



Council of the  
European Union

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**NOTE**

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From: Presidency  
To: Delegations

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Subject: Draft Council conclusions on strengthening tourism by leveraging Europe's cultural, natural and maritime heritage

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Delegations will find attached to this Note draft Council conclusions on strengthening European tourism by leveraging Europe's cultural, natural and maritime heritage.

This text will be examined by the Tourism Group on 29 September 2014.

**DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON STRENGTHENING TOURISM BY  
LEVERAGING EUROPE'S CULTURAL, NATURAL AND MARITIME HERITAGE**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING

- the Communication from the Commission on "Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" of March 2010<sup>1</sup>;
- the Communication from the Commission on "Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe" of June 2010<sup>2</sup> and the Council conclusions of October 2010 on this Communication of June 2010<sup>3</sup>;
- the Communication from the Commission on Blue growth: opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth of September 2012<sup>4</sup>;
- the Communication from the Commission on "A European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism" of February 2014<sup>5</sup>;
- the Council Conclusions of May 2014 on "Cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe"<sup>6</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. 7110/10.

<sup>2</sup> Doc. 11883/10.

<sup>3</sup> Doc. 14944/10.

<sup>4</sup> Doc. 13908/12.

<sup>5</sup> Doc. 6875/14.

<sup>6</sup> Doc. 9129/14.

## TAKING NOTE

of the outcome of the High level Conference on coastal and maritime tourism and Blue Growth which was organized by the Greek Presidency and the Commission on 10 March 2014, emphasizing the growing dynamics of the maritime sector, its economic and social benefits, its contribution to the enhancement of local economies;

[and of the 13th European Forum on Tourism held in Naples on 30 and 31 October 2014;]

1. NOTES that tourism is a key sector of the European economy, generating over 10% of the EU's Gross Domestic Product and employing around 9.7 million people in 1.8 million enterprises and has an increasingly positive impact on economic growth and employment in Europe;
2. RECALLS that Europe is one of the world's major cultural tourism destinations thanks to its rich heritage; NOTES that cultural tourism accounts for about 40% of European tourism and that tourism represents a powerful incentive for preserving and enhancing the cultural heritage of our continent;
3. EMPHASISES that Europe's cultural heritage contributes to the appeal of tourism destinations; ACKNOWLEDGES that tourism allows Europe's citizens to access and discover the cultural heritage of our continent, thus contributing to their personal growth and knowledge, developing a spirit of tolerance and respect for other cultures and people;
4. RECOGNISES that coastal and maritime tourism accounts for one third of all tourist activities in Europe, giving employment to almost 3.2 million people, generating 183 billion Euros to Europe's GDP, and making up 51% of tourist accommodation across Europe<sup>7</sup>;

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<sup>7</sup> In 2013.

5. CONSIDERS that activities and sites notably related to coastal and maritime tourism such as underwater archaeological parks, sea museums, protected natural sites, coastal towers and fortresses, historic lighthouses, historic public buildings built on the coast are part of Europe's common cultural heritage and therefore deserve to be further promoted and used in a sustainable manner to the benefit of all Europeans;
6. EMPHASISES the need to explore the possibility of further developing the European digital strategy to promote and support cultural, maritime and coastal tourism services and providers;
7. RECOGNISES that eco-tourism is attracting an increasing number of environment-minded travellers who may be served by both local products and services and whose numbers may be increased even further by environmentally-friendly business models and practices;
8. EMPHASISES the positive contribution for Europe's goals of economic growth and jobs that seeking and exploiting synergies across cultural, maritime and coastal tourism sectors and with other relevant sectors, such as creative industries or sports can bring;
9. UNDERLINES that cultural heritage and cultural and maritime tourism play a specific role in providing better choices for consumers and attracting more business by diversifying the tourism offer, extending the tourism season and making tourism accessible to all, in particular families, the young, the elderly and the disabled;
10. RECOGNISES the need to invest in specialised advanced training courses for tourism workers and to exchange best practices in Europe, including courses given in academia, so as to maintain or increase the professional skills of tourism workers. Advanced and innovative management models for tourism services should be promoted, with the involvement of tourism operators, in particular for areas with historical, artistic or natural interest;
11. NOTES that the European tourism industry is facing mounting competition from third countries, and UNDERLINES that Europe should therefore capitalise on its cultural richness and diversified natural beauty and offer sustainable and high-quality tourism services;

CALLS ON MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCE AND WITH DUE REGARD TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, AND THE INDUSTRY TO:

- continue cooperating for the implementation of the actions outlined in the above mentioned Communication "Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe";
- pursue actively and acting at European, national, regional and local level, in the implementation of the Action Plan contained in the above mentioned Communication on Coastal and Maritime Tourism aimed at boosting competitive and sustainable growth of this sector;
- encourage networking and partnerships between cultural, maritime and coastal tourism and other policy fields, between private and public actors, and across different level of governance; encourage also an European-wide dialogue between cruise operators, ports and coastal tourism operators, aiming at promoting a sustainable development of maritime tourism;
- foster cross-border and inter-regional cooperation on cultural heritage issues, in particular through the promotion of cultural and thematic tourism itineraries that protect the authenticity of our cultural legacy, while delivering high quality, sustainable tourism products, accessible to all;
- pursue policies and actions to ensure sustainable, seamless and intermodal connectivity to tourism destinations and smaller cultural areas;

- support the development of new tourism products and experiences, to reduce the impact of seasonality, and attract more visitors, by focussing on Europe's cultural richness, in particular on its intangible heritage of handicrafts, gastronomic traditions, creative sectors, and reviving or using existing networks, such as local festivals, events, pilgrimages;
- pursue the collection and analysis of statistics and economic data on tourism, and develop and implement indicators and monitoring mechanism to ensure that cultural, maritime and coastal tourism grow in a sustainable manner;
- invest in initiatives aimed at promoting the image of Europe as a tourism destination of excellence, for the quality of its services and the uniqueness of its regions, their culture, food, landscapes and lifestyle;
- support measures to improve training and skills of tourism workers, employers and managers to deliver high quality tourism products;
- engage actively with industry and stakeholders, in particular SMEs, to increase the digitalisation of the tourism value chain;
- take into account the contribution and the impact of cultural tourism in defining and implementing policies and in the use of European funds related to tourism;
- recognise and support the key role played by tourism SMEs in preserving and enhancing Europe's cultural heritage and in promoting worldwide the image of Europe as destination of excellence;

**CALLS ON THE COMMISSION TO** inform the Council about the results of these actions and initiatives by June 2017.