



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2021)0109

EU strategy for sustainable tourism

European Parliament resolution of 25 March 2021 on establishing an EU strategy for sustainable tourism (2020/2038(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in particular Article 195 thereof,
- having regard to Article 349 TFEU, which establishes a specific regime for the outermost regions,
- having regard to Article 174 TFEU,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 June 2020 on transport and tourism in 2020 and beyond¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 13 May 2020 on tourism and transport in 2020 and beyond (COM(2020)0550) and to the adoption of the Tourism and Transport Package,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 27 May 2020 entitled ‘Europe’s moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation’ (COM(2020)0456) and the accompanying staff working document entitled ‘Identifying Europe’s recovery needs’ (SWD(2020)0098),
- having regard to the Commission report of 11 June 2020 on the EU Blue Economy,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 October 2019 on the negative impact of the bankruptcy of Thomas Cook on EU tourism²,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 27 May 2019 on the competitiveness of the tourism sector as a driver for sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion in the EU for the next decade,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0169.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0047.

European Green Deal (COM(2019)0640),

- having regard to its resolution of 14 November 2018 on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 – Parliament’s position with a view to an agreement¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 22 May 2018 entitled ‘A New European Agenda for Culture’ (COM(2018)0267),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 24 October 2017 on a stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU’s outermost regions (COM(2017)0623),
- having regard to Decision (EU) 2017/864 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on a European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018)²,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 February 2014 entitled ‘A European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism’ (COM(2014)0086) and the Commission staff working document of 30 March 2017 on nautical tourism (SWD(2017)0126),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 2 June 2016 on a European agenda for the collaborative economy (COM(2016)0356) and to Parliament’s resolution of 15 June 2017 thereon³,
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights⁴,
- having regard to the Cork 2.0 Declaration of 5 and 6 September 2016,
- having regard to its resolution of 29 October 2015 on new challenges and concepts for the promotion of tourism in Europe⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 September 2015 towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe⁶,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 30 June 2010 entitled ‘Europe, the world’s No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe’ (COM(2010)0352),
- having regard to its resolution of 27 September 2011 on Europe, the world’s No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe⁷,
- having regard to its resolutions of 25 October 2011 on mobility and inclusion of people with disabilities and the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020⁸ and of 18 June 2020

¹ OJ C 363, 28.10.2020, p. 179.

² OJ L 131, 20.5.2017, p. 1.

³ OJ C 331, 18.9.2018, p. 125.

⁴ OJ C 428, 13.12.2017, p. 10.

⁵ OJ C 355, 20.10.2017, p. 71.

⁶ OJ C 316, 22.9.2017, p. 88.

⁷ OJ C 56 E, 26.2.2013, p. 41.

⁸ OJ C 131 E, 8.5.2013, p. 9.

- on the European Disability Strategy post-2020¹,
- having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 18 September 2020 entitled ‘Towards more sustainable tourism for EU cities and regions’,
 - having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 18 September 2020 on tourism and transport in 2020 and beyond,
 - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Culture and Education and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A9-0033/2021),
- A. whereas tourism is a cross-cutting economic activity with a wide-ranging impact on the environment and climate and on the EU’s economy as a whole, in particular on the regions’ economic growth, employment and social and sustainable development;
- B. whereas the tourism industry directly and indirectly employs 27 million people, which accounts for 11,2 % of total EU employment, and which, in 2019, accounted for 10,3 % of EU gross domestic product (GDP); whereas tourism helps to promote a balanced regional structure, has a positive impact on regional development, and should contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, social welfare, and the economic security of local communities;
- C. whereas the tourism value chain is one of Europe’s main industrial ecosystems identified by the Commission and whereas it is complex and made up of the four closely linked, key vectors of transport, accommodation, experience and intermediation; whereas the success of the industry lies in the degree of influence between these four vectors; whereas tourism has an impact on climate change by contributing to 8 % of global CO₂ emissions²; whereas the tourism sector encompasses a great diversity of services and professions; whereas the sector is dominated mainly by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), whose activities generate employment and wealth in the regions that depend upon it;
- D. whereas in 2018, 51,7 % of EU tourist accommodation establishments were in coastal and maritime areas, which are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change, while 32,9 % of them were in rural areas; whereas the outermost regions are characterised by their remoteness, insularity and strong economic and social dependence on the tourism and transport sectors, which makes them even more vulnerable to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- E. whereas the tourism and transport industries were among those most affected by COVID-19; whereas at least six million jobs are at risk in the EU, such as seasonal workers and those in vulnerable situations; whereas restrictions on travel introduced in response to the pandemic continue to hit global and European tourism hard, with the latest data from the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) showing a 70 % fall in

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0156.

² ‘The carbon footprint of global tourism’, *Nature Climate Change*, May 2018.

international tourism arrivals in 2020; whereas in the framework of Next Generation EU, the Commission identified a basic investment need for the tourism ecosystem of EUR 161 billion – 22 % of the total investment gap in the EU; whereas the COVID-19 crisis has severely impacted all modes of transport, in particular air connectivity and a decrease in air services, which have in some cases resulted in lost routes; whereas the latter has had a particular impact on the EU's outermost and insular regions, where accessibility and connectivity are crucial; whereas the COVID-19 crisis has left millions of passengers and consumers facing uncertainty over their rights, including complex and often unfulfilled reimbursement claims; whereas rebuilding consumer trust is key to the future of the sector;

- F. whereas Article 195 of the TFEU provides that the Union should coordinate and complement the action of the Member States in tourism, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings in the sector; whereas the Member States face common challenges and opportunities in the tourism sector, such as crisis prevention and management, progress towards the digital and green transition, socioeconomic and environmental sustainability, quality job creation, professional skilling and training of workers, and support for SMEs;
- G. whereas measures to benefit the tourism and travel industry are most effective when taken as part of a coordinated EU strategy while taking national and regional needs and specificities into account;
- H. whereas the sector is committed to accelerating and implementing measures and actions that make it more sustainable and resilient and that bring it closer to achieving objectives on ecological footprint reduction and to meeting the aims of the European Green Deal, notably climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest;
- I. whereas progress is being made in the area of soft mobility and associated routes, which are a response to European consumers' desire for tourist opportunities that are greener and closer to nature;
- J. whereas an efficient, safe, multimodal and sustainable collective transport system would make a positive contribution to the economy in the areas of tourism, leisure travel and hospitality, as it allows sustainable and flexible solutions for mobility right across the EU, helping to preserve natural ecosystems and local urban and natural environments;
- K. whereas the European Year of Rail should represent an ideal framework for initiatives to enhance sustainable tourism in order to increase the attractiveness of tourism destinations;
- L. whereas the development of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and its connections with urban, local and coastal areas will play a crucial role in providing sustainable, alternative and flexible transport solutions for travel and tourism;
- M. whereas new trends in tourism have been emerging, chiefly due to digitalisation, including alternative forms of tourism such as ecotourism, agro- and rural tourism and medical tourism;

Rebuild: COVID-19 impact response plans

1. Stresses that the COVID-19 outbreak has paralysed the EU tourism sector, putting its

ecosystem under unprecedented pressure; highlights that continued short-term financial support is essential to the survival of the sector, especially in light of the second and third wave of the pandemic; believes, nonetheless, that the current crisis should lead the Commission and Member States to fully acknowledge the importance of the tourism industry, to fully integrate it into European and national development plans, to enhance the quality of its offer, to make it more sustainable and accessible for all, and to launch long-overdue public and private investment in the digitalisation and overall modernisation of the sector;

2. Asks the Member States to fully implement, without delay, common and coordinated criteria for safe travel, as adopted by the Council in its recommendation on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement¹, while facilitating the deployment of the EU Passenger Locator Form, digitally where possible, with full respect for data protection rules; stresses the importance of voluntary, interoperable and anonymised tracking, tracing and warning apps, making use of the Commission's interoperability gateway, with none of the data used for other purposes, such as commercial or law enforcement purposes, and of setting common hygiene criteria at the main transports hubs;
3. Calls for the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) to monitor and continue to publish, in a timely manner, the colour coded map of Union countries and regions, including islands – where sufficient information is available – with a view to offering travellers and businesses a coordinated and efficient response; invites the Member States to promote the dissemination of the map through national broadcasters to ensure that it also reaches citizens with little or no broadband access;
4. Calls on the Member States, in line with the Commission's recommendation on COVID-19 testing strategies² and the guidelines of the ECDC and the European Aviation Safety Agency, to establish a common and non-discriminatory EU Health Safety Protocol for testing before departure, which should be reliable and affordable, including rapid testing technologies, PCR tests and others; urges that quarantine should remain an instrument of last resort, but where applicable, its duration should be reduced to a minimum number of days, which should be harmonised throughout the Union; stresses that any restriction on freedom of movement must be proportionate, temporary and clearly linked to the COVID-19 pandemic; points out that in order to correctly implement the protocol, all Member States should be supported with EU funding; calls on the Member States to coordinate the management of testing at the different stages during the travel period;
5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop as a matter of priority a common vaccination certificate and a system of mutual recognition of vaccination procedures for medical purposes, which should be rolled out in parallel with the distribution of vaccines, while preserving individuals' rights to privacy and data protection; believes that once vaccines have been made available to the general public and there is sufficient scientific evidence that vaccinated persons do not transmit the

¹ Council Recommendation (EU) 2020/1475 of 13 October 2020 on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (OJ L 337, 14.10.2020, p. 3).

² Commission Recommendation (EU) 2020/1595 of 28 October 2020 on COVID-19 testing strategies, including the use of rapid antigen tests (OJ L 360, 30.10.2020, p. 43).

virus, the certificate could be considered for travel purposes as an alternative to PCR tests and quarantine requirements, while retaining the need to respect current sanitary measures, such as wearing face masks in public and observing social distancing; stresses that it is necessary and important to re-establish freedom of movement in the EU and ensure a gradual return to normality for the transport and tourism sectors;

6. Welcomes the Re-open EU portal and urges the Member States to provide the Commission with clearly understandable information on the application or lifting of future restrictions on free movement as soon as such changes have been decided in order to ensure that the portal is reliable for travellers; calls on the Commission to present a mobile application in order to better disseminate the information, and to continue providing real-time information on the status of borders and on transport and tourism services available in EU countries, including information on public health and safety measures and other relevant information; considers that Member States should complement this EU portal with information on contact points in the respective destinations, e.g. in the form of a public website and information desk;
7. Calls on the Commission to launch a dedicated EU communication campaign on travel and tourism through an 'EU Tourism Brand' aimed at promoting EU travel and rebuilding citizens' confidence in travel and tourism during COVID-19;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to introduce a common colour coding system and common criteria for travel to third countries through mutual recognition of comparable protective measures against COVID-19 across all modes of travel, but above all in the aviation and maritime sectors; calls on the Commission and the Member States to establish an early alert system that warns tourists through new technologies in a user-friendly way about any potential health threats in a third country destination; asks the Commission and the Member States to support tour operators in the organisation of travel experiences in selected areas in third countries, while fully respecting robust health protocols that minimise the risk of contagion;
9. Urges the Commission to introduce an EU hygiene certification seal, which should be developed jointly by the ECDC and the Member States and should certify touristic activities, ensuring compliance with minimum hygiene standards for the prevention and control of the COVID-19 virus and other possible infections; believes that this seal should aim to set Europe-wide health standards that would help to restore consumer trust in the tourism sector and thus contribute to its revitalisation, while avoiding administrative burdens for micro enterprises and SMEs;
10. Deplores the fact that Next Generation EU does not include direct financing to the tourism industry and calls on the Member States and regional and local authorities to include the tourism and travel sectors in their recovery plans and the REACT-EU initiative, while respecting environmental and social standards; stresses that while it is important that actions under the Recovery and Resilience Facility are retroactively eligible in supporting the sector and preventing bankruptcies, they are not sufficient per se; calls on the Commission to take specific action in relation to European regions in which tourism accounts for a more substantial share of their GDP as well as to islands and outermost regions; stresses, in this context, that financial support from EU funds distributed in the Member States in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic is not always reaching those tourism operators who are in urgent need of direct funding in order to continue and maintain their economic activities;

11. Calls on the Commission to encourage Member States to temporarily set reduced VAT rates on travel and tourism services, accompanied by a special stimulus package for all micro enterprises and SMEs for the 2020-2024 period, in order to minimise the number of bankruptcies and preserve jobs and workers' rights in the European tourism industry, while utilising investments to foster the transition towards a more digital and sustainable tourism ecosystem;
12. Calls on the Member States and regional authorities to include tourism as a horizontal priority in their operational programmes, smart specialisation strategies and partnership agreements for 2021-2027 in order to finance tourism projects;
13. Asks the Commission to implement the adopted preparatory action 'a European crisis management mechanism for tourism', jointly with Parliament, with a view to being ready to cope with future crises to help tourist destinations establish crisis prevention plans, contingency measures and preparedness plans and actions;
14. Calls on the Commission to regularly inform and cooperate with Parliament about the preparatory work and progress made in the development of pilot projects and preparatory actions and to keep the parliamentary committee responsible and the MEPs who initiated the projects involved in the process;

Refocus: governance policy within the Union framework

15. Calls on the Commission to establish a new governance model between the EU Institutions, strengthening the organisational, financial and human resources structure by setting up a dedicated Directorate dealing specifically with tourism, backed by adequate funding, with a view to taking an integrated and efficient approach to tourism, supporting the relaunch of tourism in European regions and helping businesses to implement the measures needed to achieve key objectives in the areas of sustainability and innovation, and increasing their competitiveness and attractiveness;
16. Calls on the Commission, moreover, to take account of the possible synergies between the various Directorates-General in view of the cross-cutting nature of tourism, in fields such as agriculture, transport, culture, maritime, regional development, employment and climate;
17. Calls for a discussion to be initiated at the Conference on the Future of Europe on helping tourism to become a shared competence of the EU, rather than a complementary competence as is currently the case; stresses that the Treaties currently provide significant flexibility for EU policies in the field of tourism, which is not being fully utilised by the Commission; calls on the Commission, therefore, to start making full use of the Treaties to develop a comprehensive European tourism policy towards the creation of the European Tourism Union;
18. Regrets the fact that the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) does not include a dedicated line for sustainable tourism, which would represent a commitment to implementing the European tourism policy approved by Parliament in its resolution on transport and tourism in 2020 and beyond; notes that this line would not overlap or replace the financial support that is available to the travel and tourism sector through existing EU funds; regrets the fact that tourism has not yet been included as an independent objective in the regulations for the European Structural and Investment

Fund or in the Single Market Programme;

19. Calls on the Commission to create an EU mechanism to monitor the provision of support to micro enterprises and SMEs, focusing on liquidity and delivering EU added value and transparency in order to increase the ability of those enterprises to access and use EU funds and financial instruments to facilitate the modernisation and implementation of innovative and sustainable projects, ensuring accountability and administrative simplification;
20. Commends the Commission for organising the European Tourism Convention in 2020 and calls on it to present an action plan in 2021 and to develop, in a timely manner, an EU strategy for sustainable and strategic tourism aligned with the Digital Agenda, the Green Deal and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, replacing the strategy from 2010, in order to maintain Europe's standing as a leading destination; recalls that in drawing up this strategy there must be a consultation of professionals in the tourism sector; stresses, in this regard, the importance of concrete action to overcome the current crisis and the promotion of alternative forms of tourism such as cultural and sustainable tourism, agrotourism, wildlife tourism, ecotourism and other experiences, which should respect the environment and the cultural heritage of the local population to avoid overtourism;
21. Takes the view that as tourism is a global industry, it is paramount to foster dialogue and cooperation with the UNWTO on the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Parliament and the UNWTO in 2018;
22. Calls on the Commission to update the EU funding support guide and to include therein a link to a national contact point that facilitates access to information for micro enterprises and SMEs, by means of a one-stop shop or online tool with the assistance and guidance of the Member States, whenever needed; calls on the Commission to raise awareness of this guide among companies and SMEs in the tourism sector;
23. Calls on the Commission to set up a European Agency for Tourism in the next MFF and to devise a short-term solution by creating a tourism department in one of the existing executive agencies, in particular the Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME) or the upcoming Health and Digital Executive Agency;

The European Agency for Tourism should be responsible for, inter alia:

- providing the EU and its Member States with a factual overview and data for policymakers, enabling them to devise informed strategies based on collected and analysed tourism data, including on the possible social, economic and environmental impact of these;
- operating a crisis management mechanism to ensure that the tourism sector is adequately prepared for future crises, where national responses have proven to be insufficient;
- providing for technical and administrative support to micro enterprises and SMEs to increase their ability to access and make use of EU funding and financial instruments;
- supporting the tourism ecosystem by, for instance, sharing good practices to

- make informed decisions about improving tourism policies;
- promoting the European brand in third countries and focusing on the diversification of the European tourism product;

Strengthen: transition to sustainable, responsible and smart tourism

24. Notes that sustainable tourism should take account of current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and local communities¹; recalls that the tourism and travel industry creates an ecological footprint worldwide; highlights the need to devise sustainable and flexible solutions for multimodal transport and to develop policies for preserving natural heritage and biodiversity, respecting the sociocultural authenticity of host communities, ensuring sustainability and delivering socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders;
25. Calls on the Commission to swiftly develop a roadmap for sustainable tourism that includes innovative measures to reduce the climate and environmental footprint of the sector by developing more sustainable forms of tourism, diversifying the offer, boosting new initiatives for cooperation and developing new digital services;
26. Calls on the Member States to devise sustainable tourism action plans at national and regional level in consultation with stakeholders and civil society and in line with a future European roadmap for sustainable tourism, and to make full use of the Next Generation EU funds to finance the tourism transition action plans;
27. Highlights that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a shift in the nature of travellers' demands towards safe, clean and more sustainable tourism; underlines that local craft activities, agrotourism, rural tourism and ecotourism are an integral part of sustainable tourism, with an emphasis on discovering nature and the countryside in Europe via routes suitable for walking, cycling or horseback riding with shared access;
28. Calls on the Commission to bring the European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS) into operation, to equip it with a permanent governance structure and to introduce it in tourism destinations, with static indicators and real-time data for their management and evaluation, in partnership with regions; stresses that the aim of the ETIS scoreboard is to monitor the economic, social and environmental impact of tourism;
29. Calls on the Commission to examine the barriers to obtaining the Ecolabel and to expand its scope to other tourism services, as a complement to the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) for tourism, and to establish mechanisms to support those certification schemes and to promote tourism operators that have obtained those schemes;
30. Calls on the Member States, national tourism bodies and the industry to bolster their coordination of the criteria for and application of existing quality labels in the Union, and to encourage the Commission to pursue its coordination role and to support local initiatives;
31. Commends the Commission for setting up the Tourism Sustainability Group and calls

¹ UNWTO and UN Environment Programme, *Making Tourism More Sustainable – A Guide for Policy-Makers*, 2005.

on the group to resume its work and to revise the 2012 European Charter for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism as a means to encourage participation and the adoption of good practices at national, regional and local levels; believes that the group can serve as a reference for a European network of stakeholders in the area of sustainable tourism, present new tools and initiatives to assess the economic, social and ecological impact of tourism-related activities, involve travellers and enable both travellers and tourism companies to understand their environmental footprint;

32. Stresses the importance of the UNWTO Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism, which aims to integrate statistics on the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable tourism;
33. Recalls that the lack of accurate quantitative and qualitative metric data on the effects of tourism on sustainability impedes the decision-making of public and private actors; asks Eurostat to establish a frame of reference for the collection of data relating to sustainability, overtourism, undertourism and criteria on working conditions and calls for Regulation (EU) No 692/2011¹ to be updated; stresses the vast potential of big data and up-to-date data, namely in terms of origin and type of bookings, length of stays, average spending broken down by category, and occupancy rate, for understanding the evolution of tourism flows and changes in demand, and for adapting the offer and implementing adequate policies accordingly;
34. Welcomes the European Data Strategy and the Commission's proposal for a Data Governance Act; calls on the Commission to incorporate tourism in the governance framework for common data spaces and to better regulate the activity of online booking platforms and online travel intermediaries, enabling tourism businesses to fully commit to innovation and digitalisation, as the latter are crucial for modernising the entire sector and for developing new services and a broader, high-quality offer; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to promote data pooling for tourism and regional incubators and accelerators for tourism enterprises, harnessing research and innovation to help the many SMEs in the sector collect, process and utilise the data they produce and enable them to fully benefit from the data economy and implement sustainable solutions;
35. Notes that an increasing number of purchases of tourism products and services are taking place online; recognises the enhanced role of collaborative economy platforms as intermediaries and their merits in terms of innovation and sustainability; welcomes the Commission's proposals for a Digital Services Act and a Digital Markets Act and stresses the need to ensure a level playing field between online and offline businesses to avoid market distortions and preserve healthy competition, with particular regard to the distinction between peers and professional service providers; highlights, in this changing environment, the impact of online reviews and ratings on tourism experiences;
36. Considers it equally important to ensure cooperation between knowledge and innovation communities in the food and culture sectors; believes that promoting market awareness, better qualifications, increased management efficiency, real-life partnerships and targeted networking opportunities, as well as developing innovative measures for the future, are key success factors for agrotourism; also believes that improved

¹ Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2011 concerning European statistics on tourism and repealing Council Directive 95/57/EC (OJ L 192, 22.7.2011, p. 17).

cooperation and coordination between stakeholders, greater involvement of local authorities in tourism and market research and professional communication and marketing strategies are necessary in order to boost the social, economic and environmental performance of agrotourism;

37. Calls on the Commission to respect the right of local authorities to regulate against the harmful impacts of overtourism;
38. Notes that tourism is closely linked to mobility and that Member States must, with financial support from the EU, increase investment in the transition to cleaner fuels, in low and zero-emission vehicles, whenever possible, in more accessible modes of transport, including for disabled people and people with reduced mobility for all modes, and in support for mobility as a service and platforms that guarantee the interoperability and intermodality of ticketing systems to offer transnational and intermodal door-to-door tickets;
39. Believes that tourism mobility should prioritise the use of the most sustainable means of transport, which create a smaller carbon footprint; recalls the necessity for all Member States to have modern, safe and sustainable transport infrastructure in order to facilitate travel across the EU and to make the outermost regions, peripheral and remote areas and islands more accessible for intra-European and international tourism and strengthen territorial cohesion; points out that particular attention should be paid to missing connections across borders, to their completion and to compliance with the TEN-T 2030 and 2050 deadlines;
40. Highlights that the European Year of Rail could present an opportunity to create public awareness of sustainable tourism and the new cross-border routes that European citizens can discover thanks to rail connections; calls on the Commission, therefore, to improve the European railway network; applauds the Union's DiscoverEU initiative, which gives mostly young people the opportunity to discover Europe through learning and cultural experiences and the promotion of local cultural heritage;
41. Underlines the importance of culture and cultural heritage in European tourism; calls on the Member States, therefore, to allocate sufficient funding to culture and cultural heritage sites, without forgetting their intrinsic value as a part of our cultural heritage that needs to be protected, not least from climate change and overtourism;
42. Stresses the need to study the resilience of cultural heritage and notes the liaison between sustainable tourism and cultural heritage; believes that cultural tourism can act as a catalyst for strengthening the mutual understanding of people in the EU by allowing them to discover European cultural heritage in all its diversity; highlights the need to take into account the lessons learnt from the European Year of Cultural Heritage; recalls that many initiatives have been taken at EU, national and local level to improve sustainable tourism by integrating cultural heritage into environmental, architectural and planning policies; considers the need to protect industrial heritage of regions in transition to enable new economic and professional opportunities in those areas; reiterates the need to raise awareness of heritage protection among all actors, including of the risk of illicit traffic in cultural goods; points out that any reflection on sustainable tourism must also take another look at works and cultural goods that have been looted, stolen or illegally obtained during wars; encourages the promotion of excellence in sustainable cultural tourism; calls on the Member States to take measures

to foster collaboration between experts in cultural tourism and to promote cooperation and exchange of best practices in the sector;

43. Considers that the Cultural Routes programme launched by the Council of Europe will help to highlight Europe's diverse history and promote cultural heritage; notes the importance of connecting tourist attractions; believes that the programme has a high potential for small businesses, intercultural dialogue and transnational cooperation, and it must evolve by increasingly advocating for sustainability in tourism, including protection for cultural heritage;
44. Calls on the Commission to explore possible synergies with EuroVelo and its 17 corridors, notably by increasing financial support, in order to promote cycling tourism in Europe; calls on the Commission to encourage the reconversion of disused railway lines, including by supporting bike-train projects, and to actively support bike-train intermodality; proposes the promotion of cycling packages aimed at tourists combined with other sustainable offers; believes that cross-border routes for outdoor activities including rural, mountain or nautical tourism, promoted through specific networks supported by EU funding, can play a key role in connecting different Member State regions and diverting tourism flows in an efficient manner, while providing opportunities to boost tourism in less developed regions;
45. Urges the Commission to propose a new European inclusive tourism scheme following the model of the Calypso initiative, enabling vulnerable social groups to use national tourist vouchers in associated establishments in other Member States which also offer a social tourism programme to their citizens; notes that many Member States are implementing such programmes with very good results and believes that it would be very positive to make these schemes interoperable at EU level;
46. Calls on the Commission to present the results of the Smart Tourism Destinations pilot project and outline how it intends to implement the scheme, linking innovation with the protection of UNESCO and nature sites and traditional local specialities and centres of culture;
47. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to make the European Capital of Smart Tourism a permanent project with broader and fairer criteria, thereby benefiting the local economy and local supply chains; calls for greater commitment towards a gradual increase in sustainable mobility opportunities throughout Europe;
48. Commends the Commission for the Access City Award and calls for the implementation of similar initiatives at national and regional levels;
49. Commends the Commission for its work on the 14 actions which make up the Strategy for Coastal and Maritime Tourism, and invites it to present the results, which can be used to channel financing to infrastructure (ports and marinas), logistical and operational support, waste prevention and the use of renewable energy; stresses the need to respect the maritime ecosystem, promote dialogue between Member States, regional and local authorities, stakeholders and civil society, and foster the sustainable development of coastal and maritime tourism; calls on the Commission, in agreement with the Member States, to take measures to support the cruise industry, which continues to be severely damaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to facilitate its operational restart, while respecting social and environmental standards;

50. Calls on the Commission to develop initiatives for nautical and coastal tourism with regard to the recognition of skipper qualifications, VAT rules on boats, marinas and anchorages, to tackle seasonality and promote cross-border routes, such as a network of routes for nautical tourism, and to make public the state of play of the pilot project: charter of good practices for sustainable cruise tourism;
51. Encourages the Commission to include local actors that work in rural and coastal areas in income diversification initiatives through the creation of tourism products, services or experiences, in the design of new initiatives and the search for synergies between existing ones; encourages efforts to involve producers from the primary sector (agriculture, livestock and fisheries) in these initiatives and to explore whether these initiatives could be used as a means of marketing their products and disseminating their cultural or gastronomic traditions;
52. Underlines the potential employment opportunities in rural areas for legally resident third-country nationals, thereby promoting their social and economic inclusion;
53. Highlights the positive contribution of rural tourism in safeguarding small-scale and diverse farming, tackling social inequalities and creating employment opportunities for women, with the proportion of women in the sector in the EU being around 50 %, thereby contributing to generational renewal and reversing depopulation;
54. Stresses the need to include health tourism, in particular spa and wellness tourism, as a separate industry with high competitive and innovative potential in future measures to develop tourism in Europe, in view of demographic changes and increasing public health awareness;

Rethink: planning the future of the tourism industry

55. Stresses the need to support the tourism industry in implementing the principles of the circular economy, by for instance boosting the supply of climate-neutral products, using clean energy, reducing the use of harmful chemicals and single-use plastics, improving the energy efficiency of buildings by incentivising the renovation of the tourism building stock, implementing rainwater and domestic wastewater recycling processes, facilitating recycling and preventing waste;
56. Urges the Commission to present an analysis in the first semester of 2021 on the requests received from each Member State for State aid schemes for the tourism industry and on EU financing used to tackle the effects of COVID-19, including the applicability of the SURE programme; calls on the Commission to consolidate and extend SURE until the end of 2022 in view of the socioeconomic difficulties the Member States are facing;
57. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to address the situation of workers in the tourism sector affected by the COVID-19 crisis and to consider the possibility of establishing a European framework, within the action plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights, across the industry's entire value chain, in close cooperation with social partners and businesses, through a constructive dialogue on the working conditions in the sector, which is characterised by seasonality and part-time and atypical forms of employment; emphasises that access to social protections must be guaranteed;

58. Calls on the Commission, together with the European Investment Bank, to establish sufficient dedicated support for the decarbonisation of the tourism sector, for digitalisation and for innovative projects, and the conditions of access for micro enterprises and SMEs to InvestEU, so that new skills can be acquired and more quality jobs created; stresses the need for better coordination between the EU and the local level in order to solve the issue of access to finance; highlights that new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, robotics and virtual and augmented reality, can have a significant impact on the tourism industry; notes that their uptake requires adequate funding for tourism establishments, in particular micro enterprises and SMEs;
59. Calls on the Commission to propose new programmes to support innovation in the tourism sector through design thinking;
60. Calls on the Commission, together with the Member States, to support the best practices currently employed by national, regional and local authorities, the transition to seamless intermodality in transport, and the development of through-ticketing for rail travel; recalls the importance of modern, seamless TEN-T networks and high-speed cross-border services across Europe for unlocking the potential of international collective sustainable transport to make tourism more sustainable throughout every season of the year; recalls, in this respect, the need to strengthen urban nodes and public transport, which are an important part of tourists' experiences and citizens' everyday lives in tourist destinations;
61. Calls on the Commission to introduce the e-visa, along with the travel visa and other measures that allow visitors to enter the Union lawfully;
62. Believes that the promotion of the European tourism brand in third countries must focus on the diversification of the tourism product to attract a wider range of tourists and increase market share, while promoting key destinations which offer an alternative to areas of mass tourism; highlights the attractiveness of pan-European touristic products and services such as transnational itineraries;
63. Points out the major contribution of sport to European tourism and highlights the opportunities arising from sporting events and activities, while not forgetting the importance of improving the sustainability of major events; underlines the importance of Europe's gastronomy, gastronomic routes and hotel, restaurant and catering (Horeca) sector for the tourism industry; underlines the importance of health and spa tourism and calls on the Commission to promote tourist initiatives that may help to reduce health costs through preventive measures and lower pharmaceutical consumption; believes that the promotion of the European tourism brand must focus on the diversification of the EU's offering in cultural and natural heritage, food and health, in cooperation with destinations and tour operators;
64. Urges the Commission to submit a proposal on geographical indications for non-agricultural products, not least in the light of the outcome of the 2014 public consultation, which showed that this recognition, in the form of the immediate identification of a product with a territory, would boost the tourism industry;
65. Calls on the Commission to promote artistic and traditional craft professions, which exemplify the excellence of products made in Europe as an expression of the identity and traditions of European territories, including in the context of the tourism industry,

through official recognition as part of European cultural heritage;

66. Calls on the Commission to evaluate and, if necessary, to review the Package Travel Directive¹ and to unblock the negotiations in the Council on the revision of Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 on air passenger rights² to take account of the effects of the recent crisis, prevent future legal uncertainty and ensure the protection of consumer rights; asks the Commission to analyse the possibility of strengthening the insolvency protection provisions by adding a prevention approach to support companies and SMEs at an earlier stage and in order to protect workers in the event of systemic shocks and/or insolvency;
67. Calls on the Commission to establish a European travel guarantee scheme, based on the experience of the COVID-19 crisis and similar schemes in the Member States, in order to secure financial liquidity for companies and guarantee refunds for travellers as well as repatriation costs, together with fair compensation for any damages incurred in the event of bankruptcy;
68. Calls on the Commission to establish a single platform for the creation of digital innovation literacy programmes for the senior executives of micro enterprises and SMEs, giving them the skills they need to optimise their wealth-creating potential; believes that regular training and the reskilling of the existing workforce in the tourism sector is of the utmost importance, with a specific focus on digital skills and innovative technologies; calls on the Commission to develop an EU roadmap to upskill workers in the sector, including an EU financing scheme to this end;
69. Notes that skills and qualifications are not always harmonised between countries and there is a lack of mutual recognition; calls on the Commission, therefore, to evaluate options for harmonising the rules and legislation in this regard;
70. Urges the Commission to work together with associations in the sector and to use best practices to issue recommendations and provide financial support for the organisation of trade tourism events, fairs, congresses and tourism related to artistic and entertainment events, such as concerts and festivals;
71. Requests that the Commission publish and share with stakeholders and the Member States good practices for the professional tour guide profession in order to address the problems affecting this sector; considers that professional tour guides play a vital role in promoting cultural heritage in synergy with the local territory, its traditions and its specificities; believes, therefore, that this profession should enjoy adequate protection in the labour market in order to ensure high-quality services while preserving open and fair competition; calls on the Commission to analyse the lack of mutual recognition in the sector in order to ascertain where the Union can make the requisite improvements;
72. Underlines the importance of accessibility of travel and tourism services for all, including for children, elderly people and disabled people, regardless of their economic situation or potential vulnerabilities; calls on the Commission to work to facilitate the possible wider implementation and recognition of the European disability card scheme; highlights that accessible tourism for all can only be achieved with the right

¹ OJ L 326, 11.12.2015, p. 1.

² OJ L 46, 17.2.2004, p. 1.

combination of legal standards implemented by the Member States, innovation and technological developments, personnel training, awareness-raising, adequate promotion and communication, throughout the supply chain of the tourism offer; stresses, in this regard, the importance of European networks where public and private stakeholders can cooperate and exchange best practices; further calls on the Commission and the Member States to actively drive the ongoing development of the International Organisation for Standardisation standard on accessible tourism services and to ensure its swift and correct implementation once adopted, while also ensuring that service providers respect the relevant accessibility standards already in place or in the process of implementation and provide information on the accessibility of their services;

73. Calls on the Commission to propose a standardised method for collating interactive feedback on the accessibility of destinations by enterprises and tourists and to promote its use to the tourism sector as a whole;
74. Calls on the Commission to consider the special characteristics and additional constraints of the outermost regions when formulating and assessing the impact of tourism legislation, in accordance with Article 349 of the TFEU, as those regions rely heavily on tourism for their economic, social and cultural development; warns, in this context, of the need to ensure proper funding to safeguard the accessibility of the outermost regions; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to take into consideration the climate and digital transition in the outermost regions;
75. Call on the Commission to pay particular attention to mountainous regions, islands and insular regions and rural areas and underlines the importance of well-structured institutional cooperation with all interested regional actors, as well as the Committee of the Regions;
76. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to ensure mobility in territories suffering from double and triple insularity, given the abrupt decline in supply; highlights the possibility of establishing safe travel corridors to and from the outermost regions and islands to help alleviate the permanent constraints they face;
77. Stresses that EU rural development measures contribute to strengthening the EU agrofood sector, environmental sustainability and the well-being of rural areas;

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78. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.