

The World's Top Destination: Driving Sustainable and Competitive Tourism Across Europe



Tuesday 17th March 2015
Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre
Brussels



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Overview

Tourism is the third largest socio-economic activity in the European Union, employing approximately 5.2% of the total European workforce, mostly in small and medium-sized enterprises. Figures show that tourism is recovering from the economic crisis better than most other sectors in the EU. It is important for growth and employment in Europe, offering job prospects for people struggling to maintain steady employment as a result of the crisis.

Today, Europe remains the world's number one tourist destination and tourism represents 8.4% of the European GDP. However, trends show that the European continent is losing position and more must be done to maintain its tourism sector's overall competitiveness. The European Commission has launched various cross-sector initiatives to make European tourism more sustainable, competitive and modern. The strategy "Europe, the World's No 1 destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe" was launched in 2010 with the core objective of stimulating European tourism competitiveness; promoting the development of sustainable and high-level tourism; consolidating the visibility of Europe in the world; and maximising the potential of EU financial policies and instruments for developing tourism.

Initiatives and projects such as the *European Tourism Quality Principles*, the EDEN Project, the Calypso Project, as well as the simplification of visa procedures, were initiated in order to address current challenges faced by the industry. Member States are fully competent when it comes to promoting tourism, but European and international organisations have an important role to play in coordinating and supporting European tourism through several flagship initiatives.

Ultimately, the European tourism sector is facing challenges that call for specific responses and efforts from relevant stakeholders and public authorities. Thus, there is a need to increase cooperation to tackle challenges such as global competition, technological and social novelties as well as climate change. Actions should therefore be developed to improve innovation and competitiveness in the sector. A positive tourism experience also relies on consumers' safety and rights, which is a priority for public administrations and EU institutions as well as various European consumer organisations.

This International Symposium seeks to analyse current tourism trends across Europe and to discuss the challenges faced by the tourism industry. It aims to monitor and measure the impact of European partnerships and initiatives and to exchange good practice at local, regional and European levels and examine current measures in Europe. Delegates will have the opportunity to discuss several perspectives on tourism in Europe and its impact on our economies. The Symposium seeks to integrate European knowledge in order to help shape a sustainable EU-wide tourism strategy. The Symposium will support the exchange of ideas and encourage delegates to engage in thought-provoking topical debate with local and regional practitioners and policymakers at EU level.

“ (...) Tourism has become one of the fastest growing economic sectors of our times; a sector that drives global growth and development, creates millions of jobs, spurs exports and investment and transforms peoples' lives”

- UNWTO Secretary General Taleb Rifai, March 2014

Venue and Accommodation

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre
Avenue du Boulevard 17
1210 Brussels
Belgium



Why Attend?

- ✓ Gain insights into EU initiatives and policy developments to promote competitive and sustainable tourism in Europe
- ✓ Discuss the economic impact of the tourism industry
- ✓ Understand the current legal framework for tourism
- ✓ Explore solutions to promote and develop a more sustainable and responsible tourism in Europe
- ✓ Examine European and local initiatives to improve the European tourism experience

Who Should Attend?

- Local Tourism Officers
- Culture, Heritage and Arts Officers
- Environment, Regeneration, Conservation and Communities Officers
- Local Authority Directors, Managers, Chief Executives, Leaders and Elected Members
- Project managers
- Hospitality Industry
- Hoteliers
- Regional Authorities
- Chairs of Local Strategic Partnerships
- Heads of Economic Development
- Heads of Policy and Performance
- Youth Arts Officers
- Sports Officers
- Arts Council Regional Directors
- European Tourism Associations
- Directors from Regional Government Offices and Development Agencies
- Community Development and Community Service Managers
- New Deal for Communities
- Directors of Arts and Leisure Providers
- Creative Consultants
- Community Consultants
- Board Members and Directors of Arts and Creative Institutions
- Regeneration Developers
- Leisure Developers

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Programme

- 09:15** Registration and Morning Refreshments
- 10:00** Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks
- 10:10** **Tourism in Europe: Current Challenges and Policy Developments**
- Following Up the New Political Framework for Tourism in Europe and the EU Industrial Policy for the Globalised Era
 - Implementing Initiatives at European Level: EU Actions to Promote and Support Member States
 - The Legal Framework and Horizontal Approaches to Tourism Policies
 - Discussing the European Tourism Quality Principles
- 10:40** **First Round of Discussions**
- 11:10** Morning Coffee Break
- 11:30** **Promoting Sustainable and Competitive Tourism in the EU**
- UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism
 - Adapting to New Technologies and New Types of Tourism
 - Ensuring Access to Tourism for All: The Calypso Project
 - Lessons Learnt from Destination Europe 2020
- 12:00** **Second Round of Discussions**
- 12:30** Networking Lunch
- 13:30** **Tourism Industry as a Driving Force for Economic Growth**
- Current Trends and Figures
 - The Role of SMEs in the Tourism Industry
 - Enhancing European Tourism Competitiveness: Innovation and Workforce
 - Improving Data Collection on the Tourism Sector
- 14:00** **Third Round of Discussions**
- 14:30** Afternoon Coffee Break
- 14:45** **Improving Consumers Safety and Tourism Experience in the EU**
- Promoting the Role of Consumer Organisations
 - Guaranteeing Travellers' Rights across Europe
 - Increasing Cooperation at Local and European Level
 - Recommendations for Future Actions
- 15:20** **Fourth Round of Discussions**
- 15:50** Chair's Summary and Closing Comments
- 16:00** Networking Reception
- 16:30** Symposium Close

Please note that the programme is subject to change without notice

Event Details

- Date:** Tuesday 17th March 2015
Time: 10:00am – 4:30pm
Venue: Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre, Brussels



Speakers Include

- ✓ **Francesca Tudini**, Head of Tourism Policy Unit, DG Enterprise and Industry, European Commission (confirmed)
- ✓ **Eduardo Santander**, Executive Director, European Travel Commission (ETC) (confirmed)

Forthcoming Events

- ✓ Young People and Substance Abuse in the EU: Decreasing Supply, Reducing Dependence, Building Recovery
18th November 2014
- ✓ 5th Annual International Symposium on Preventing Human Trafficking: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution
27th November 2014
- ✓ Free from Fear, Free from Pain: Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation in Europe
20th January 2015
- ✓ Europe 2020 Bridging the Digital Divide: Securing Equal Access to High-Speed Internet
21st January 2015
- ✓ eHealth in Europe: Empowering Patients and Offering Better Connected Healthcare Services
27th January 2015

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