



# WORLDWIDE LAUNCH FOR NEW EUROPEAN TRAVEL PORTAL – VISITEUROPE.COM

Vienna, 21 March 2006

The new European travel portal “visiteurope.com” will be given its worldwide launch at the European Tourism Ministers’ Conference which is taking place today in Vienna. The new internet portal will provide a unique platform for marketing Europe as a single tourism destination.

Arthur Oberascher, President of the European Travel Commission, stressed the strategic importance of IT and E-Commerce for European tourism at a joint press conference with European Commission Vice-President, Günter Verheugen and Austria’s Minister of Economic Affairs, Martin Bartenstein. **“We know that the US travel market already spends more money online than offline. This is a paradigm shift that is changing the whole travel and tourism industry – and a shift that Europe is reacting to at a professional level with visiteurope.com”**, said Oberascher.

The European Travel Commission (ETC) has been closely involved in the development of the visiteurope.com project, which was initiated and funded by the European Commission under its IDA (Interchange of Data between Administrations) programme. ETC will market, operate and promote the portal worldwide. Over the last two years ETC has integrated the European tourism destinations into the development process and coordinated the content using the strongest common denominators with a single goal: to present 'Europe as a whole' to the 425 million guests who visit Europe each year.

What “visiteurope.com” offers:

- Totally new visibility for 'Destination Europe' on a single web platform.
- Intercultural access: i.e. a perfect tailor-made portal in all relevant languages – particularly those which are important for the competitiveness of European tourism such as Russian, Chinese, Japanese or Portuguese.
- visiteurope.com also features tools that can help customers to plan their own vacation, tailor-made to their individual special interests and travel preferences.

This will provide advantages to European destinations such as:

- The possibility to promote and market cross-border and pan-European offers and products such as the Danube region, architecture or castles. Through its link-ups, visiteurope.com supports the development of regional and interregional clusters of services which are so important for tourism.
- Finally, through its own reporting tool visiteurope.com can measure the effectiveness of its marketing, and thus offer the possibility of reacting quickly and efficiently to trends in supply and demand.

The real achievement of visiteurope.com, however, is that it is the first time ever that all European destinations have been integrated into a single internet platform. This network provides the portal with enormous potential – opening up new and exciting opportunities for promoting tourism in and to Europe which were not possible in the past. **“From today onwards visiteurope.com will raise the collaboration between European tourism destinations to a completely new level. This is an important step for European tourism. But it is also an important step for a united Europe”** stressed ETC President Arthur Oberascher.

## THE EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION (ETC)

Founded in 1948, ETC is the umbrella organisation for Europe's national tourism organisations (NTOs) bringing together the know-how of 34 strong national tourism destinations. ETC's mission is the worldwide marketing of Europe as a tourism brand. ETC also serves as a forum for NTOs to find common solutions to the most important challenges for European tourism. In its activities ETC focuses on three strategic pillars: e-marketing, market and cultural intelligence and operational excellence.



A photo of Arthur Oberascher is available from the ETC Press Office.

Contact: Lisa Davies, ETC Executive Unit,

19A Avenue Marnix (PO Box 25), 1000 Brussels, BELGIUM.

T: 00 32 2 - 548 9000 / F: 00 32 2 - 5141843 / e-mail: [press@etc-corporate.org](mailto:press@etc-corporate.org).

For further information, visit ETC's website: [www.etc-corporate.org](http://www.etc-corporate.org)