

## Speech - Towards Joint Promotion of Europe as Tourist Destination

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### Intro

- I would like to first thank you for inviting and welcoming me in Berlin. I find the capital of Germany a great source of inspiration for tourist activities and services.  
I can't think of a better setting for our debate.
- As the co-chair of the newly established intergroup on Tourism Development in the European Parliament, I understand the importance of solidarity in developing European public policies, especially with regards to Tourism.
- This new Intergroup aims at supporting the European tourism sector within a holistic approach, via the work and activities of the various Parliamentary committees. Be it the Visa policy, e-sharing economy or accessible tourism, our intergroup wants to give a voice to MEPs on the various topics affecting the sector.

### Promoting a European year on Tourism

- One of the goals of our Intergroup, is nominating a European Year on Tourism.
- I take advantage of Mr ORTUN's presence in this panel, to ask for his support on this matter.  
I would also like to ask Mr Ortun to deliver this message to Commissioner Bieńkowska, whose support is essential to the success of our initiative.  
A European Year on Tourism will certainly raise the profile of the various players, active in this sector, foster job creation, and advance the branding of Europe as a top destination for tourists - from all over the globe.
- We, members of the Intergroup, believe that promoting tourism and cultural heritage must be a priority for the EU, and we think that promoting a year on Tourism in Europe will give us an advantage over our competitors.

## The importance of Tourism in the EU

- The Intergroup on European Tourism and Cultural Heritage was approved by all political leaders in the EP, because we all understood that the tourism sector faces various challenges.
- Currently, approximately 10% of the EU's GDP comes from tourism activities.  
10 years ago the tourism sector accounted for more than 13% of the EU's GDP (prior to the ascension of Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia).  
The Tourism sector provides approximately 5.2% of the total workforce, roughly 10 million jobs, and it involves almost 2 million SMEs.
- Tourism still creates jobs in the EU, and it still producing large share of the EU's GDP, but can we do better?  
The answer is certainly yes.
- The Tourism sector is a driver for economic growth and creation of millions of jobs at the European level.  
It should remain this way.
- Investing gradually and strategically in areas, that require investment will help us achieve this goal.  
One example is investing in transport infrastructure to assure connectivity with rural areas, and other areas with great touristic potential.  
Another is the branding of Europe as a unique destination, rich and diverse.
- To get there, we need to update the current strategies, and set up new ones, which represent the current conditions.
- Mobilizing the EU institutions, local authorities, and notably the private sector, will help us come to a mutual agreement on how the future of European tourism should in fact look like.

## About Romania

- As a gateway between East and West, I am confident that Romania can actively contribute to the growing, and further development of European tourism.
- We still have a lot to accomplish in our region, but we are moving forward.
- Going further, Romania requires the help of the EU. We need a framework orientated to the expansion of European infrastructure, to and from the region, and we need plans, approved, supported and endorsed by the EU.
- I can only begin to share with you Romania's many attractions. From the rich and story-like mountains, where you find villages where time stands still, to the busy and ever-growing Capital, full of energy and dynamic night-life.  
From one of the worlds most diverse and beautiful deltas, the Danube, to a sunny seaside.  
We have it all.
- I am confident that my country, as well as yours, has a lot to offer in terms of beauty.
- All we have to do is to promote our very special tourist attractions and services as part of the EU, with the EU's seal of approval and quality.

## Conclusion

- Europe has to struggle to overcome challenges coming from the fast growing global market. Be it the shadow economy, or competitors from Asia or South America.
- Only together we can succeed in making Europe a long term leader in tourism.
- It is my personal opinion, but I am sure it is shared by most of us here, that we need a new strategy for European tourism, that brings together the main EU institutions: Parliament, Council and Commission with the private sector, on the development of a long lasting relationship, that will serve the needs of the sector.
- The Intergroup for European Tourism Development is open to real collaboration with counterparts from the EU, and especially with representatives of the private sector.
- We should start developing a European political framework on tourism that is based on the foundation that the EU is growing, and tourism has to grow with it.
- This goal will require new and revised EU strategy on tourism, in this context; an update to the Commission's 2010 communication is necessary.
- Last but not least, diversity is our advantage, let's promote it.
- People from all over the world come to Europe and are amazed by our modern capitals, culture, unique architecture and history.  
But many tourists are also coming to Europe to find peace in rustic villages and smaller towns.
- Whichever destination tourists pick, from the South of France to the beautiful Northern shores of Scandinavia, they should know they visited Europe.
- They should leave with a brand of excellence imprinted in their eyes, and with a sense of wonder that will make them return to us.
- Thank you.