



Panel 1 - Towards a "Destination(s) Europe Brand" initiative?

Europe is the first tourist destination in the world and has kept its number one position in the past years: in 2013, European Union destinations recorded more than 432 million international tourist arrivals, representing a market share of almost 40%. In particular long-haul markets contributed significantly to the growth of inbound European tourism. The forward momentum mainly comes from North America - the USA, but also from China and Russia. Furthermore, the future of the tourism sector appears prosperous as international tourist arrivals to Europe are expected to accumulate to 745 million by 2030.

However, the European tourism industry is facing increasing global competition from emerging destinations that are attracting increasing numbers of tourists. Destinations in Asia and the Pacific will benefit from the expansion of intra-regional travel and will gain most of the new arrivals in 2030. Consequently, North-East Asia will replace Southern and Mediterranean Europe as the most visited sub-region in 2030.

In order to remain the world's first tourist destination, Europe must respond to these shifting patterns in global tourism and capitalize not only on the potential of tomorrow's outbound travel markets whose expanding middle classes are a growing market for European destinations, but also ensure the development of a competitive and sustainable tourism sector.

Europe must take advantage of its tourism offerings and enforce its market shares in both emerging and established markets.

First of all, we need to align Europe's market mix and develop a strong, easily accessible and reliable offer of pan-European tourism products covering several countries, as well as identify underserved segments (e.g. senior tourism, MICE, LGBT, etc.). We need to emphasize the diversity of Europe's natural scenery, cultural wealth, history, quality of life, and safety in order to stimulate demand for European tourism products while tailoring offerings to their particular needs (cultural background of tourists, special needs, etc.). In particular, through the promotion of pan-European thematic experiences, European destinations should seek to raise visibility for the plethora of products available, while creating awareness for the region's diversity and the factors that differentiate one country from another. This shall encourage targeted product development, while embracing the differences that make Europe so special.

We then need to increase efforts to raise the profile of and promote Europe as a destination, in particular on third country markets, which perceive Europe as a single destination and not as a collection of individual countries. Although traveller's behaviour is changing, there is still a big majority of tourists from Asian or Latin American countries that travel through Europe as part of a multi country tour visiting several countries in a few days, so that they get the feeling that they have been to and done Europe properly.

It is crucial that tourism organizations at all levels continue to strengthen their collaboration under the umbrella of a common European approach and positioning. Therefore, it would be important to develop a clear definition of a Destination(s) Europe Brand, capitalising on Europe's common values (wealth of culture, natural beauty and history, high standard in human resources and quality of tourism services in a healthy, safety and secure, easily accessible environment, etc.) as well as on its exceptional diversity and great variety of tourism experiences offered. Such a Destination(s) Europe Brand initiative should involve all tourism key public and private players and have as a main aim to add value to all current promotion efforts. It would need to be developed with an inclusive holistic approach, so as to create advantages for both established and less known destinations without creating confusion or further competition.



European Tourism Day

01 December 2014 Brussels - Charlemagne Building



Last but not least, efforts should be joined towards a European promotion campaign, involving all European National Tourism Organisations, their umbrella association – the European Travel Commission (ETC), as well as relevant private stakeholders from the whole tourism value chain.

All in all, the objective of this panel is to have the views of the European Tourism public and private stakeholders at all levels on the future of the promotion of Europe as a destination.

DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. Do you think that a Destination(s) Europe Brand initiative should be envisaged for the future?
2. On which priority markets should Europe focus its promotion strategy?
3. Would you (EU Member States and National Tourism Organisations, European Travel Commission, EU tourism value chain industries) be ready to commit to cooperate towards the consolidation of a Destination(s) Europe Brand initiative?
4. What should be the role of the European Commission?
5. What should the role of the Member States and their National Tourism Organisations be and how to ensure the best coordination of their promotional and marketing actions towards an increased visibility of Destination(s) Europe?
6. Who should take up leadership and coordinate the actors from the EU tourism value chain industries to implement a roadmap for Europe as a travel destination? How should roles and responsibilities be distributed?