals for minimum standards for tourism safety in the EU, in particular in the area of fire safety and carbon monoxide safety in holiday accommodation.

Speaking to the European Parliament’s plenary, Violeta Bulc, Commissioner for Transport, indicated that the 2025 figures for the tourism sector are likely to reach 38 million jobs (worth 2.1 billion euro). She announced that the Commission would hold an event on funding in the sector in April 2016. It will also analyse the impact of taxes on tourism, but it is primarily a national competence.

Taxation/VAT

European Parliament and Commission progress on fairer corporate taxes

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On Monday 26 October the special committee on tax rulings in the European

Parliament (TAXE) adopted its [recommendations](#) for achieving fair and transparent corporate taxation in Europe. MEPs will vote on them during the November’s plenary session. This reports covers among others tax rulings, transparency and a compulsory common consolidated corporate tax base (CCCTB), which is a single set of rules that companies operating within the EU could use to calculate their taxable profits.

On 8th October, the European Commission opened a public [consultation](#) on the new proposal for a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB). Issues on which the Commission is seeking stakeholders input are, among others, whether CCCTB is the right instrument to address aggressive tax planning and whether it should be mandatory, whether there could be a voluntary opt-in. The consultation is opened until 8 January 2016.

Employment Law/ Labour Skills

EU Council adopts decision on employment policies

COUNCIL

On the 5th of October, the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council adopted a decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the member states. The four employment guidelines are the following:

- Boosting demand for labour
- Enhancing labour supply, skills and competences
- Enhancing the functioning of labour markets
- Fostering social inclusion, combating poverty and promoting equal opportunities.

The Council also adopted conclusions on the new agenda for health and safety at work which aim at encouraging better working conditions.

More information can be found in the [summary](#) of the outcome of the Council meeting.

EP Employment Committee adopts draft report on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On the 13th of October, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) adopted the own initiative report by MEP [Ole](#)

[Christensen \(S&D, DK\)](#) on the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020.

The non-binding report was adopted by a large majority. It stresses that addressing the challenges of health and safety in the workplace in Europe requires the application of legislative and non-legislative initiatives. Therefore, it enumerates additional concrete measures that should be included in the framework presented by the Commission in order to achieve the objective.

The final text of the EMPL Committee's report will be published soon, and the report is expected to be voted in the European Parliament's Plenary on the 23rd of November.

Consumer Issues

Parliament continues calls for action against geo-blocking as the Commission pledges to tackle price discrimination with launch of new Single Market Strategy

COMMISSION

Liberals and Democrats in the European Parliament have launched a campaign to

end the practice of unjustified "geo-blocking" across the EU, which is the discrimination of online consumers on the basis of their country of residence/nationality.

On the 8th of October, a joint Committee meeting of the Internal Market Committee (IMCO) and the Industry Committee (ITRE) met to discuss the related [strategic report](#) "Towards a Digital Single Market Act", jointly drafted by German [MEP Evelyne Gebhardt](#) and Estonian [MEP Kaja Kallas](#) both Liberal and Democrats.

The report calls for ambitious actions to improve access to legal digital content, in particular by ending geo-blocking practices and unfair price discrimination based on geographical location. The report also calls for a common set of rules for online cross-border sales and action to deliver a level playing field for digital networks.

This is a non-binding report but it will inform the related legislative proposals which the Commission is expected to adopt by the first half of 2016.

Amusement parks will fall in the scope of these proposals, as confirmed by a recently published [Internal Market Strategy](#) that mentions the amusement park industry in

relation to consumer discrimination. The Commission fight against “geo-blocking” has in fact recently resulted in the demand for an investigation against Disneyland Paris for alleged price discrimination. The Internal Market Strategy mentions that the Commission will ban specific forms of residence-based discrimination not grounded on “objective and verifiable factors”.

MEPs adopt Package Travel Directive in Plenary

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On the 27th of October, MEPs [adopted](#) the Package Travel Directive in Plenary. Parliament’s vote ends the EU legislative procedure. Member states now have two years to incorporate the new rules into their national law and a further six months to make them applicable.

The new legislation will broaden protection to where travel services are advertised as a package or where they are offered at a total or inclusive price.

According to the text, any website that offers travel services together with online marketing through advertising will most

probably be caught in the scope of the Directive.

This means that parks that carry commercial advertising for other tourism services on their website or on marketing emails could be at risk of becoming a linked travel arrangement (LTA) – a new category of consumer protection which requires companies to adhere to certain information requirements and purchase insolvency protection for any LTAs they are involved in.

EU Funding

Commission publishes update of Guide on EU funding for tourism

COMMISSION

The '[Guide on EU funding for the tourism sector \(2014-2020\)](#)' gathers information on sources of EU funding of interest to the European tourism industry, from both private and public sector.

This new version comes with updated hyperlinks, the latest information on financial instruments and additional examples of recently selected projects.

The guide covers the most important EU funding programmes (2014-2020) for the tourism sector, i.e. private and public entities promoting tourism destinations or developing tourism services.

MEP Questions and Answers

[European Commission answer question on European policies for people with reduced mobility](#)

In July, MEP [Gabriel Mato](#) (EPP, ES) [asked](#) the Commission whether they had plans to strengthen policies for people with reduced mobility, including in the tourism sector, and if the steps taken in this direction so far were sufficient.

The Commission answered that many initiatives have already been taken, as presented in the EU report on the implementation of the UN Convention and others will follow. The Commission services' preparatory work for a European Accessibility Act continues. Parallel work on the preparation of accessibility-related standards is also ongoing.

The Commission added that EU funds — in particular European Structural Funds and Investment Funds — can and should be

used by Member States to support the creation of conditions for independent living for people with reduced mobility and/or disabilities, including improving accessibility of the built-environment and transport.

Since 2010 the Commission has been promoting and raising awareness of accessibility of the urban environment through the Access City Award. This annual Award encourages cities from all Member States to present their activities and strategies designed to overcome barriers and make cities accessible and truly inclusive.

[European Commission answers question on geo-blocking](#)

MEP [Adam Szejnfeld](#) (EPP, PL) [asked](#) the Commission how it plans to combat geo-blocking on the Digital Single Market (DSM), without infringing businesses' freedom to conduct their activities.

Commissioner Oettinger answered that in the DSM strategy the Commission announced that it will come forward with a legislative initiative prohibiting unjustified geo-blocking in the EU. Charging different prices in different national markets is in itself not necessarily illegal, and it is not the

Commission's intention to harmonise prices across the European Union.

However, consumers should be empowered to search for the best price available in the EU and should not be prevented from accessing more attractive offers available in other Member States unless justified by objective criteria, which is the essence of Article 20 of the Services Directive. In the same way, online geo-blocking might be justified in certain situations due to national laws to protect public interest objectives.

Any legislative proposal by the Commission requires an impact assessment covering e.g. economic and social consequences of a certain action. The Commission has launched a public consultation closing in December 2015 and will consult stakeholders before making proposals.

Events

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
- 25 January 2016: [European Tourism Indicators System conference and Accessible Tourism workshop \(DG GROW\)](#), Brussels, Belgium