



European Committee  
of the Regions



European Parliament



Network of European Regions for  
a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism  
**NECSTouR**



# Press Release

Brussels, 17 July 2017

## The end of roaming is just the beginning!

*MEPs, regions, cities and the tourism industry urge the European Commission to come forward with a European Tourism Strategy*

**40 MEPs, more than 70 Members of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and representatives of Europe's tourism industry call for a comprehensive strategy supporting the tourism sector in an [Open Letter](#) addressed to the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker.**

Tourism is the third biggest industry in the EU and an engine for sustainable growth and jobs - generating 10% of the EU's GDP and providing employment for up to 15% of the EU's population, mostly in millions of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). For many European regions and cities tourism is crucial for securing their economic and social stability.

The [Open Letter](#) underlines that "*tourism often regenerates dilapidated areas and less developed regions, particularly rural ones.*" Additionally tourism also contributes "*to creating a sense of pride in European citizenship and promotes mutual understanding within the EU*" with the numerous benefits European citizens enjoy when travelling in the EU, such as removed roaming charges, EU passenger- and cross-border consumer rights, the European healthcare regime, as well as customs free shopping with a single currency in the Eurozone.

However, the sector faces massive challenges like a growing investment gap, burdensome bureaucracy for SMEs, the need to align the sector with the energy and climate targets as well as digitalisation, a growing crisis of missing skills, security and marketing issues related to terrorism, and fierce competition from new non-European markets. These challenges cannot be dealt with at national level alone. Therefore political action at the European level is needed to secure Europe's position as the world's leading tourist destination while continuing creating jobs and sustainable growth.

Ending roaming charges is just the beginning. A consistent multi-annual EU tourism strategy is needed. It's time that the European Union steps up its efforts to support this industry which is crucial for Europe's economic development and a shared European identity.

**Istvan Ujhelyi**, MEP, Vice-Chair of [TRAN Committee](#), Chairman Tourism Task Force  
**Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar**, MEP, Chair of the Working Group Tourism of [SME Europe](#)  
**Hanspeter Wagner**, [CoR Member](#) and rapporteur on tourism  
**Eduardo Santander** Executive Director of the [European Travel Commission](#)  
**Patrick Torrent**, [President of NECSTouR](#)

### Further information:

[Study of the European Parliamentary Research Service on Tourism](#)  
[European Committee of the Regions opinion on Tourism](#)  
[European Travel Commission: European Tourism 2017 – Trends and Prospects](#)

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