

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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**COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN
TO ASSIST TOURISM**

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

I. INTRODUCTION

It was in 1983 that the European Parliament began adopting Resolutions on the following: Community policy on tourism,¹ Community action in the field of tourism,² and the possibilities offered by tourism in the context of regional development and social measures.³ More recently, Parliament's Resolution of 22 January 1988 on facilitation, promotion and funding of tourism in the European Community⁴ led to 1990 being declared European Year of Tourism.

That Resolution drew the Commission's attention to the potential role of tourism in regional development, in particular rural development, and to the importance to tourism of the completion of the single market (facilitation of the movement of travellers, freedom of establishment, consumer protection, restructuring of the sector, taxation, etc.).

Moreover, on 13 December 1990, Parliament adopted a Resolution on the European Year of Tourism, in which it reaffirmed its support for a Community policy to assist tourism.

Parliament is also considering holding, during the course of 1991, a general debate on tourism at which a report will be presented on the Community's policy on tourism in all its aspects (transport, culture, regional policy, external relations, economic and social importance, consumer policy and environment).

The Economic and Social Committee has delivered opinions on communications from the Commission, and has recently drafted a report on tourism and regional development,⁵ in which it asks that the importance of tourism be recognized by implementing suitable measures at Community level and by making specific reference to tourism in the Treaty, when it is revised.

Since 1988 the Community's ministers for tourism and the Commission have held regular meetings in order to exchange information on tourism policy in each Member State and discuss the approach to Community action in that field. At their latest meeting, on 29 November 1990 in Brussels, the ministers asked the Commission to put forward guidelines for a Community action programme on tourism.

Before any new action, it is necessary to examine the responses already made by the Community to the needs of tourism in the face of changes in its environment and in demand.

1 OJ No C 10, 16.1.1984.

2 OJ No C 7, 12.1.1987.

3 OJ No C 36, 17.2.1986; OJ No C 99, 13.4.1987.

4 OJ No C 49, 22.2.1988.

5 CES 1093/90, 20 September 1990.

This review of the situation and of the action undertaken will make it possible to outline the scope of and priorities for additional Community measures on tourism.

In defining these measures and the ways of implementing them, the Commission will fully respect the principle of subsidiarity: its priority role will be to coordinate national policies and action and initiate new measures, mainly on the basis of exchanges and the demonstration of innovatory practices tried out in certain Member States or certain regions or by certain operators.

II. THE FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION BY THE COMMUNITY IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM

In designing Community measures to assist tourism in the Community we must take into account the present situation of Europe's tourist industries, their position on the world market, and the effects of the completion of the single market and economic and monetary union on the structural development and expansion of the tourism sector and its components.

In identifying these measures, we must also take account not only of tourism's importance in economic activity as a whole but also of its importance as a means of bringing the nations together, in particular at a time when the frontiers with central and eastern Europe are opening up.

1. The economic and social importance of tourism

There is now greater awareness, in the world generally and in the Community in particular, of the economic and social importance of tourism and the prospects which it affords.

Within tourism, "passenger transport" and "travel" are among the biggest service exports: they account for more than one third of all international trade in services, i.e. close to 5% of all trade in goods and services in the OECD area, and their growth has outstripped that of services generally.⁶

The figures for the Community are equally significant: tourism accounts for more than 5% of GDP and almost 5% of foreign trade. It employs close to 8 million people, i.e. 6% of the total number of jobs in the Community, and continues to create employment.

From the point of view of economic and social cohesion, tourism has great potential for exploiting the natural and cultural resources of Community regions and helping to ensure that they develop in a balanced way.

⁶ Source: World Bank and United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations: OECD - Report on tourism policy and international tourism in the OECD member countries, Paris 1990.

The importance of tourism does, however, vary between different parts of the Community: Spain, France, Greece, Italy and Portugal derive a large net surplus from their tourism trade; in Ireland earnings slightly exceed expenditure; in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom the balance of trade in tourism is substantially in the red.

This uneven development of tourism between regions of the Community (and indeed within the same Member State) leads to a concentration of tourism in certain regions while others are neglected.

The Member States themselves attach varying amounts of importance to tourism in the context of their economic and social development. Europe as a whole is steadily losing world market share as a tourist destination and the various European destinations are showing varying results which could affect the existing balance. The resulting problems require specific solutions which can no longer be confined within a regional framework.

2. The impact of the completion of the single market and of economic and monetary union

Tourism plays a fundamental role in bringing the nations together. As an economic activity, it is subject to the effects of changes in economic systems and mechanisms, and because some parts of tourism activity take place across borders the effect of the completion of the internal market will be greater on tourism than on some other parts of the economy.

Tourism is one of the industries which are destined to benefit greatly from the completion of the single market and from economic and monetary union, and this in turn should further increase the progress to be achieved in market integration by way of the single market.

The measures designed to achieve the single market should facilitate the implementation of various activities in all countries of the Community, including those concerning tourism. There is still much to be done in order to carry out all the measures proposed.

With regard to the provision of tourism services, especially of airline services, progress has been made towards the general liberalization of economic activity. But, as far as tourists themselves are concerned, progress remains limited to simple measures of facilitation.

The completion of the single market should give rise to an increase in the movement of people in the Community. In this perspective, and in view of the current congestion of road and air transport infrastructure, the Community is developing an approach which aims to take into account the new dimension of the market by means of trans-European networks.⁷

⁷ Council Resolution of 22.1.1990.

The Commission is endeavouring to ensure that no loopholes remain after the completion of the internal market in road, sea and air passenger transport, in the temporary importation of vehicles and, more fundamentally, in the abolition of border controls between Community countries. The phasing-out of internal Community border controls, together with the recognition of social security schemes for travellers, will represent a major boost to tourism in the Community. As far as non-Community tourists are concerned, once they have been checked at one of the Community's external frontiers, they should be able to move around with much greater ease within the Community.

Furthermore, a common visa valid for the whole Twelve (currently under discussion within the framework of the preparation of a convention on the crossing of external borders) should as a general rule, permit a national of a third country who has been checked at an external border to benefit from the right to move throughout the other Member States without having to obtain other visas. The recent political changes in central and eastern Europe and the prospect of an increase in tourist traffic with the countries there has already led the Twelve to abolish the visa requirement for Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

The new means of payment (i.e. electronic payment cards which give access to cash points and which can be used to authorize payments at point-of-sale terminals) are already making it easy for tourists to obtain local currency or settle their bills in the countries they visit. Moreover, the ecu will play a more prominent role with the introduction of economic and monetary union.

3. Development factors which are specific to tourism

Looking beyond the changes arising from the completion of the single market, tourism businesses will have to develop under constraints which are specific to that sector and, in particular, adapt to changes in demand and to the introduction of technologies which, in some cases, will entail major changes in traditional occupations.

3.1 The structure of demand and competition on the world market

Demographic changes and increasing real incomes are bringing about an overall increase in the demand for holidays, while changes in the structure of demand (holiday travellers from southern Europe, senior citizens' holidays, etc.) are also leading to changes in patterns of tourism. There is an ever-widening range of tourism products on the market, in particular outside the Community and outside Europe. These factors may lead to a change in the traditional north-south flow of tourists in the Community, in favour of new destinations, which in future may well be in central or eastern Europe or indeed outside Europe altogether.

Another factor in the structural development of tourism relates to changes in demand with regard to the environmental aspects of the tourist industry. The development of tourism has been unevenly distributed in the Community. In some regions there is a problem of environmental protection which is closely associated with the presence of too many tourists. Environmental concerns are increasingly affecting the choice of holiday location, within

the general pattern of a search for quality. Faced with that requirement the tourism sector is experiencing major problems as a result of large-scale regional disparities and the need to renew or adjust certain tourism facilities.

A further difficulty which the tourism sector must confront concerns the change of direction in intra-Community tourism. The ever-increasing number of people from southern European countries taking holidays is tending to strengthen the south-north stream, which until now has been negligible compared with the traditional north-south movement of holidaymakers. This situation is changing the nature of tourism in the northern European countries, which will have to respond to new problems in catering for tourists.

At the same time, the percentage of holidays to non-Community countries is growing at a regular pace, a sign of the rapid development of international competition directly affecting Europe.

In the face of this sharp increase in competition on the world market, the lack or inadequacy of tourism products which are designed on a European scale or can be identified as European is a real problem which tourism-promotion policy must face.

3.2 The spread of technology in tourist industries and services

Computerized booking and information systems have begun to lead to far-reaching changes in the procedures for holiday travel. They can allow tourists direct access to leisure and accommodation facilities. The middlemen in the tourist industry are not always aware of what is at stake in the spread of this technology or, because they tend to act in isolation, are not always in a position to plan and implement strategies for change.

The expected setting-up of trans-European networks of computerized telecommunications services relying on the most efficient infrastructure now being developed (ISDN, wideband), should enable the industry to offer consumers increased choice and comparisons and to improve considerably the quality of its services, giving tourists access to the best and most complete information with regard to choice, product, quality and price.

The IMPACT programme being operated by the Community for the information industries could also play a major role in developing these new techniques in tourism.

However, the conditions for free access to such networks by the industry and by tourists have not yet been fully established.

III. ACTION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY THE COMMUNITY ON TOURISM

Various Community policies, and a number of programmes and measures, without being directly aimed at tourism, do already provide responses to the needs associated with the development and changes in tourist activities.

Measures aimed directly at tourism have also been adopted, in addition to certain specific initiatives tried out as part of the European Year of Tourism.

These programmes and measures may be classified in three categories:

- general measures connected with the completion of the internal market;
- indirect actions resulting from the application of Community policies;
- direct measures in favour of tourism and actions undertaken as part of the European Year of Tourism.

1. General measures connected with the completion of the internal market

The development of Community legislation and of the case law of the European Court of Justice has led to changes in the economic and legal environment of tourism. These changes affect all sectors of the economy but some measures are of particular importance to tourism.

From the tourism point of view, the most important changes in transport policy concern air transport. The measures concerned are the December 1987 proposals on the liberalization of the industry (entered into force 1 November 1990). They concern the apportionment of air transport capacity (particularly the allocation of routes and authorized increases in seasonal capacity), methods of fixing tariffs, access to the market, airport taxes and air traffic control. Two regulations were also adopted with the aim of preventing the misuse of computerized reservation systems.⁸

Another set of basic measures for the completion for the internal market concern indirect taxation. The 1987 Commission proposal on the abolition of fiscal frontiers has been amended and is still under discussion.

As matters stand at present, proposals specifically affecting tourism relate firstly to the transport of passengers within and between Member States, which the Commission has proposed be taxed in the country of departure. Commission proposals also provide for the abolition from 1 January 1993 of tax-free purchases between Member States and of the limits on the quantity and value of taxed purchases. Tax-free allowances for persons travelling between Member States will thus be done away with completely.

Because of the often transnational nature of some tourist activities, general proposals on company law are of major importance for tourist businesses.

With a view to completion of the internal market, the Commission is concentrating its efforts on creating a Community rather than a strictly national framework for company law. This consists of: the proposal for a fifth company law directive, currently being discussed in the Council, which is aimed at closer harmonization of national law; the proposal for a tenth company law directive on the removal of legal obstacles to cross-border mergers; and the proposal for a thirteenth directive on ensuring harmonization of the procedures to be followed as regards take overs and other general bids.

As well as harmonizing national laws, the Community is developing specifically Community instruments such as the European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG), which came into effect on 1 July 1989, and the proposal for a Regulation on the Statute for a European company, which will enable companies to cooperate at Community level by setting up a joint subsidiary, merging or setting up a holding company.

The internationalization of tourism can also be assisted by setting up businesses or carrying on an activity in another Member State.

A number of directives adopted on the freedom of establishment and the freedom to supply services, and certain transitional measures, apply to the tourist trades (restaurants, cafes, hotels and camping sites; couriers and travel agents). In 1988, the Council adopted a Directive introducing a general system for the recognition of higher-education diplomas awarded on completion of professional education and training of at least three years' duration. This came into force on 1 January 1991.⁹

The Commission is currently preparing a similar Directive on a system for the mutual recognition of vocational training given at secondary-education level and short higher-education courses (2 years) and for certain occupations requiring experience rather than a qualification. However, the new Directive will not replace the more specific ones already in existence or the transitional measures, in particular those relating to tourist occupations, where these have already introduced mutual recognition. To that extent, the transitional measures would become permanent.

As regards vocational training for skilled workers, the Commission has introduced comparability at Community level in respect of eight occupations (receptionist, porter, salesman, domestic help, restaurant, barman, cook and wine-waiter).

Specific questions were raised as regards the freedom of establishment and the recognition of qualifications for tourist guides and tour operators.

Directive 75/368/EEC on transitional measures directly regulates the freedom of establishment of tour operators in the sense of persons organizing package holidays and persons accompanying tourists, but not persons who give detailed explanations of sites, etc.

Tour guides come in two categories. First, there are those who accompany tourists to the host Member State whilst remaining based in their State of origin: their situation is covered by Article 59 of the EEC Treaty, as recently decided by the Court of Justice.

9 89/48/EEC.

Secondly, there are tour guides who wish to become established in another Member State: their activities are covered by Article 57.

Mention must also be made of the increasing importance of Community competition policy for the changing environment of tourism firms. Several fields relating to tourism have been the subject of Court decisions (application of Article 85): contracts concluded between a tour operator and a travel agent; agreements obliging travel agents to invoice the prices set by operators for package tours or prohibiting them from passing on to customers some of the commission they receive for the sale of holidays or from granting discounts to customers; exclusive distribution and exclusive purchasing agreements, whereby a travel agent is obliged to purchase holidays from a particular operator only or not to sell holidays proposed by competitors.¹⁰

For its part, the Commission in 1988 decided that there should be one exemption per category of franchise agreement.¹¹ This type of agreement is frequently used by operators and travel agents, and can also be resorted to in other parts of the industry, e.g. hotels.

On 21 December 1989, the Council adopted the merger control Regulation, which came into force on 21 September 1990 and will apply, of course, to the supervision and review of large-scale mergers in the tourism industry.

In the course of 1990, the Commission also initiated the action programme relating to the implementation of the Community Charter of Basic Social Rights, which complements the economic aspects of the completion of the internal market.

Two proposals are of particular importance for tourism: the proposal for a Directive on contracts and forms of employment other than full-time open-ended employment relationships (atypical work) and the proposal for a Directive on the adaptation of working time. Many activities in the tourist industry, by virtue of the type of work and, in particular, of its seasonal aspect, may be covered by these proposals.

Four other proposals, more general in scope, could have an impact on tourism. These concern: the information, consultation and participation of workers in businesses or in groups of businesses with a Community dimension; the introduction of a type as evidence of contract or type of employment other than full-time open-ended employment; the living and working conditions of Community citizens living in border areas, especially frontier workers; the working conditions applicable to workers from another Member State representing the host country as regards freedom to provide services.

¹⁰ Individual exemptions may be granted by the Commission in respect of such agreements, where they improve the efficiency of distribution or where they contribute to unifying the market.

¹¹ OJ No L 359, 28.12.1988.

2. Indirect measures resulting from the application of certain Community policies

Generally speaking, the Community's enterprise policy, which places information, cooperation, financing and training instruments in particular at the disposal of businesses, has an indirect effect on tourism, whose economic base consists essentially of small and medium-sized firms. In addition, the procedure for evaluating the impact of any proposed measure on smaller firms makes it possible to identify those areas of Community activity which have a tourist dimension.

Such areas are in particular: regional policy, consumer protection, measures to develop rural areas, cultural development in the Community, environmental policy, and education and training.

In most of these cases, action to assist tourism has already been taken by the Community.

2.1 Regional policy

Between 1986 and 1988, about 5% of the ERDF was allocated to projects or programmes for the development of tourism (the proportion was greater in the case of certain programmes such as the IMPs). Following the reform of the Structural Funds, the Community support frameworks for 1989-93 include the promotion of tourism: 5.5%, or ECU 1.6 billion, for Objective 1 (regions whose development is lagging behind). In the Community support framework for regions whose development is lagging behind (Objective 1) specific priorities for the expansion of tourism have been proposed and qualify for a substantial financial contribution from the Community. Thus, for Ireland, Spain and Greece, ECU 188,6 million, ECU 182 million and ECU 166,7 million, respectively, have been allocated to tourism⁽¹²⁾. For Objective 5b (rural development), the figure is 6.7% or ECU 176 million. As regards Objective 2 (regional conversion), the Community support frameworks provide assistance of ECU 267 million, or 7% for tourism activities in the period 1989-91. Lastly, European Investment (EIB) loans for tourist infrastructures can be added to the other Community assistance for improving communications in certain regions and, hence, contribute to the expansion of tourism.

2.2 Consumer policy

Measures have been taken in the following fields:

- the supply of tour holidays, with the Directive on package holidays,⁽¹³⁾ which provides a number of guarantees for the consumer in the event of problems on the journey or during his stay;
- transport, with the adoption by the Council of a Regulation establishing common rules for a denied-boarding compensation system in scheduled air transport;⁽¹⁴⁾

¹² For more details see the Commission's working paper for the Council meeting on tourism on 29 November 1990 (SEC (90) 2356).

¹³ OJ N° L 158, 23.6.1990.

¹⁴ OJ N° L 36, 8.2.1991

- the protection of tourists, as consumers, under the proposal for a Directive on unfair terms in consumer contracts, currently under discussion.¹⁵

2.3 Rural development

A wide range of Community measures is already available to rural tourism businesses, in particular under the common agricultural policy. Council Regulation (EEC) No 797/85 on improving the efficiency of agricultural structures, as amended by Regulation (EEC) No 3808/89, provides for a system of aid which extends to investment in tourist and craft activities on farms. The scheme may be applied to farmers who derive at least 50% of their total income from activities carried out on the holding provided that the proportion of income deriving directly from farming is not less than 25% of the farmer's total income and that off-farm activities do not account for more than half the farmer's working time. Agri-tourism measures limited to specific areas may also be taken under Council Regulation (EEC) No 1820/80 for the stimulation of agricultural development in the less-favoured areas in the West of Ireland or under Council Regulation (EEC) No 1401/86 introducing a common action for the encouragement of agriculture in certain less-favoured areas of Italy and certain Scottish Islands. The Community initiative for rural development (LEADER - Links between actions for the development of the rural economy, SEC(90)1602 final) encourages integrated rural development at local level.

The programme called LEDA (action for the development of local employment) organizes exchanges of development experience at European level. It evaluates those possibilities which will stimulate the rural fabric and assist employment through the promotion of activities linked to tourism. These initiatives all concern optimum exploitation of local resources.

Under Objective 5(b) (rural development) and measures to promote rural development in the Objective 1 regions, most of the Community support frameworks provide for action to promote rural tourism and vocational training in the field of tourism, including the financing of investment in tourist facilities, such as farm accommodation and the development of nature parks or sports complexes (golf, skiing etc).

Two studies carried out in recent years have highlighted a number of priority measures.

2.4 Cultural development in the Community

In its communication of January 1986, in response to the Council Resolution of 21 April 1984, the Commission identified cultural tourism as one of the main fields for Community action.

¹⁵ COM(90) 322 final.

At the same time, in its 1987 communication on matters of culture¹⁶ the Commission identified a number of spheres, some of which are of great interest for cultural tourism:

- . support for pilot projects relating to the conservation of the architectural heritage;
- . actions concerning European cities of culture;
- . the programme to encourage cultural events with a European dimension.

Since 1990, the aforementioned have been streamlined and publicized under the heading "Platform Europe".

European cultural routes have also been worked out at the initiative of the Council of Europe.¹⁷

2.5 Environmental policy

The increasingly vocal concern that tourism should develop in harmony with the environment is reflected in the Resolution on mass tourism adopted by Parliament on 13 July 1990, and the opinion on tourism and regional development delivered by the Economic and Social Committee on 20 September 1990.

In implementing the reform of the structural Funds the Commission has made efforts to ensure that the Member States take account of the environmental impact of the investment projects which they propose for Community financing. According to the rules on the reform of structural Funds, Community funds must be used to support investments and projects which are in accordance with Community policy, particularly Community policy on the environment.

There is provision for the Funds to aid protection of environmental resources which are directly linked to the economic development of eligible regions. The Commission itself has also identified several fields of action (ENVIREG, INTERREG, LEADER) which can contribute to this.

A number of environmental measures which the Community has adopted or plans to adopt will have an impact, direct or otherwise, on tourism. Examples are Community legislation on impact assessment of environmental projects and its proposed extension to policies, plans and programmes,¹⁸ the quality of bathing water, waste management and the control of industrial or other emissions. The Commission's Green Paper on the urban environment underlines the need to develop a planning strategy for urban tourism. Using economic and tax instruments on environmental matters is currently also being discussed within the Community institutions.

¹⁶ A fresh boost for culture in the European Community, Bulletin of the European Communities, Supplement 4/87.

¹⁷ The subject of a recommendation by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

¹⁸ The Commission has proposed a Directive on the environmental assessment of policies, plans and programmes.

2.6 Education and training

In every Member State major resources have been made available for basic and further training in the field of tourism.

Similarly, since the early 1980s, the Commission has boosted and diversified its work in the field of training while, pursuing the general objective of improving skills, in order to keep pace with economic, technical, social and cultural change. The reform of the structural Funds has reoriented the traditional activity of the ESF by emphasizing the relationship between training programmes and development needs. Thus, programmes in the tourism sector, funded by several sources, are implemented in many Objective 1 regions where tourism development is a priority. The problem of training in rural tourism has been studied under Objective 5b. Since 1987 there has been an increase in resources for the European Social Fund's "traditional" activities, and special programmes have gradually been implemented which explore ever-wider areas of the demand for training: transnational cooperation between educators; promoting the mobility and exchange of students and university staff, and the exchange of experience.¹⁹ Moreover, some experimental measures have been developed in the context of specific Community policies, in particular in connection with research and the environment, or in the context of enterprise policy (preparing managers of SMEs for 1992).²⁰

A study has been carried out to evaluate vocational training needs in tourism businesses. This showed up certain characteristics of employment in the sector. The Commission made its contribution to the holding of two European seminars on the subject of vocational training in the tourist industry. These led to the preparation of international pilot projects which are currently being drawn up, covering tourism and regional development in Objective 1 and 5b areas and skills and improved access to further training in industry.

3. Direct measures to promote tourism; the European Year of Tourism

3.1 Direct measures

In April 1984,²¹ a Council Resolution called on the Commission to put forward proposals on facilitating tourism in the Community.

¹⁹ In particular the Comett, Eurotecnet, Erasmus, Petra, Iris, Force, Euroform, Leda programmes, and the Archipelago experiment; for the definition and the precise objective of the training programmes, see the memorandum on the rationalization and coordination of vocational training programmes at Community level (COM(90) 334).

²⁰ SEC(88) 1860.

²¹ OJ No C 115, 30.4.1984.

The Commission communication on Community action in the field of tourism identified six main areas for action by the Community.²²

In December 1986, the Council adopted two Recommendations proposed by the Commission, one on standardized information in hotels²³ and the other on fire safety in hotels.²⁴

Also in December 1986 the Council adopted a Resolution on the better seasonal and geographical distribution of tourism.²⁵

A Council Decision setting up an Advisory Committee on Tourism provided the Commission with an instrument for cooperation with the Member States.²⁶

In December 1988, following a proposal from the Commission based on an initiative of the European Parliament, the Council adopted a Decision on an action programme for a European Year of Tourism (1990).²⁷

3.2 The objectives of the European Year of Tourism

In the Decision calling for a Year of Tourism²⁸ the Council gave the Year two objectives:

- to prepare for the establishment of the single frontier-free market, turning the integrated role of tourism to account in the creation of a people's Europe;
- to stress the economic and social importance of the tourist sector, particularly in regional policy and job creation.

Accordingly, under the Council Decision, projects eligible for Community assistance were to be designed, in particular, to promote:

- greater knowledge among the citizens of the Member States, particularly young people, of the cultures and lifestyles of the other Member States;
- a better seasonal and geographical distribution of tourism, while respecting the quality of the environment, particularly by encouraging the staggering of holidays and the development of alternatives to mass tourism, and of new destinations and new forms of tourism;
- intra-Community tourism, particularly by facilitating the movement of travellers, and tourism from non-Community countries.

22 OJ No C 114, 14.5.1986.

23 OJ No L 384, 31.12.1986; OJ NO C 340, 31.12.1986.

24 OJ No C 49, 21.12.1984.

25 OJ No C 340, 31.12.1986.

26 OJ No L 384, 31.12.1986.

27 OJ No L 17, 21.1.1989.

28 OJ No L 17, 21.1.1989, Article 2.

3.3 The lessons to be learned from the European Year of Tourism

An analysis of the projects undertaken on the basis of these guidelines²⁹ demonstrates the importance of the experience acquired in the course of the Year of Tourism, and justifies the conclusion that the objectives Year should be maintained in defining further Community measures to assist tourism.

The achievements of the Year of Tourism can be assessed in four respects:

- (i) the usefulness of exchanging information and pooling experience between the Commission and those involved in tourism, and indeed within the Commission itself.

The Year of Tourism allowed closer links to be developed between national and local administrations, trade associations and representatives of the industry, and between all of these and the Commission. Close cooperation grew up between the different Commission departments responsible for information, the environment and social and regional policy, leading up to the joint organization of specific measures.

- (ii) The need for a broader framework for the development of new initiatives and the exchange of experience between Member States.

In most of the specialized branches of tourism, the Year of Tourism encouraged the development and implementation of projects aimed at diversifying and improving the supply of tourist services and placing it in a Community or, more broadly, a European dimension.

Thus, for example, the bodies responsible for developing rural tourism proposed projects aimed at improving the quality and promotion of rural tourism services. Those engaged in this branch of tourism manifested a desire to improve their professionalism and to make rural tourism in Europe more attractive, particularly by establishing European links or entering European competitions which might make their local achievements better known and better rewarded.

Cultural tourism accounted for the lion's share of these projects,³⁰ and such cultural projects were likewise the most successful; they included for example the design and promotion of European cultural tourist routes and cooperation between various regions of Europe. The projects financed demonstrated a need for a more effective information policy, for improved cooperation and for Europe-wide networks for the exchange of experience.

The other main sphere of mobilization of those engaged in tourism concerned environmental considerations. There were a great many pilot projects to develop and promote "environment-friendly" or "ecological" tourism, making all sides aware of the importance of preserving the environment in the development of infrastructure and tourist services and the exchange of experience in this field, to which increasing importance is being attached in many Member States.

²⁹ COM(91) 95/2.

³⁰ It was in this field, too, that cooperation on the part of EFTA countries was strongest.

A number of projects were aimed at affording Community citizens greater access to tourism. Most of these were directed towards the younger age groups, to facilitate travel for all young people and increase their awareness of other European cultures, particularly through exchanges between young people from eastern and western Europe.

Initiatives intended to promote access to tourism for other sections of the population such as the disabled or senior citizens were limited in number, but proved to be of a high calibre and can be expected to generate positive spin-off in terms of cooperation between social tourism organizations.

(iii) An innovative approach to action to assist tourism

One of the aims of EYT was to support national schemes or pan-European projects (proposed by more than one Member State or participant country). The Year has shown that transnational cooperation in the tourism field exerts a multiplier effect, particularly in as yet relatively undeveloped areas (for example urban tourism) or where the need for transfer of experience and know-how is considerable (as in the case of cooperation with central and eastern Europe).

(iv) The importance of making operators inside and outside Europe more aware of the richness and diversity of European tourism

Holding a European Year makes it possible to carry out specific promotion activities. Many such activities have drawn attention to European tourism, the nature of the industry and the conditions in which it can be further developed. The very extensive use of the EYT logo could prove fruitful in paving the way for introducing the concept of a European tourism product to supplement what is already on offer in the different Member States and Community regions.

Analysis of the impact of Tourism Year and the importance and diversity of the projects and schemes it has generated has highlighted the desirability of adopting a Community action plan to assist tourism, supplementing the general measures taken within the ambit of the Community's traditional areas of responsibility or as part of its specific policies.

IV. COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN TO ASSIST TOURISM

In response to the needs of the tourism industry resulting from changes in the business environment and shifts in demand, the Community should implement a coherent plan to supplement initiatives already taken under common policies or specific programmes.

The plan will cover all aspects of tourism and will aim to achieve an all-round improvement in the quality and competitiveness of tourism facilities and services on offer in the Community, facilitate awareness of the demand for tourism and support efforts to satisfy that demand.

In pursuing those objectives, the Community action plan will promote a common approach to the challenges facing European tourism in the medium and long term.

The measures covered by the action plan should aim essentially to help tourist activities adjust to the changes in the business environment resulting from completion of the internal market and economic and monetary union, and to the shift in demand towards diversification and better quality, in a context of growing international competition.

Most of the measures follow on from and supplement work already undertaken. On the other hand, the initiatives designed to promote social tourism and develop certain transnational schemes are entirely new and will directly assist the development of the specific branches of the tourism industry concerned. Promotion activities that have already been carried out on a small scale will take on a new dimension through the image of the European Community as a single market.

In the light of the results of EYT and its complementarity with measures already taken at Community level under other sectoral policies, the Community action plan to assist tourism will focus on two main priorities:

- strengthening the horizontal approach to tourism in both Community and national policies;
- supporting specific measures to assist tourism in the Community, through medium-term action to facilitate the diversification of tourist activities, the development of transnational schemes and better promotion of European tourism on international markets.

1. Strengthening the horizontal approach to tourism

In order to ensure greater consistency between the different measures taken to assist tourism and achieve the greatest possible impact from the broadly based measures in the action plan, the first objective should be to gain as accurate as possible a picture of the present situation and the development problems faced in all areas of the tourist industry.

This horizontal action will be taken in five main areas.

1.1 Improving knowledge of the tourist industry

Improving knowledge of the tourist industry, its component parts and the changes taking place in it is an essential preliminary to any Community initiative in this field. Improving tourist statistics is one aspect of this.

(i) Developing Community tourism statistics

The Council Decision of 17 December 1990 on the implementation of a two-year programme for developing Community tourism statistics³¹ is a response to requests from the Member States and the industry itself.

³¹ OJ No L 358, 21.12.1990, p. 89.

The objective of the programme is the definition and introduction of a Community framework of reference for tourism statistics by bringing together the concepts and methods already used in Member States.

Various stages are planned:

- analysis and evaluation of user requirements as regards tourism statistics;
- analysis of existing systems in the Member States;
- preparation of a Community methodological framework;
- collection and dissemination of existing data on tourism.

Before the end of 1992 the Commission will present to the Council:

- (a) an evaluation report on the results of the actions which are planned in the programme;
- (b) guidelines which will result from this report, for the development of the information system required for Community statistics on tourism after 1992.

First and foremost, in order to ensure the effectiveness of the tourism statistics collected, the Commission, together with the tourism industry and government departments, is studying ways of disseminating information to users. A complementary data processing system is also to be devised, and a study was begun in 1990 on setting up a documentation and information centre in this field.

- (ii) Implementation of detailed studies

A programme of forward planning and discussions will provide the requisite information for identifying the main trends regarding expansion of tourism activities.

Its objectives are to improve knowledge of tourism demand from both inside and outside Europe, so as to examine the conditions for adjusting tourism supply to changes in demand, and to initiate feasibility studies on the development of adjustment strategies.

The programme will focus on two areas:

- the impact of the various Community policies and technological change on tourist flows and infrastructures and the tourist trades, including employment;
- forward analysis of the various forms of tourism and ways of promoting them.

Participation by the Member States, especially through specific contributions on particular subjects, will make it possible to improve the programme. To make it more effective, it will be directed in close cooperation with the Member States through the various steering and monitoring committees which will be formed.

It is planned to publish the results of the studies as widely as possible so as to create a basis of documentation on the essential features of Community tourism.

1.2 Coordination of Community and national policies

Crucial for the industry's future is that Community firms should adjust to a rapidly changing business and social environment. The importance of the part played by the Community in this changing environment means that the impact of all Community policies on tourism must be analysed during the various stages of policymaking. To ensure that greater account is taken of tourism in these policies, the Commission will strengthen existing cooperation between the departments concerned.

Coordination of Community policies must go hand in hand with improved coordination at Community level of national policies to assist tourism. To this end, the Commission will both strengthen cooperation with the Member States, within the Advisory Committee on Tourism, through more frequent and more regular meetings, and make sure that decisions concerning the implementation of Community policy are better communicated.

An initial information document on Community policies and measures affecting tourism, from the standpoint in particular of completing the internal market, has been drawn up and circulated.

1.3 Organizing consultation with the tourism industry

As well as strengthening cooperation with the Member States within the Advisory Committee on Tourism, consultations should be held with trade associations in the tourist industry, diverse as these are.

A number of industry representatives are already members of the Committee on Commerce and Distribution, while others take part in the regular meetings on the cooperative, mutual and non-profit sector. The Commission does not propose to set up an additional structure to supplement these channels.

However, tourist trade associations may be consulted at meetings of the Advisory Committee, to which their representatives and officers of European tourism bodies and, as necessary, representatives of the Consumers Consultative Committee would be invited to discuss specific items.

Similarly, should the tourist industry decide to set up, on its own responsibility, a comprehensive structure for consultation and exchange of information on tourism, the Commission could take part.

1.4 Improved staggering of holidays and dispersion of tourism

The staggering of holidays is a matter of growing concern for the authorities and the tourist industry.

The excessive concentration of tourists in particular areas at particular times of year has a serious impact on the larger part of the industry's supply side: transport delays, overbooked accommodation and transport services, overcharging, a decline in the quality of service, and frequent environmental deterioration in overcrowded regions, etc.³²

Achieving a better spread of tourism and holidays presents a number of problems given the variables governing the choice of holiday period, e.g. dates of school and factory holidays in different countries or the inadequate incentives offered by the industry for people to take holidays out of season.

To a large extent, the staggering of holidays is a transnational problem, and the dialogue between the various authorities involved and employers and employees should be resumed. The Commission can play a significant role in encouraging and coordinating national or regional measures and initiatives to assist the spreading of holidays and the dispersion of tourism.

In view of the current rigidities in this field and of its complexity, any improvement, however slight, should be regarded as a significant achievement. Community action will be in three main areas:

³² Resolution of the European Parliament of 13 July 1990 on the measures needed to protect the environment from potential damage caused by mass tourism, as part of European Tourism Year.

(a) Follow-up to the 1986 Resolution and the 1991 conference on the staggering of holidays

As a follow-up to the 1986 Resolution, the Commission will analyse the results of a survey of the Member States, which should be available by the end of 1991.

It will also have to analyse in detail the conclusions of a conference to be organized by the Dutch authorities in the autumn of 1991 on the geographical and seasonal distribution of tourism.

An informal working party will be set up to analyse the results of these two initiatives and, in cooperation with the Member States, to examine thoroughly those areas where coordinated measures could be carried out.

(B) Implementation of an experimental cooperation procedure

The Commission will have to evaluate those areas where it is possible to devise measures that can significantly affect habits and constraints as regards timing of holidays. To this end, preliminary meetings will have to be organized by the Commission to prepare for possible consultations between the various parties in decisions governing holiday periods: educational authorities, employees and employers, consumers, representatives from the various branches of the tourist industry, and so on.

(C) Support for pilot schemes

The Commission will take part in a number of pilot schemes testing innovative ideas within one Member State, or the transfer of best practice between Member States. It will coordinate the publication and distribution of information on such pilot schemes.

1.5 Improved protection for the tourist as consumer

The development of tourist activities should be considered from the point of view of both supply and demand. In this context the tourist should be protected as the purchaser of both services and goods. Initiatives so far give only partial protection to tourists.

Furthermore, protection given to tourists by the Member States for a number of tourism activities varies considerably. This is particularly true for the independent traveller who has not taken a package holiday. It is therefore necessary to put together coherent measures which will guarantee tourists the protection to which they ought to be entitled.

The European Parliament has considered this question on several occasions³³ and is currently studying a report on "Tourism and the consumer"³⁴.

³³ OJ No C 290, 14.11.1988; OJ C 256, 14.9.1989.

³⁴ Pereira Report. EP Doc. 144.146.

In this context, the Commission guidelines regarding improved information and the protection of the tourist focus on measures such as:

- drafting a proposal for filling major gaps in information for tourists;
- drafting a proposal regarding cross-border property transactions (time-sharing);
- carrying out a study on the possibilities for complaints by tourists as individual consumers, under a fast, simple and inexpensive procedure.

These measures come within the framework of consumer policy but, they are worth reiterating here, given the interest taken in this particular area by the European Parliament. The detail of their implementation will be part of the increased co-operation between the services of the Commission, already mentioned in paragraph 1.2.

2. Support for specific measures to assist tourism in the Community

The horizontal approach is obviously of major importance in an area like tourism which is itself of a horizontal nature. However, some problems require specific action at Community level.

Certain medium-term and long-term problems represent a growing preoccupation for Member States: the protection of the environment in natural and historic sites or places which experience heavy tourist traffic; the growing expense of externalities linked to the concentration of tourist traffic in time and space; the level of the quality of the product most notably when it concerns "human resources"; the far greater number of people who travel. The diversity of interest of the different sectors of the tourism industry is a definite constraint in responding to these problems, which occur in similar fashion in most of the Member States. This gives a catalytic role to the public authorities, a role which will be more persuasive and effective when cooperation at Community level is implemented.

There is another group of actions which are by nature transnational but which should be determined by the operators whatever their terms of reference.

All these actions contribute to tourism in the Community. Logically, however, economic development in other parts of the world increases competition. This development is completely natural; the Community even contributes to it through its support for programmes to promote tourism in certain third world countries. The promotion of Europe as a tourist destination in non-Community countries is therefore also justified.

Although the latter action concerns demand, the other actions aim in the medium-term to strengthen the tourism supply of product by supporting diversification and innovation and encouraging the development of particularly European products.

As has been said earlier, the Community is heavily committed on the side of the supply of tourism through the structural Funds and through specific training programmes. However, these actions involve investment whether it is in accommodation, in infrastructure or in human resources. For the most part, these actions are limited to areas designated eligible for regional development. Actions which are not covered right across the Community include better transparency in the market, innovation, improved quality, and research into a better balance between supply and demand. It is in this area that the specific measures proposed below are complementary to actions already organized by the Community.

When defining these measures, added value to a Community action was the main criterion for their selection. The synergy between the different operators, private or public and the snowball effect of an impetus at Community level have largely identified these measures. Only the Community can instigate cooperative actions or joint-ventures which go beyond the regional or national framework. This is equally valid for transferring experience or implementing best practices through competitions or publications.

In what follows, the actions of Chapter 2.1 (i to v) look at the diversification in the medium term of the tourist supply and the improvement of quality. 2.2 concerns transnational measures and 2.3 efforts to strengthen the demand from third countries in promotion.

2.1 Promoting diversification of tourist activities: medium-term action

(i) Community action to assist rural tourism businesses

On 26 September 1990 the Commission adopted a communication (COM(90)438 final) on an action programme (1991-1994) in favour of rural tourism businesses. The programme, which is consistent with the objectives of the European Year of Tourism, aims to support diversification, improvements to quality and promotion of rural tourism products.

Faced with increasing competition in the form of tourist products outside Europe, and tourist requirements, European tourism must be revitalized in order to provide new, quality products. Rural tourism is a natural alternative to mass tourism and Europe's rural environment has great potential which should be promoted: scenery, authenticity, local culture, architectural heritage, and personal contacts between local people and tourists.

The forms and interpretations of rural tourism vary considerably from country to country. The concept of rural tourism products must therefore be broadened to include more than just agri-tourism (or farm-based tourism), to which it is often likened. Rural tourism involves all forms of tourism in a rural environment.

The measures to be taken by the Community will be aimed at creating rural tourism products which can be marketed in such a way as to encourage the setting-up and development of businesses responsible for their management.

The measures will be implemented in conjunction with operators in the industry where consultation of trade associations shows them to be necessary, and will focus on the following aims:

- (a) to help define rural tourism products by improving information on demand for such products and enhancing the transparency of supply and by harmonizing information on all the components of rural tourism products (system of appropriate symbols);
- (b) to help with the creation and development of rural tourism products by improving information on, and access to, the Community aid schemes for rural tourism; by assisting the local authorities in their rural tourism role; by promoting cooperation between those involved locally; by measures to improve the management of rural tourism activities through support for training measures, exchanges and

the setting-up of networks. As far as possible, these measures will be based on existing schemes and networks, especially as regards promoting employment and aid to local development;

- (c) to promote access to the market in rural tourism products by better customer information involving awareness of the facilities available at national level and their identification through the use of a system of European symbols; by encouraging improvements in the quality of rural tourism products; by promotion aimed at national and local officials; by providing support for the marketing of rural tourism products at Community level; by supporting the creation of a European network for the distribution of rural tourism products.

- (ii) Community action in the field of cultural tourism

Tourism in Europe faces a twofold challenge: diversification in order to meet continually growing demand, and the need to cater for an increase in activities without destroying the European cultural heritage. Cultural tourism is a very important sector of tourist activity in the Community: it is attracting growing numbers, from both inside and outside Europe. It is also an area where tourist businesses benefit from customers attracted by services external to the industry itself. Largely because of the diversity of customers, the development of different forms of cultural tourism also contributes to the staggering of tourist visits, to a better balance in intra-Community tourist flows and to the promotion of new tourist destinations.

The importance of tourism as a means of encouraging mutual understanding and recognition of the various aspects of European culture was highlighted in the European Parliament's Resolution of January 1988, which led, inter alia, to the European Year of Tourism. This favoured a great many projects in cultural tourism.

These projects have prepared the ground for longer-term action by the Community, including:

- Research and exchange of information in the field of visitor management techniques

In all Member States there is a need to combine the exploitation of cultural assets and the cultural heritage for tourist purposes with their protection and conservation.

A number of research centres, universities and experts are involved in developing techniques, procedures and specific solutions for the problems relating to the link between exploitation and conservation.

A European information system capable of ensuring the dissemination of information on this topic is an appropriate response to the need for information, exchange of experience and comparison of results which has been voiced by those involved in tourism and cultural institutions in all Member States.

Networking will allow members to participate actively in the circulation and continuous updating of information.

- European prize for the best cultural tourism products

A Community prize is an effective means of promoting and providing information on European culture, particularly where there is a cross-border tourism impact. The aim is to encourage tourist operators in this field.

A catalogue of the cultural tourism covered by the competition could be a first trial for the production of a European guide to cultural tourism.

The Commission will support the launching of this prize, to be organized and managed by an outside body.

- Contribution to the creation of new European cultural itineraries

During the European Year of Tourism, support was given to several pan-European projects for the creation of European cultural itineraries for tourists.

Priority must be given to continuing this action in order to encourage coordination between Member States and other European countries (especially EFTA and the countries of Eastern Europe) to develop existing routes and stimulate the creation of new ones. The creation of cultural products on a European scale can help to meet demand from outside for "European products".

Priority will also be given to supporting existing European cultural routes if they have a tourism dimension.

The programme will be organized by a Project Selection Committee made up of representatives of the Commission, the Council of Europe, the Member States and European organizations in this field.

The publication at European level of the different cultural routes, whether in the form of guides or theme-based maps, would be one of the most effective ways of supporting the advertising campaigns carried out by the promoters of these routes.

- Actions in cooperation with museums

The pan-European European Museums Competition "Tourmuse" supported under the European Year of Tourism will be completed in January 1992. The aim is to promote, through a competition, better provision for tourism in museums.

In this competition, which will continue, museums are invited to propose a complete tourist package in association with a tourism partner (tour operator, tourist office, local authority, etc.).

The Commission will support the regular publication of the results of this competition as a contribution to the dissemination of information on new initiatives for better understanding and cooperation between culture and tourism circles in Europe.

There is room for improvement in the way visitors are received in European museums. The provision of information material and documentation, comprehensive labelling and the organization of guided visits are among the main ways in which museums and cultural sites aim to cater for visitors.

These services can prove inadequate if the documentation provided is available only in the language of the host country. The language barrier can hinder the cultural enrichment of visitors from both inside and outside Europe.

The proposed Community action aims to encourage Member States, cultural authorities and tourism and culture professionals to improve the facilities available to foreign visitors by the production of information material in a number of languages including minority languages at the major centres of cultural tourism in Europe.

(iii) Taking the environment into account in developing tourism

When holding talks with the Member States on regional development programmes for which Community funding is being sought under the structural Funds, the Commission can bring its influence to bear - and indeed has already done so on a number of occasions - with a view to achieving a better balance between the development of tourism and the protection of the environment.

In order to promote environment-friendly forms of tourism further measures should be envisaged to strengthen the links between tourism and the environment. The following specific action will be supported by the Community:

(a) Encouraging the drawing-up of inventories of tourism resources in the Member States.

The inventories would be drawn up by the Member States as invaluable instruments in the drafting of regional and tourism development programmes, whether or not funding from the structural Funds was being sought. They would be intended both for areas where tourism could be developed in an environmental-friendly way and areas in need of rehabilitation, but still to be kept open to tourists.

Consideration could be given to setting up a network of regions experiencing the same type of problems, viz. coastal areas, mountainous regions, etc. An assessment of the impact of the development of tourism in these regions could well prove useful.

(b) Awarding an environment prize.

A Community Prize for the Environment would contribute usefully to a positive action, in that it would further encourage the various sectors of the tourist industry to widen their professional experience. It would also give rise to an

information network on "ecologically valid" professional experience in the various parts of the industry (e.g. hotels, restaurants and transport). This type of award scheme has proved very successful at national level.

The experience gained in the course of the Blue Flag campaign should also be taken into consideration.

(c) Drawing up a code of behaviour for tourists

Based on schemes launched under the European Year of Tourism, its aim will be to link the various schemes being implemented in this field in order to produce a single message addressed to all tourists. If necessary, the document concerned could be the subject of a Council recommendation;

(d) Drawing up a practical guide aimed at the industry

It will contain recommendations which may make it easier to take environmental factors into account when devising tourism products and facilities.

(e) Exchange of experience in visitor management

Best practices in this area at Community level will be identified and made available to local authorities as a recommended basis for improving visitor management during busy periods.

(f) Support for pilot projects in environmental tourism

Continuing from the experience gained in the European Year of Tourism, the Community will support the financing of pilot projects or actions which provide a useful stimulus in the development of initiatives in "eco-tourism".

iv) Helping to improve the quality of tourism services through vocational training

Expanding tourism in the Community and in Europe, and thus maintaining Europe as the leading world tourist destination, depends on a supply of quality products and services capable of meeting the increasing demands of consumers of tourism products. This in turn depends on the human resources available and their level of training.

Tourism as a whole, and all the firms which comprise the industry, are in a position to benefit from the whole range of Community measures designed to foster training in Europe. However, because of factors which are specific to tourism, the number of firms taking part in the programmes does not always reflect the economic importance of the sector and the magnitude of its training requirements. Those factors include seasonality and the fact that the firms in question tend to be very small.

What is more, occupational profiles in the industry are not always clearly defined, in particular because widely differing occupations are often found alongside each other.

These characteristics give rise to difficulties with regard to the short-term management of human resources, be it in connection with the training of managers or the skills of the workers. They also make it difficult to identify the industry's long-term training needs.

The Commission will implement three types of measures:

(a) Identifying occupational profiles

The absence of well-defined occupational profiles is an obstacle to the implementation of vocational training schemes in the tourist industry, whether they are organized at local or national level or in the context of a Community programme. One of the prime objectives of measures to foster vocational training in the tourist industry is to set up the necessary machinery to identify and adapt the occupational profiles concerned.

They can be identified only in close cooperation with the actual protagonists: the managers and workers.

(b) Dialogues within the industry

The move towards a closer sectoral dialogue, which the Commission has already begun to put into effect in the case of the hotel and restaurant industry, is intended to identify needs at the various levels, plot the occupational profiles, define training programmes in respect of each profile and establish the territorial level of the action to be taken.

This is a process which should continue in order to take account of the other sectors which comprise tourism activity;

(c) Ensuring greater involvement by firms from the tourist industry in Community training programmes and measures

The Community has implemented or tried out a number of measures which are designed to foster vocational training in Europe and meet a wide range of specific training requirements. Although designed to deal with specific problems, the Community's programmes and measures are general in nature and are not intended mainly or solely for individual sectors within the industry.

The tourist industry should be the subject of an effective awareness campaign involving brochures, meetings with the agencies responsible for implementing the programmes at national level, and information aimed specifically at the trade interests and unions concerned.

(d) Support for pilot international cooperation schemes

This will involve the exploration of new fields with a view to devising new Community training programmes and identifying new ways of responding to the training requirements arising from changes in the supply of tourism products (rural and cultural tourism, the environment, social and youth aspects, etc.).

This action will benefit from the experience gained in the different programmes (FORCE, PETRA, EUROFORM) which give a spread of answers to the problems of initial and continuing vocational training.

Transnational cooperation between agencies specializing in training in the field of tourism will also be encouraged.

(v) Giving a larger number of citizens access to holidays

Tourism is one of the most powerful forces paving the way for the realization of a people's Europe since it generates a wide range of contacts and exchanges and fosters a closer mutual awareness among different nations.

However, about 40% of Europeans do not yet travel on holiday, and action by the Community will be directed at certain less-advantaged categories of the population and at young people, who, although they travel more than their elders did, are faced with special problems.

(a) General measures in support of tourism accessible to the less well-off

"Social tourism" covers various aspects, depending on the Member State concerned. For some, the purpose of social tourism is to provide citizens on low incomes with a means of taking holidays. In others, it has a broader meaning and includes other population categories which, for various reasons, cannot travel easily. These include senior citizens, handicapped persons, young people or single-parent families.

Irrespective of its form, social tourism should be regarded as a means of enabling everyone to take a holiday: it makes "tourism for all" possible (nearly one European in two never travels on holiday).

In the ten years from 1970 to 1980, social tourism was strongly influenced by changes in tourism in general. The latter's development involved a considerable diversification in the range of products on offer, easier access by most people to such products and the beginnings of a profound change in tourist habits. Tourists started to want a high quality of supply generally.

The following measures are envisaged by the Community:

. Measures to improve operating conditions of the supply of social tourism

The aim here will be to reorganize facilities by supporting all forms of linkage between the various owners, exchange clearing-houses, etc. so that they can take the requisite measures together. The latter will involve the networking and grading of social tourism facilities. They will also include measures aimed at full integration of facilities combining the group tourism structures of different countries (e.g. "Eurovillages"). The aim will be to broaden the customer base by diversifying supply throughout the Community;

General measures to assist diversification of demand

This aspect complements the preceding one. The aim will be to support efforts by social tourism bodies to determine, after a discussion of how facilities should be graded and networked, specific measures to assist their customers. Such measures may include the study and application of seasonal tariffs that will encourage the staggering of holidays, or the reasons why the various customer groups take their holidays at particular times of the year and the specific features of those groups.

Extension of the French (and Swiss) experiment with holiday vouchers ("chèques-vacances") will be discussed in this context.

(b) Pilot schemes to assist handicapped tourists

These schemes are aimed at ensuring that the handicapped have the opportunity to travel. There are 50 million persons in the Community with one form of handicap or another. There is also a high percentage of people who have difficulties in travelling or using tourist facilities properly: senior citizens who find it difficult to get about, parents with very young children, and so on.

On the basis of actions taken during the European Year of Tourism and of the recommendations of the Conference on Tourism for All in Europe³⁵ the Community will seek to facilitate access to tourism by these categories of person.

Assistance will be given to two initiatives:

- Production of a European guide on "Accessible Europe"

The guide will be produced in conjunction with national tourist offices and will contain details of travel opportunities, accommodation and other necessary information for handicapped tourists;

- Preparation of a European brochure giving advice on the provision of tourist facilities

The brochure is aimed at architects and developers and will provide information to ensure that tourist facilities and accommodation are designed with an eye to maximum degree of accessibility. It will be particularly useful for hotel builders or owners (whether individual hotels or chains) undertaking renovations.

(c) Taking into account the specific needs of older tourists

Older people are increasing in number and have a strong propensity for taking holidays, notably outside peak periods. For this reason, they may experience particular difficulties in organizing or taking holidays.

Moreover, their motivation is based more on meeting people and exchanges than on making new discoveries.

³⁵ Gatwick, London, March 1991.

Community action will consist in encouraging the relevant organizations to reflect on all of these problems and to assist the implementation of whatever measures are necessary to facilitate matters for the older tourist and for the professionals in charge of looking after them.

It will give particular support to the creation of a European card granting special advantages to older tourists.

(d) Assistance for youth tourism

The bringing together of young Europeans, as part of EYT, proved the value of a thorough discussion of the special problems facing tourists. They constitute a reserve of potential holiday-makers - there are 51 million young people between 15 and 26 years of age in the Community (16% of the population).

Youth tourism is also one of the best ways of conducting exchanges and forming links, and this plays a leading role in the promotion of greater understanding between peoples.

Lastly, to ensure its future, the tourism industry needs young people, and young people are becoming increasingly interested in working in tourism.

Young people, with their slender means, find travel and taking holidays difficult (this applies to all three main aspects: transport, accommodation and access to activities). The Community will carry out specific measures designed to facilitate travel and tourism information for young people, in close cooperation with the competent bodies.

The Community will encourage the competent bodies informally to combine their activities in a permanent forum set up, on their initiative, at Community level and will support the initial activities of such a body.

Initially, the forum could focus on two broad approaches:

- . to increase the special benefits available to young people as regards travel and holidays and make them transferable.

The aim would be to provide, in cooperation with the various bodies responsible for youth travel, a single permit (youth card) valid in all Member States for the widest possible range of facilities as regards travel and tourism, including in the cultural sphere;

- . to inform young people, through guides and brochures, about job opportunities in tourism.

Such information, largely occupational in character, will be designed to improve knowledge of the tourist trades and, hence, draw into the industry the extra skills that it badly needs.

2.2 Intensifying certain transnational measures

European Tourism Year amply demonstrated the importance of practical cooperation in the tourism field between towns, regions and Member States. Cooperation is one of the founding principles of the Community's activity, and part of the programme is therefore devoted to the establishment of model forms of cooperation.

Some of the competitions initiated during EYT highlighted the wide range of existing projects and experience, thus helping to focus efforts and provide motivation for innovative or steadily evolving measures which are particularly relevant to medium-term action in the field of tourism.

Most of these initiatives take the form of pilot schemes designed for subsequent incorporation into existing Commission programmes (INTERREG, JUMELAGE, PHARE).

Such projects have a number of advantages:

- . they make it possible to expand activities relating to specific subjects of demonstrated feasibility;
- . they help to maintain close contact between the Commission and those working in the tourist industry;
- . they serve as models, providing a solid basis for the subsequent development of general programmes.

The Community will support measures in the following fields:

(a) Promotion of initiatives concerning transnational cooperation

This involves support for the expansion of transnational tourism cooperation programmes launched as part of EYT. The programmes cover many specialist branches of the tourist industry. They have the advantage of being implemented in an overall manner by the bodies concerned, which are generally public or semi-public regional organizations for tourism development.

(b) Development of commercial links with central and eastern Europe through transfer of know-how

In the field of tourism the transfer of know-how is one of the fundamental aspects of cooperation with central and eastern Europe.

Within this framework, the action envisaged concerns the pursuit and extension of the experience of training trainers for the management of tourist sites initiated in Poland and Hungary.

(c) New forms of tourism and technical cooperation between towns

The purpose here is to continue and extend the pilot scheme carried out in 1990 as part of EYT. The measure also seeks to draw up and finalize a programme for the development of urban tourism in this context.

2.3 Improved promotion of European tourism on international markets

As this paper has already pointed out, Europe as a whole, as a tourist destination, is steadily losing world market share. This is a result of the emergence of new competitors, whose activities have been facilitated by developments in air transport; to counteract this, tourist destinations in the Community must step up their promotional activities on the world market.

This objective can be achieved by way of: increased capacity for Community enterprises to sell their products on third-country markets, either directly or on the basis of agreements with foreign firms, and increased promotion of tourism in Europe.

(i) Reinforcing the capacity of Community firms on third-country markets

The recent expansion of tourist activities on the Community market has seen the emergence of third-country operators who have penetrated the market to a significant degree. Community firms must enjoy operating conditions on third-country markets comparable to those obtaining on the Community market. For this reason, it is essential that tourism businesses operating in third countries are not confronted with unwarranted barriers. The general agreement on trade in services, being discussed in Geneva under the multilateral trade negotiations of the Uruguay Round, should provide a framework allowing the Community to develop its external activities further. The adoption of the concept of national treatment in particular will enable services to be provided in cases where national regulations reserve certain activities for nationals or national firms.

It is also important that, simultaneously, the structure of the industry should be strengthened. With the exception of a few large firms, the majority of travel agencies/tour operators in the Community are small, sometimes one-man businesses which find it difficult to penetrate third-country markets.

(ii) Increased promotion of European tourism in third countries

In view of the challenge to tourism in the Community and in Europe from outside competitors, the emphasis of measures to promote European tourism on international markets needs to be changed.

The new image of Europe emerging with the completion of the single market and the prospect of economic and monetary union makes for more effective marketing in third countries. The likely gradual emergence of the countries of central and eastern Europe on the tourist market will further enhance the renewed attractiveness of Europe.

The Commission is thus planning, in so far as available budgetary resources will allow, to conduct a "volume campaign" aimed at a large population

segment, especially in the United States and Japan, using television as well as the press.

An initial campaign of this type might build on the completion of the single Community market by 1992, a subject already fairly well-known in these two countries. Another type of campaign could be carried out by way of television programmes produced in connection with EYT (such as the CIRCOM Régionale series of programmes or the "Europuzzle" game).

In addition to its direct effect on the increase of tourist flows, a volume promotion campaign would have the ancillary advantage of helping in part to balance Community assistance for the promotion of tourism inside and outside Europe.

Apart from the publicity campaign, specialist correspondents and travel journalists invited to Europe under national tourist offices' travel schemes for the press can be encouraged to take an interest in Europe as a whole.

Other public relations activities will be carried out throughout the campaign.

Proposal for a
COUNCIL DECISION

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN
TO ASSIST TOURISM

The Council of the European Communities,

Having regard to the provisions of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 235 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal for a decision presented by the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee,

Whereas tourism occupies an important place in the economy of the member states and that tourism activity is a strong potential for employment,

Whereas tourism is a vehicle to promote a better knowledge of the cultures and way of life in the member states of the Community for all its citizens,

Whereas taking account of the results obtained during the European Year of Tourism

Whereas in view of the above, Community action in the field of tourism should be translated through a reinforcement of the horizontal approach of tourism in national and Community policies and the realisation of specific actions,

Whereas a certain number of measures are already in place in order to improve the knowledge of the tourism sector and to respond to its needs within the framework of the Community instruments and policies.

Whereas the Community can contribute to improve the quality and competitiveness of the supply of Community tourism, favouring a common approach towards medium term problems which face European tourism, by encouraging the development of transnational actions, as well as developing the promotion of European tourism on the main third markets,

Whereas, in view of the above, the Community can promote the smooth development of economic activities in the Community as a whole, a continued and balanced expansion, an accelerated increase in the standard of living and closer relations between the member states,

Whereas in addition to a better integration of tourism in the different Community policies it is necessary to favour a close cooperation between all the public and private actors of the tourism sector, and that the putting into operation at Community level of a certain number of specific measures, complementing those taken at national level, is the most appropriate way of realising such a cooperation,

Whereas, without influencing the negotiations in course, the Community should envisage the situation where agreements with third countries or international organisations will be necessary to ensure the success of the objectives defined in its action plan in the field of tourism and that, in addition, the Commission should be authorised to conduct the negotiations.

Whereas the Treaty does not provide, for the adoption of the present decision, powers other than those of Article 235,

Has decided as follows:

Article 1

A Community action plan in favour of tourism shall be declared.

Article 2

The budgetary authority shall determine the budget available for each financial year.

Article 3

The Commission shall put into operation the action within the framework defined in the annex. It shall be assisted by the Tourism Advisory Committee, established by the Council decision of 22 December 1986 (1).

Article 4

Without influencing the general negotiations and in the case where cooperation with third countries and international organisations be deemed necessary for the pursuance of the objectives of the current action plan, the Commission shall be authorised to negotiate.

Article 5

After a period of three years maximum, the Commission shall evaluate the actions in progress and shall propose the appropriate modifications to the present decision and its annex.

(1) O.J. no L 384/52 of 31.12.86

A N N E X

SPECIFIC COMMUNITY MEASURES IN FAVOUR OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN TOURISM

1 - Cultural Tourism

- support for the elaboration of new European cultural tourism routes and their promotion through brochures and publications
- creation of a European prize for the best cultural tourism products
- European competition for museums which offer a tourism product in partnership with operators of the sector
- exchange of experiences in the field of visitor management techniques
- improvement of the welcome and the services offered to foreigners in European museums and sites in particular by the availability of information in several languages and the improvement in signposting

2 - Tourism and Environment

- support for the establishment by the Member States of an inventory of European tourism resources in order to identify the regions with potential for developing new forms of tourism in harmony with the environment and those which require better management and protection.
- elaboration of a code of behaviour for tourists, in order to provide ecological guidelines and ethics of behaviour
- encourage the development of a practical guide for the use of operators
- launch of a Community prize for the environment
- support for pilot actions concernin the exchange of experiences on tourism management techniques at sites

3 - Rural Tourism (1)

- elaboration of a harmonised European signposting system aimed at facilitating access to tourism products in rural areas
- improving the information of operators in rural areas by the edition of documents explaining existing Community aids in the field of rural tourism and the edition of a European rural tourism operators manual
- pilot actions in favour of the creation, development and promotion of new rural tourism products emphasising partnership between operators at local, regional and European level

(1) COM (90) 438 final

- renewal of a European competition for the best rural tourism areas with an award for the most successful tourism initiatives by local authorities

4 - Social Tourism and Youth Tourism

- support for the study by operators of the conversion and promotion of tourism facilities
- support for the extension of the "holiday Eurocheque" system and other forms of holiday assistance
- publication of a guide entitled "Accessible Europe" aimed at the disabled as well as the managers of facilities in order to encourage them to make their facilities accessible to the handicapped
- encouragement of reflection and specific actions on the particularities of tourism for the elderly
- support for the organisation of a European youth forum to include the principal youth travel organisations in order to facilitate youth travel
- support for the extension of the youth reduction card
- dissemination of information to young people on tourism resources and careers
- support for the establishment in all Community countries of homogenous measures to encourage youth accessibility to culture

5 - Vocational Training

- identification of professional profiles of the sector
- encouragement of the participation of tourism businesses in existing Community action programmes for training
- support for the cooperation between Universities and tourism schools and tourism professionals
- pilot actions for specific training in this sector: rural, social, cultural, environment

6 - Promotion in Third Countries

- strengthening of promotional actions in the North American and Japanese markets
- launch of a feasibility study in order to identify the means of launching a European promotion campaign in 1992 and 1993

7 - Staggering of Holidays

- measure to encourage national authorities to better stagger holidays
- experimental actions in order to study the possibility of future Community measures to be adopted

8 - Improving the Knowledge of the Sector

- launch of a programme of studies to complement the tourism statistics programme (2) concerning on the one hand an evaluation of the impact of existing Community policies in favour of tourism, and on the other hand an analysis of new forms of tourism

9 - Transnational Actions

- continuation of cooperation initiatives between border regions
- development of commercial links with Central and Eastern Europe through the transfer of know-how
- putting into operation of new forms of tourism and technical cooperation between towns

(2) Council decision of 17.12.90 O.J. L538/89 of 21.12.90

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Part 1: Financial Implications

1. Title of action: Actions in the field of tourism
2. Budget lines concerned: B2-710
B8-553
3. Legal basis: Article 235 of the Treaty
4. Description of the action
 - 4.1 Specific objectives of the action: to promote tourism in Europe and the development of alternative forms of tourism
 - 4.2 Duration: not determined
 - 4.3 Target population of the action: the tourism sector in Europe
5. Classification of the expenditure or income
 - 5.1 DNO
 - 5.2 CND
 - 5.3 Type of income envisaged: None
6. What is the nature of the expenditure or income:
 - Subsidy for cofinancing with other sources of the public and/or private sector
 - Other
 - If the action is an economic success, is a partial or total reimbursement of the Community assistance envisaged? No
 - Does the proposed action imply a modification of the level of income? If so, what is the nature of the modification and what type of income is envisaged? No
7. Financial impact on the budget (part B of the budget)
 - 7.1 Indicate the means used to calculate the total cost of the action:

Through the experience gained during the European Year of Tourism individual actions have been defined, matched with a budgetary estimation whose cost has been calculated based on the average cost confirmed during the European Year of Tourism. These actions

have been discussed during the three meetings of the Tourism Advisory Committee which has agreed they have been well founded

- 7.2 Indicate the part of the "mini-budget" in the total cost of the action. Explain the mode of calculation:

A "mini-budget" of "p.m." is envisaged by analogy to the mini-budgets of the lines B8-551 and B8-552. If appropriate, and within the limits of budgetary availability, the expenditure of the second part below could be covered if the budgetary authority does not grant sufficient posts for permanent staff.

- 7.3 Indicative calendar of commitments and payments: see table in annex III.

8. What anti-fraud provisions have been taken in the proposed action? Those required by the Financial Control.

PART 2: ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

1. Does the proposed action imply an increase in the number of staff of the Commission? If so, how many?

The Community action in favour of tourism implies an increase in staff: 2A, 1B, 2C*

2. Indicate the amount of operational and personnel expenditure generated by the proposed action. Explain the method of calculation.

Estimated cost of 1A = 60.000 ECU

thus 2A x 60.000 = 120.000 ECU

Estimated cost of 1B = 50.000 ECU = 50.000 ECU

Estimated cost of 1C = 40.000 ECU

thus 2C x 40.000 = 80.000 ECU

TOTAL = 250.000 ECU

The quota of in-house personnel is about 15.000 ECU per person x 5 = 75.000 ECU

* Furthermore, the Council decision of 17 December 1990 concerning the implementation of a biennial programme 1991 (1992) for the development of Community tourism statistics (O.J. L358 of 21 December 1990 p.89), implies an increase in staff of 1 A grade official and 2 B grade officials.

PART 3: COST EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS

1. Objective and consistency with the financial programme

1.1 Specific objective of the proposed action. It should be quantified as far as possible and presented for each of the years concerned if it concerns a pluriannual programme.

The specific objective of the Community action in favour of tourism is to improve the knowledge of tourism and to ensure that it is taken into account in the different Community policies, to stimulate development of alternative forms of tourism and to favour the promotion of European tourism in third markets.

The objective will remain the same for the next few years.

1.2 Is the action envisaged in the financial programming of the DG for the years concerned? Yes

1.3 Indicate the more general objective defined in the financial programming of the DG to which corresponds the objective of the proposed action.

To help tourism businesses prepare for the advent of the internal market by increasing their competitiveness.

2. Justification of the action according to three criteria: cost, derived effects, multiplier effects.

The action plan envisages different measures in the following 10 fields: cultural tourism, tourism and environment, rural tourism, youth tourism, social tourism, vocational training, promotion in third countries, staggering of holidays, improving the knowledge of the sector and transnational actions.

In each of these fields, specific actions are envisaged and described in the fiches in annex V. These fiches comprise the justification, the programming, the desired effect, as well as the cost corresponding to each action per year. Consequently they respond to the questions concerning the justification of the action notably regarding the criteria of cost and derived effects.

The cost of the actions is minimal in relation to the importance of the tourism industry and the activity generated (tourism accounts for 5.5% of the GDP of the European Community). The derived effects are very important for the economic

operators of the regions and countries which are affected. The action will also have an increased impact on the tourism markets in Europe and in third countries.

Tourism, being a multidisciplinary sector by definition, the Community action will have numerous effects in the sectors related to tourism in terms of increase in turnover and job creation.

Furthermore, in order to illustrate the multiplier effects likely to be generated by the proposed actions, we may give a few examples:

In the field of rural tourism, pilot projects aimed at developing, for example, commercial agreements between the operators of tourism supply in rural areas of a European region (eg. F, I, or E) and tour operators of various tourism generating countries (eg. UK, NL, and DK) will enable not only direct marketing of new products by means of traditional marketing networks to which these regions do not generally have access owing to their lack of experience in this area, but also to promote these regions on a more general basis, to diversify the range of products offered by making tour operators aware of these new forms of tourism for which there is growing demand from certain categories of tourists, and finally to spread tourism geographically. These pilot projects should also facilitate the marketing networks of European regions.

In the field of cultural tourism, the promotion of cultural itineraries is a relatively inexpensive action in relation to its potential impact. The action will enable to stimulate transnational cooperation, to encourage the creation of new cultural products, to bring local economic benefits all along the route, not only in the main tourist centres already known, but also in the less frequented villages and regions, to stimulate local art and craft industries, to exploit the common European cultural heritage and to ensure common promotion.

In the field of transnational cooperation, a subsidy to a Community town wishing to cooperate with another Community town in the field of tourism with the objective of an exchange of experience, common promotion, exchange of clientele or personnel will have numerous multiplier effects: economic benefits for both towns, international impact, the involvement of operators in this transnational development, beyond those in the tourism field.

In the field of vocational training, support for cooperation between tourism schools/universities and professionals, exchange programmes, exchanges of students and teachers, the adaptation of study

programmes to the needs of professionals will have various multiplier effects. These actions will have the effect of diversifying the products offered, widening the knowledge and consequently the capacity for adaptation of the tourism workforce, its mobility and versatility necessary in particular in this sector which is very elastic to the demand. For example: a pupil at a French hotel school who is learning Italian cookery would be able to work in a French restaurant in Italy, an Italian restaurant in France, an Italian restaurant in Italy or a French restaurant in France.

In the field of tourism promotion, the multiplier effects can be analysed in terms of the additional sponsorship obtained by our promotional campaigns by airline companies, hotel chains, tour operators and other tourism operators or in terms of articles published on European tourism.

In general, the Community action in favour of tourism will have multiplier effects in terms of job creation, economic benefits for the operators and countries concerned by the project, the mobilisation and awareness of member states and local authorities who, by snowball effect, will be encouraged to support these actions at their own level, the stimulation of cooperation between the various partners of the sector, the taking into account of the European dimension. The experience gained from the European Year of Tourism has shown that the multiplier effect of Community spending is very high. In fact, the Commission having given subsidies at an average of only 20% has generated a multiplier effect of around 500%.

An examination of the alternatives to the actions and measures proposed leads to the following conclusions:

The actions envisaged take account of the principle of subsidiarity: they aim to create a synergy between the operators at all levels (member states, regions, local authorities) in order to counteract the effects of mass tourism. In order to achieve this it is envisaged to encourage by soft means the diversification of the traditional tourism offer towards cultural tourism, rural tourism, social and youth tourism, environmental tourism. The alternative would be a much more voluntarist action, either by legislation which would direct tourism flows, or by the creation of a European tourism agency as suggested in a draft report of the European Parliament. These alternatives either contradict the principle of subsidiarity or they require far more resources.

As regards the possible reinforcement of promotion on the principal third markets, the objective is to benefit from the effect of 1992. The necessary

means for a volume campaign far exceed the possibilities of the European Travel Commission, an international organisation comprising 24 countries whose activities are of medium scope.

Of course, each member state continues to carry out its own promotion. But a promotional campaign for Europe requires a coordination that the member states are not in a position to realise without the assistance of the Community.

All the actions envisaged have been chosen so as not to duplicate the actions carried out at national level. Even when it concerns actions of encouragement, it is recognised that the global effect of Europe is much greater or produces better results than actions carried out at purely national level. This is true whether or not the actions are transnational which is often the case in the proposed programme.

3. Follow-up and evaluation of the action

3.1 Performance indicators selected

Performance indicators directly visible:

- number of project requests received
- number of files handled
- number of countries and regions concerned

Performance indicators which are difficult to perceive:

- number of jobs created
- increase in turnover of the operators concerned or regions or countries concerned
- increase in visitor numbers
- influence of European tourism

3.2 Methods and periods of evaluation envisaged:

A regular evaluation will be made by personnel outside DG XXIII.

3.3 Principal factors of uncertainty which may affect the specific results of the action: none