

**PRESS RELEASE****NET calls for policies that foster the competitiveness of the European tourism industry during a meeting with Commissioner Bienkowska.**

A NET delegation comprising high level representatives from the European Private Sector in Tourism met with EU Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, Ms Bienkowska to discuss the main challenges and opportunities within the tourism sector.

Tourism is a key contributor to Europe's competitiveness. It is the third socio-economic activity which is mainly composed of small and medium-size enterprises 91% of which are microenterprises. Tourism accounts for 9% of EU GDP and employs 10% of the total EU workforce. This translates in to 13 million jobs<sup>1</sup>. It is also one of the key sectors to further contribute to economic growth and job creation, a priority of President Juncker.

However, unless Europe is competitive in terms of its tax and regulatory regime, destination appeal, perceptions of value and visa facilitation, Europe will continue to lose out. This loss is an actual, not a potential one.

Discussions focused on NET suggestions on how to unlock the full potential of tourism to foster innovation, create jobs and stimulate economic growth.

The Commissioner's support was sought for:

- Continuing to raise awareness of and support the adoption of a smart Schengen visa policy to facilitate legitimate travellers from important tourism source markets, such as China, India and Russia;
- Adoption of a well-functioning Single Market, with special focus on the Digital Single Market;
- The simplification and streamlining of the regulatory framework for tourism, in particular as regards taxation. Avoid proliferation of taxes at various levels, which render Europe excessively costly and uncompetitive;
- Upgrading skills and competences across the tourism sector in order to enhance the competitiveness of companies and keep on creating jobs

Hubert Andela, President of the IRU Taxi Group, concluded, "Over recent years the taxi business has increasingly embraced the latest technologies to better serve their customers. With the IRU Global Taxi Network we are building a stronger and smarter taxi for our society within a level playing field."

**CLIA Europe**  
CRUISE COMPANIES OPERATING  
IN EUROPE

**ECTAA**  
TRAVEL AGENTS &  
TOUR OPERATORS IN EUROPE

**EFCO&HPA**  
CAMPS SITES, HOLIDAY PARKS  
& HOLIDAY VILLAGES IN EUROPE

**ETOA**  
EUROPEAN INBOUND TOURISM

**HOTREC**  
HOTELS, RESTAURANTS  
& CAFÉS IN EUROPE

**IAAPA**  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
AMUSEMENT PARKS AND ATTRACTIONS

**IRU**  
BUS, COACH & TAXI OPERATORS  
WORLDDE

<sup>1</sup> Source: [EUROSTAT](#)

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**NET**, the Network for the European Private Sector in Tourism is a contact group of pan-European trade associations. Our members are: CLIA, ECTAA, EFCO&HPA, ETOA, HOTREC, IAAPA, IRU. NET's purpose is to develop common goals for the tourism industry and work with policy makers and other partners to achieve them. For more information please email one of the NET members.

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