

EU Intelligence Report
November 2014



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Institutional change

Juncker Commission issues new working methods

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

On 11 November, President Juncker sent a detailed [communication](#) to all Commissioners on the working practices he expects Commissioners to follow. This builds on the major structural changes he announced with the formation of his team and gives some more guidance on how the Vice Presidents will work with their colleagues to ensure co-operation across portfolios. To enhance transparency, all contacts and meetings with stakeholders will be made public on the Commission web site. All stakeholders must be listed in the Transparency Register of the Commission.

The document also sheds some light on the relationship between the 7 Vice-Presidents and the wider Commission College. As Vice-Presidents will have no services to support them directly, they are able to draw on the services of any relevant department provided they have the permission of the Secretariat General of the Commission.

Tourism Policy

IAAPA Launches European Manifesto in the European Parliament

IAAPA

On 4th November, IAAPA held an event in the European Parliament to launch its new manifesto document.

The event was hosted by MEP Andreas Schwab (EPP, DE) Member of the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) and MEP Wim van de Camp, EPP coordinator for the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN). They respectively introduced and concluded the event, praising the role of the amusement parks industry in the economic growth and tourism drive. The event featured presentations from They respectively introduced and concluded the event, praising the role of the amusement parks industry in the economic growth and tourism drive. The event featured presentations from Miikka Seppälä, CEO Särkänniemi, who talked about safety and tackling sustainability, and Pelle Johannison, Executive Vice- President, Liseberg AB who talked about accessibility and the impact of VAT on the sector.

European Parliament could back an Intergroup on tourism

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On Wednesday 26 November the EPP and S&D agreed to put an intergroup on tourism amongst the list of possible groups to go before a final vote of the full European Parliament. NET, the Network for the European private sector in Tourism, which includes IAAPA as a member, has been campaigning for the formation of a tourism intergroup to ensure that there is a forum for the discussion of tourism issues amongst MEPs from diverse committees in the European Parliament. Although the Parliament has a Transport and Tourism Committee its work tends to be dominated by transport legislation with little time to dedicate to tourism.

European Tourism 2014 - Trends & Prospects (Q3/2014)

EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION

The European Travel Commission has released its new [report](#) on trends and prospects in the tourism sector in 2014. The report highlights that European tourism has continued to grow robustly throughout 2014. Data from the first three quarters of this year

show a general increase in tourism across all destination in Europe.

Some of them exceeded expectations including destinations in Southern and Northern Europe. An increase in visitors from long-haul markets have also helped to support the positive performance of European destinations.

Taxation

Tax evasion likely to rise up the political agenda

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Following a request by the Parliament's Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) group, a debate took place on the 12th November with the European Commission on how to deal with tax avoidance and tax fraud in the European Union. During the debate, the ALDE Group asked the Commission to present conclusions on how to deal with the issue before the end of the year. The Group also renewed its support for a European approach to combat tax evasion, tax fraud and tax havens and announced that the group is ready to present its own proposal. European Tax Compliance legislation and a

convergence code (with minimum and maximum levels to be applied in the taxation field) for Member States, will be part of these proposals. ALDE members of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee also [called](#) for a temporary EP committee on tax evasion and tax havens to investigate the issue of tax avoidance and tax evasion within the European Union.

The European Conservative and Reformists Group welcomed the investigation led by Competition Commissioner Vestager into the tax arrangements over by the Government of Luxembourg, but rejected Juncker's calls for EU harmonisation in respect of tax, arguing that tax competition helps to keep the EU competitive.

The Greens urged the Parliament to go further than just a special committee taxation, favouring instead a committee of inquiry with additional powers.

Consumer Issues

IAAPA expresses concerns over Package Travel Directive

IAAPA/ COUNCIL

The Council's Working Party on Consumer Affairs is negotiating a Council position on

the Package Travel Directive ([PTD](#)). The scope of the Directive will likely cover products that are marketed and sold by amusement parks, particularly those combining park passes with accommodation services. Even parks that cross sell accommodation services from other providers may find themselves subject to additional consumer rules and insolvency protection.

Member States will attempt to reach a position at a meeting of Ministers which takes place in Brussels on the 4th of December.

Employment

Member States are unable to ensure skills recognition across EU

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

According to the [2014 European Inventory](#) on validation of non-formal and informal learning, Member States are still unable to ensure that knowledge, skills and competences that people have acquired outside school or university are recognized. This is the main finding of a report released on 20 November jointly with the European Commission.

The 2014 European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning, which covered 33 European countries calls for a better design and implementation of effective tools to recognise skills so they can better contribute to tackling current bottlenecks within the EU labour market.

MEP Questions

MEP question on aid for Spanish Amusement Parks

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The Spanish MEP José Blanco Lopez (S&D, ES) tabled a [question](#) on aid for Spanish theme parks. The MEP mentions a plan to build a new theme park in Alhama (Murcia, Spain) and asks the Commission whether it has granted aid of EUR 16.28 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for this project. The MEP also mentions the project owner's involvement in legal proceedings regarding irregularities in urban development agreements and refers to 4 other theme parks built during the property boom in Spain which are struggling and now face competition from this new development. The Commission must answer the question within 8 weeks.

MEP question on Tourism and Cultural Heritage

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Aldo Patriciello MEP (EPP, IT) tabled a [question](#) this month on the tourism industry and the enhancement of Europe's cultural heritage.

Despite the fact that Europe is still the world's most popular tourist destination, the sector's competitive advantage has declined in recent years. MEP Patriciello makes the case for the improvement of cultural and natural heritage as a way to promote the quality of tourist services. In the light of the above, he asks the Commission about its plans to develop a synergy between tourism and cultural heritage to strengthen a high-quality, sustainable tourist offer. The Commission must answer the question within 8 weeks.

Funding

Executive Agency for SMEs launches Call for Proposal to promote Senior Tourism

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

As part of its efforts to increase the competitiveness of the EU's tourism sector, the European Commission has launched a

[call for proposals](#) to help boost mobility of senior and young people in Europe.

The main aim of this call is to strengthen competitiveness of the European tourism sector by encouraging the extension of the tourism season and by increasing internal mobility of seniors and young people. Eligible proposals will target seniors (55 years old or above) or young people (aged between 15 and 29) and will aim at designing/developing a tourism product concept, and running a pilot test.

Applicant organizations must be legal entities operating in the sector of tourism. Eligible categories include public authorities and their network associations at the European, national, regional, local level regional, and their networks or associations; international organizations, universities; research centers, travel agents, tour operator; private or public non-profit organization, NGOs, civil society organizations, foundations, think-tanks, umbrella associations, networks or federations of public or private bodies, whose core activity falls under the following fields: tourism, youth or senior policies, or any other field that is strictly related to the object of the proposal. For more information please see the guidelines [document](#).

The deadline for proposals is 15 January 2015

Erasmus+

COUNCIL/ EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The Council adopted on 3rd December a regulation establishing "[ERASMUS+](#)" the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport for the period 2014-2020. It brings together in a single programme activities previously covered by a number of separate programmes (including the Lifelong Learning Programme, Erasmus Mundus and Youth in Action) and it also covers activities in the new area of European competence, sport.

The new programme has a total budget of about €14.7 billion which represents an increase of 40% compared to the precedent budget - and can also benefit for Any additional funding from external action instruments (such as the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, the Development Cooperation Instrument, the European Neighbourhood Instrument, as well as the European Development Fund).

Its main operational priorities are simplification of procedures and a

performance-based allocation of funds, as well as closer links between the formal, informal and non-formal education and learning sectors.

On-Going Calls for Proposal:

- [Call "Meeting between young people and decision-makers in the field of youth"](#)
- [Call "Strategic partnerships in the field of youth \(Deadline 04.2.2015\)"](#)
- [Call "Mobility of individuals in the field of youth"](#) (deadline 04.02.2015)

COSME - Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

For the period 2014-2020, the European Commission has published a proposal for a [Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs](#) (COSME) with a planned budget of € 2.5 billion.

The Programme has the following general objectives: 1) improve access to finance for SMEs in the form of equity and debt: 2) improve access to markets inside the Union and globally through Enterprise Europe

Network that will facilitate expansion of businesses beyond the borders; 3) promote entrepreneurship by developing entrepreneurial skills and attitudes, especially among new entrepreneurs, young people and women.

The Commission proposal includes a reference to specific objectives to improve the competitiveness of enterprises in the tourism sector. The Commission intends to ensure coherence and consistency implementation, as well as informed policy-making at Union level. Benchmarking, the exchange of best practices and sectorial initiatives in particular will be encouraged. The main beneficiaries will include existing entrepreneurs (small businesses in particular), future entrepreneurs (including young people) as well as national, regional and local authorities. On this basis, eligible tourism partners could include: Accommodation providers, Transport providers, Restaurants/ Cafés, **Attractions**, Public Authorities

On-Going Calls for proposals:

- [Facilitating EU transnational tourism flows for seniors and young people in the low and medium seasons](#) (Deadline 15-01-2015)

Consumer Programme 2014-2020

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The new consumer programme was adopted last 23 October and [proposed](#) by the Commission in November 2011. Although ensuring continuity with the previous one, the new initiative aims to better serve consumers' interests by enhancing product safety through effective market surveillance, improving consumers' information, education and awareness of their rights, consolidating consumer rights and strengthening effective redress, especially through alternative dispute resolution.

This programme sets financial framework for many actions that aim to improve consumer protection throughout the EU. These actions include financing of joint cooperation actions between Member States market surveillance authorities and supporting Union level consumer organizations.

European Regional Development Fund 2014 – 2020

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

[The European Regional Development Fund](#) (ERDF) aims to strengthen economic and

social cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions. For the next period (2014 – 2010), the ERDF focuses its investments on several key priority areas namely Innovation and research, the digital agenda, support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the low-carbon economy.

The ERDF resources allocated to these priorities will depend on the category of region.

Upcoming Events

- 1 December: EU Tourism Day
- 5 December 2014: [Accessible Tourism](#): Innovative approaches between accessibility and heritage protection, Economic and Social committee, Brussels
- 2 December: [European Conference on sharing economy in Tourism](#) organised by EARTH and NECSTouR networks,
- 10 December: [Event](#) on Driving Sustainable and Competitive Tourism Across Brussels, Belgium
- 20 January 2015: [Smart cooperation in coastal and maritime tourism - Encouraging transnational](#)

[partnerships through clusters and networks](#), organized by DG Enterprise & Industry, Brussels, Belgium