

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# Working Documents

1983-1984

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14 November 1983

DOCUMENT 1-816/83/ANNEX

ANNEX

to the report by Mrs Ph. VIEHOFF

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Youth,  
Culture, Education, Information and Sport on  
the Community policy on tourism

PE 83.993/fin./Ann.



OPINION

(Rule 101 of the Rules of Procedure)

of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health  
and Consumer Protection

Draftsman: Mr CERAVOLO

On 3 December 1982 the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection appointed Mr Ceravolo draftsman.

It considered the draft opinion at its meeting of 22 September and 2 November 1983. At the latter meeting it adopted the opinion unanimously.

The following participated in the vote: Mr Collins, chairman; Mr Alber, Mr Bombard, Mrs Dury (deputizing for Mrs Weber), Mrs van Hemeldonck, Mrs Krouwel-Vlam, Mrs Lentz-Cornette, Mr Muntingh, Mrs Pantazi, Mr Protopapadakis (deputizing for Mr Ghergo), Mr Provan (deputizing for Mr Johnson), Mr Ryan, Mrs Schleicher, Mrs Scrivener, Mrs Seibel-Emmerling, Dr Sherlock, Mrs Spaak, Mrs Squarcialupi (deputizing for Mr Ceravolo) and Sir Peter Vanneck (deputizing for Miss Hooper).

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection

1. Has examined with considerable interest the document COM (82) 385 containing the 'Initial guidelines for a Community policy on tourism'.

In addition to being a factor of considerable importance for European integration, tourism is also a rapidly expanding economic activity whose existence and development are based on the environmental heritage.

Tourism also raises serious questions connected with consumer protection and important matters relating to health.

- 2(a) Points out that various effective initiatives and measures have been introduced in the field of consumer protection,

- (b) Hopes for the submission at the earliest opportunity of a proposal for a directive on the protection of consumers with regard to charter travel,
- (c) Would like to see an improvement in enforcement facilities for individual travellers (e.g. claims in respect of accidents, deficient services, etc.) and therefore recommends that there should be an investigation into the various means open to EEC citizens travelling abroad as regards enforcing legal claims in the different Member States,
- (d) Asks the Commission to start work on criteria for self-catering accommodation analogous to the classification of hotels and boarding houses,
- (e) Would welcome the distribution at frontiers of an aide-memoire informing citizens of differences in regulations which are of immediate relevance to the traveller (speed limits, health insurance provisions, etc.).

3. Points out that environmental and health factors have not been taken into account properly in the development of tourism. The interests of tourism and the environment are not given equal weight and it is rare for the former to be subordinated to the latter. It is often the case that tourism exploits the environmental heritage as an instrument, a renewable resource for consumption, and as a result does irreparable damage to it. This occurs more frequently in newly-discovered, tourist development areas, which are usually less-favoured economic zones where tourism is developing in a chaotic manner, either because of an influx of tourists seeking to discover unspoiled, inexpensive areas or because of local interests attempting to maximize tourist development quickly, with a view to rapid socio-economic adaptation and progress.

This has happened in the past, and unfortunately, is happening again. The symptoms are all too clear and in many cases irreversible.

4. Considers that the Commission document does show some awareness of the concept that the protection of the environment is a factor of equal importance to others in the development of tourism.

The document, to its credit, draws attention to the need to protect the environment and gives due weight to the directives and measures already adopted by the Community (protection of bathing waters, prevention of pollution of the sea by hydrocarbons, discharge of dangerous substances, etc.) and to those due to be introduced (environmental impact, ecological mapping, etc.), although it has little of interest to say on the danger to the environment posed by the chaotic and uncontrolled development of tourism and how to avert it.

5. Stresses that the protection of the environment should not be seen as a brake on tourist development, but rather as a stimulus to improve it.

In this field in particular it should be possible to show that improving the environmental and cultural heritage is an integral part of tourist development.

6. Expresses the utmost concern at the harmful effects which unregulated mass tourism has, in particular on the shorelines of seas and lakes and in mountain areas.

It need only be remembered that in the summer season places which are generally the most noteworthy from the point of view of landscape and nature (small bays, coves, etc.) become sites for temporary tourist installations (campsites, small harbours), bringing a much larger population than usual to the area. This situation produces additional pollution which cannot be neutralized by the marine environment and which leads to the disappearance of all forms of flora and fauna and poses a danger to human health. One need only think of the danger to children playing in shallow water which renews itself slowly.

Unregulated tourism has caused harm to genuine parts of the environmental heritage (beaches, sand-dunes, adjacent woods), in addition to the damage caused in more traditional, well-established areas of marine tourism by construction work and permanent structures.

7. Points out that in order to prevent further damage it is now enough to refer to the directive on environmental impact, which has not yet been adopted and, in any case, is far from being operative. Specific rules need to be introduced to regulate the phenomenon of mass tourism.

8. Considers that the following measures should be taken immediately:

- (a) rapid introduction of rules to protect at least those sectors most vulnerable to damage, coastlines and mountain areas, and aimed at averting the more serious negative effects of tourism on the environment. These rules should aim in particular to prevent future damage and also provide for the possibility of renewing and restoring starting with the worst affected areas where possible;
- (b) making protection of the environment with specific reference to particular cases a condition for the granting of all Community loans, concessions and finance for the development of tourist structures;
- (c) financing projects to renew, restore and improve tourist areas;
- (d) including the subject of the protection of the environmental and cultural heritage in all training courses on tourist management techniques ;
- (e) setting out provisions for the siting of camping grounds taking into account the appropriateness of the sites and the adequacy of services, particularly medical and health services.
- (f) in all areas water purification must be given priority.

9. In brief, what is required is an upgrading of tourist structures and sites, with the emphasis on the protection and improvement of the environmental and cultural heritage, to prevent tourism from destroying the bases of its own existence, in certain areas at least.

All this could properly be done within the framework of the policies provided for in both the European Coastal Charter - which has been adopted by the maritime regions of the Community and of which it would be a logical extension - and in the Barcelona Convention and its related protocols.

