

## OUTLINE for a new Communication of the European Commission on “*Framing the future of the European tourism: a strategic and cooperative approach*”

### Comments

NET, the Network of European Private Entrepreneurs in the Tourism Sector, welcomes the plans of the Commission for a new Communication on “*Framing the future of the European tourism: a strategic and cooperative approach*” and will contribute positively to the design of a new strategic and co-operative approach on European tourism. Although we regret that the document was circulated late in July to be discussed on 5 September, allowing very little time for consultation within the European associations and among the European associations, we see this paper as a good opportunity for a renewal of the relationships between the industry and the European Institutions. It should allow for an improved mastering of the various developments of EU origin impacting the sector.

We will review briefly some of the most attractive features of the draft.

### More consultation and cooperation with the industry

The first proposal of the Commission is to work in “*close consultation with all the parties concerned*”. We do hope that the expression “*close consultation*” implies more than a simple information exercise and that the views of the sector will really be taken into consideration. The idea is further developed in section “*IV. Strategic approach and proposals for actions*” where the outline indicates that one of the main principles of action should be “*full partnership and ownership of all stakeholders*”. We are particularly pleased with this announcement. In the same vein, we welcome the announcement of an *Annual European Tourism Summit*.

### Diversity of the sector

We welcome particularly the recognition by the Commission of the “*diversity of stakeholders, multi-component products, tourist destinations, vertical interdependencies, forms of tourism, resources*”. It seems that the Commission is taking into account one of 3 main themes developed in the Joint Declaration on 13 September 2001 on “*Tourism in Europe: united yet diverse*”.

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## **More than 90% tourism enterprises in the EU are SMEs**

Here again we are pleased to see that the Commission is taking into account one of the most important statements in the Joint Declaration just mentioned above and refers to the special needs of SMEs in its draft. It is, indeed, essential to understand the real structure of the sector to be able to analyse properly the impact that new measures of EU origin may have on it.

## **Need for the Tourism Unit to take into account the horizontal dimension of tourism and to work with other Commission services**

We welcome also the statement that *“the horizontal nature of tourism will be examined as cross-cutting all policies...”*, that a main element of the strategy should be to *“involve all relevant policies and instruments (monitor and manage their effects on tourism, integrate tourism issues into the different policies)* as well as the intention to improve *“coordination between Commission services”*. For years the industry has requested that the Tourism Unit concentrate the core of its work on the coordination of all measures worked upon by the various services of the Commission and with an impact – direct or indirect – on the tourism sector. This wish was already developed at length in HOTREC’s reply to the *“Commission Green Paper on Tourism”* in 1995, in the brochure *“Tourism: how important is it?”* issued by a number of tourism associations in 1999, in the *NET Manifesto* of April 2000, and in the Joint Declaration of 13 September 2000: *“Tourism in Europe: united yet diverse”*.

We noted also with great satisfaction that the Commission refers to the *“impact assessment of Community measures affecting tourism”*. For the industry the business impact assessment or cost/benefit analysis of each proposed measure is an essential policy instrument to the development of which the Tourism Unit should devote the major part of its time: therefore the Communication should not refer to it as a simple *“accompanying measure”*.

Whereas we welcome also the SWOT analysis, we do think that it should be integrated in the business impact assessment to be developed by the Commission and the sector for every measure of Community origin likely to affect the sector.

## **Priorities activities proposed by the WGs in their final reports**

The topics developed by the 5 Working Groups were mentioned briefly by the Council of Ministers in June 1999. NET was very pleased to be able to contribute to the work of the WGs by sending experts to the meetings from October 2000 onwards and is overall satisfied with the summary reports included as annexes to the outline for a Commission Communication. We hope, however, that the long brainstorming exercise developed over the Commission over the last 8 years (see annex) will now result in concrete proposals for concrete actions and that the greatest part of the resources of the Tourism Unit will be, in the future, devoted to a true coordination of all measures of EU origin of impact to the tourism sector and its many diverse sub-sectors.

**In summary**, we are satisfied with this outline which takes into consideration many of the requests expressed in the *NET Manifesto* and in the Joint Declaration of September 2000 "*Tourism in Europe: united yet diverse*" and look forward to the finalisation and concrete implementation of the Communication.

Lastly, we suggest that this outline for a Communication be reviewed in the light of the proposals for changes contained in the "*White Paper of the Commission on European governance*" issued in July 2001 and which calls for

- Better involvement and more openness
- Better policies, regulation and delivery
- Global governance
- Refocused Institutions.

Annex

Brussels, 31 August 2001

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D-0801-311-MP