

# MEMBERS OF HOTREC NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS ONLY



## Live from Brussels - Issue 81 - 16 May 2017

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## GENERAL POLICY ISSUES

### Interview of Mr. Ignasi de Delàs, President of European Cities Marketing



Mr. de Delàs is the President of European Cities Marketing since June 2013 and is also Deputy General Manager of Turisme de Barcelona. European Cities Marketing is a platform for convention, leisure and city marketing professionals to exchange knowledge, best practice and widen their network to perform even better. HOTREC asked Mr. de Delàs three questions about the role of ECM's role in destination marketing, its vision for the collaborative economy and platform's cooperation on the collaborative economy.

#### **In a challenging context for tourism in Europe, could you briefly introduce the evolving role of destination marketing agencies in promoting an even more attractive Europe?**

Indeed, DMOs are facing new challenges. The need to strategize their future and their own existence is real. It's tough when markets change and you and your organisation don't. The nowadays law of the global economy is easy: adapt or die. Logically, we often ask ourselves as DMOs: What about tomorrow? Will there still be a role to play?

We need to find and rethink our scope. Destination promotion now happens through destination stories told by many that are a direct result of the destination experience. DMOs should undercover their place DNA, and then brand their destination accordingly.

That's why some DMOs are considering turning into DMMOs (Destination Marketing Management Organisations) to keep up with the tourism trends. The goals that DMOs have historically pursued now threaten their future relevance and even existence. We must shift resources from marketing to management in order to balance the interests and benefits of tourism with those of the local communities we serve.

DMOs are the only organisations within a city structure that have the capabilities, capacities and funding to focus on developing and managing the experiential quality of a city and consequently promote an even more attractive Europe.

At the [ECM International Conference in Dubrovnik](#), May 31-June 3, 2017, ECM members (Europe's city marketers and tourism professionals) will meet industry thought leaders and leading tourism academics to pursue this discussion and debate and strategise the new normal in urban travel.

#### **The exponential development of the collaborative economy, which can be seen as an opportunity for European cities, is also generating a set of drawbacks in many aspects of cities everyday life (e.g. urban planning, cost of housing and living, unfair competition with the existing tourism eco-system and in particular with hospitality businesses). Can you explain how DMOs act in order to reconcile these two aspects and transform it into an opportunity?**

The sharing economy is indeed the fastest growing segment in tourism, estimated to represent 50% of all travellers by 2025, expecting to equal traditional rental economy's revenue growth.

On the bright side, the real sharing economy is a great way for visitors to engage with the locals – to get the real and authentic city experience delivered by real people, living real lives. The connected economy has been praised as a value based consumer movement to end materialism and meaningless consumption in favour of people-to-people collaboration, sustainable living and pursuit of authentic social relations.

Like you said, on the other hand, it has been strongly criticised for being just the opposite: nothing but big business tagged with all of the well familiar immoralities of full blown capitalism - tax evasion, violation of labour rights and consumer protection laws to name a few. It also has had negative impact on some local neighbourhoods in Europe's great cities in terms of everyday visitor pressure, gentrification, crowding out of local life and driving up the cost of shopping and renting an apartment for local citizens.

At our last ECM Annual Meeting in Madeira in 2016, ECM members collectively asked sharing economy influential bodies to play with and respect local rules to maintain a fair-play attitude, rationalise, legalize and facilitate growth of the sector.

**The hospitality sector being a major contributor to the economic and social life of European cities, how do you see the cooperation of peer-to-peer platforms in order to foster a responsible and sustainable collaborative economy?**

The big question for our DMOs is not whether to be pro or con the sharing economy. It is how destinations can actively interact with, simply because this phenomenon is here to stay. We issued in June 2016 a "Discussion paper on Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) and the sharing economy" produced by Toposophy that many can relate to.

Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) in general are the connectors between industry players and authorities; they are the stage managers of their city. And for our members DMOs, it is a crucial need to balance the interest of their established partners with the popularity of the new collaborative platforms.

To promote a sustainable collaborative economy, we urge peer-to-peer platforms to do their utmost to play with local rules in order to make the pie bigger i.e. increase the total number of visitors to some destinations, attracted by what sharing economy platforms offer there. However, up to now, the growth of the tourism sharing economy has largely happened with engagement of every other stakeholder group except governmental authorities.

If managed properly, the sharing economy can be a tool that can prove highly cost effective, enrich the experience of visitors, provide opportunities for deeper citizen engagement and offer considerable rewards on environmental impact too.

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## DIGITAL ISSUES

### European Commission to take action on unfair B2B practices of platforms



On 10 May 2017, the European Commission issued a [Communication](#) on the Mid-Term Review on the implementation of the Digital Single Market Strategy. The Communication also provided a first feedback on the Commission's investigations, which had been carried out over the past 12 months, into online platforms' business-to-business (B2B) practices.

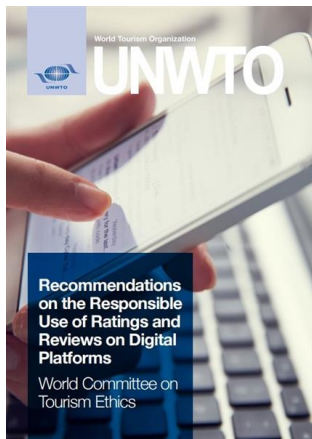
With regard to platforms trading practices, the Commission comes to the conclusion that some platforms engage in trading practices which are to the potential detriment of businesses. The Communication mentions the examples of delisting, lack of transparency in ranking and search results as well as the lack of accessible and effective redress mechanisms.

The Commission's objective is to safeguard a fair, predictable, sustainable and ultimately trusted business environment in the online economy. Therefore, the Commission will prepare actions to address the issues of unfair contractual clauses and trading practices, including exploring dispute resolution, fair practices criteria and transparency. These actions may take the form of a legislative instrument and could be proposed by the end of 2017.

#### HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC welcomes the European Commission's mid-term review of the Digital Single Market Strategy.*
- *HOTREC is satisfied that the Communication recognises the problems in the B2B relations with online platforms and is dedicated to take up action for a fair online economy. Given the extremely unbalanced powers on the market in favour of the few major platforms vis-à-vis the around 1,8 million hospitality businesses, fair, reliable and effective market conditions are of crucial importance*

## UNWTO publishes recommendations for online reviews



At the occasion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) International Congress on Ethics, UNWTO published its Recommendations on the responsible use of ratings and reviews. The Recommendations were elaborated with the contributions of some of the main platforms, including TripAdvisor and Yelp. It includes in 3 chapters recommendations for the 3 main stakeholders, namely for digital platforms, service providers and users as well as some advice in case of conflicts.

Accordingly, platforms shall ensure displaying correct information on the providers, take reasonable measures to ensure that reviews reflect authentic experiences and allow service providers to respond to reviews. Platforms should also have policies in place to detect fake reviews and to deal with blackmailing reported by providers. Complaints should be proceeded through user-friendly procedures also through an easily identifiable and reachable contact.

Service providers should be aware that user generated content impacts their businesses and are encouraged to benefit from consumer feedback. They are recommended, inter alia, to regularly monitor online consumer feedback, encourage customers to leave a review and that staff should be able to deal with reviews. They should also report perceived fake reviews to the platform and refrain themselves from writing or letting write positive reviews on their own services or bad ones on competitors' ones.

Users (consumers) shall be aware that their reviews may impact businesses and also the expectations of other users, therefore the importance of responsible behaviour is crucial. Users shall try to address issues with the service providers when they arise, rather than afterwards in a review, and shall avoid personal attacks on staff or the owner of the business.

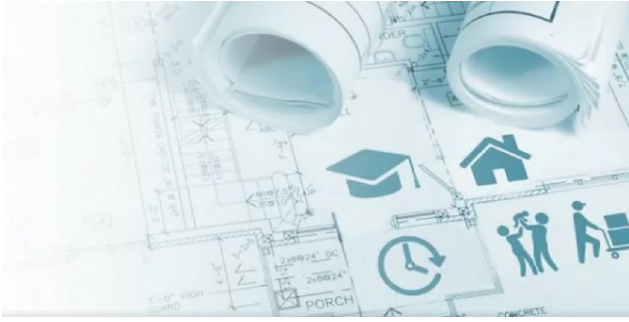
Recommendations in case of conflicts are included in the document as well.

### HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC considers these recommendations as a good step towards more responsible behaviour by all stakeholders involved.*
  - *The Recommendations may have a positive effect if all involved act responsibly.*
  - *Platforms have to be open to possible complaints and shall handle them quickly and effectively, avoiding to take issues to legal level.*
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## SOCIAL AFFAIRS

### European Pillar of Social Rights unveiled!



On 26 April 2017, the European Commission presented the European Pillar of Social Rights Package. A number of principles and rights included in the Pillar will require further legislative and non-legislative initiatives to become effective.

Where needed, existing EU law will be updated, complemented and enforced. The package is for the moment formed by:

- Proposal for a Directive on Work-life balance for parents and carers. The proposal repeals [Council Directive 2010/18/EU](#) and includes the following main points: 10 working days of paternity leave when the child is born; 4 months of non-transferable parental leave to be taken until the child reaches the age of 12; right of 5 days of carer's leave per year per worker, paid at sick pay level, to take care of seriously ill or dependent relatives; right to request flexible working arrangements for parents of children up to 12 years old and workers with caring responsibilities. All the leaves should be paid at the level of sick leave;
- Social partner 1<sup>st</sup> phase consultation on the revision of the Written Statement Directive ([91/533/EEC](#)) to ensure that all workers get information about their working conditions in a timely manner and written form and to achieve a number of important rights to all workers (including for precarious employment relationships);
- Social partner 1<sup>st</sup> phase consultation on addressing the challenges of access to social protection for people in all forms of employment: the intention is to ensure similar social protection rights for similar work; tying social protection rights to individuals and making them transferable; making social protection rights and related information transparent; simplifying administrative requirements;
- A recommendation and a proposal for an interinstitutional proclamation on the European Pillar of Social Rights: both documents contain the basic principles of the pillar focusing on equal opportunities and access to the labour market; fair working conditions; working protection and inclusion;
- An interpretative Communication on the Working-Time Directive ([2003/88/EC](#)), non-legislative document, which provides guidance on how to interpret various aspects of the Directive in line with the European Court of Justice rulings. The aim is to help Member States to interpret the *acquis* correctly, by avoiding infringements.

All the legislative initiatives adopted on 26 April 2017 are part of the 2017 Commission Work Programme. Further initiatives may be considered in the context of future work programmes.

#### Next steps:

The proposal for a Directive on Work-life balance will be negotiated between European Parliament and Council.

The Commission will engage with Member States and various stakeholders, such as national governments, regions, local authorities, social partners to ensure efficient implementation of accompanying measures.

#### HOTREC Position:

- *HOTREC views the setting up of benchmarks positively, if their purposes are to support all EU Member States in the improvement of framework conditions for job creation and labour market integration, with a focus on competitiveness and employment. Benchmarks could provide reference to support national implementation of structural reforms with a focus on labour markets, education and training systems and social systems in all Member States. If benchmarks are developed, they should be developed in concertation between Council, Commission, Member States and social partners;*
- *HOTREC strongly disagrees that the European Commission has repealed the social partner agreement on paternity leave, which had been negotiated in 1995 and revised in 2010. The consequences of additional costs for companies created by the compulsory payment for parental leave, paternity leave and care leave, would probably have as a direct consequence a decrease in job creation and competitiveness in the hospitality sector;*
- *HOTREC welcomes the consultations on Social Protection and the revision of the Written Statement Directive.*



## Tackling bogus self-employed



On 9-10 March 2017, a plenary meeting of the European Platform tackling undeclared work was held in Brussels. The first day of the meeting was dedicated to bogus self-employment (BSE).

The OECD defines BSE as people whose conditions of employment are similar to those of employees, who have no employees themselves and who declare themselves as self-employed simply to reduce tax liabilities, or employers' responsibilities. The "bogus" denomination underlines the intention to circumvent labour, tax, social security rights and regulations, to reduce costs and avoid payments and obligations. BSE needs to be tackled, as they do not receive the same legal protection as employees (including sick pay, holidays, pensions); they are affected by low job quality and they constitute unfair competition for legitimate employers.

On 10 March took place the plenary meeting on Undeclared Work. Amongst other outputs it was agreed that a working group on "Success stories – lessons from companies' experiences" would be launched and that on 1 October 2017 a dedicated meeting to the collaborative economy will take place. Jean-Marc Banquet D'Orx, chair of the Social Sectorial Dialogue for HOTREC, participated in both meetings.

### Next steps:

On 1 October 2017 a dedicating meeting on the collaborative economy will take place.

### HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC attends the Platform of Undeclared Work with an Observer Status;*
- *HOTREC supports any measures that will help tackle undeclared work. This will help curbing black economy and will secure legal working conditions for all citizens.*

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## ACCESSIBILITY

### European Parliament's IMCO committee adopts its draft report on the European Accessibility Act

On 25 April 2017, the Internal Market and Consumer Affairs (IMCO) Committee adopted its draft report on the European Accessibility Act. According to the adopted text, the scope of the Directive has not changed in relation to tourism and hospitality services.

The e-commerce aspect, namely selling products and services online, remains the most relevant one for the hospitality industry. MEPs also voted in favour of including a micro-enterprise exemption in the future Directive, taking into account their size, resources and nature.

Following the vote in the IMCO Committee, the accessibility requirements are proposed to be based on functionality, rather than on technical specifications. Thus, when considering the accessibility of e-commerce websites, functional performance requirements would need to be met, instead of imposed technical solutions.

### Next steps:

The Council has to agree on a general approach among the Member States so that negotiations with the European Parliament to reach a possible first reading agreement on the text can start.

### HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC welcomes the vote of the IMCO Committee and considers reasonable the scope of the Directive as adopted by the IMCO Committee.*
- *HOTREC also welcomes the micro-enterprise exemption voted, as several enterprises of such small size could have difficulties of compliance with the imposed requirements.*

# TAXATION

## HOTREC unveils report on the benefits of low VAT



On 4 May 2017, HOTREC published its [report on the benefits of low VAT](#) on job creation and competitiveness in the European Union regarding the hospitality and tourism sector. The report includes the call for the long-term application of VAT to tourism related services, which call is broadly supported by the major European tourism organisations in Brussels.

Having regard to a constantly decreasing market share of Europe in terms of international tourist arrivals over the past decades, as well as to the fact of Europe being second in terms of receipts, with a lower growth rate than the rest of the world, it is essential for policy makers to improve Europe's competitiveness also through the long-term application of low VAT rates for tourism.

As demonstrated through examples of recent changes in VAT rates in the last years, low VAT not only helps improving competitiveness, but, among others, strongly fosters job creation, contributes to increased investments and saves enterprises and jobs.

The report is also a contribution of the hospitality industry to the current discussions in relation to the European Commission's 2016 Action Plan on VAT, which also includes moving towards a modernised rates policy.

### HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC has been calling for the application of reduced VAT rates for hospitality services for years. In fact, 25 of 28 EU Member States apply such a reduced rate to accommodation and 17 to restaurant services.*
  - *The long term maintenance of the possibility for all EU Member States to apply reduced VAT rates to hospitality and tourism services is of crucial importance to keep and further improve Europe's competitiveness, so that Europe can remain the number 1 destination in the world, and to properly fulfil its crucial role in the European economy.*
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## FOOD

### Food Waste: the European Parliament opts for aspirational targets at EU level



On 14 March 2017, the European Parliament adopted in plenary session its 1<sup>st</sup> reading position on the revision of the Waste Framework Directive.

The plenary position largely confirms the ENVI (Environment, public health and food safety) Committee report, as far as food waste is concerned:

- Food reduction targets are aspirational: Member States have an obligation to take measures, with the view to achieve an aspirational EU waste reduction target (30% by 2025, 50% by 2030);
- It confirms Member States obligation to measure food waste throughout the food chain;
- It confirms Member States obligation to separately collect bio-waste (except in scarcely populated areas);
- It provides that Member States shall provide incentives for the application of the waste hierarchy and encourage the implementation of waste prevention measures;

However, the plenary added a new provision calling on the Commission to evaluate by 2020 the possibility/feasibility to establish binding food waste reduction targets in the future.

Meanwhile, the ENVI Committee also adopted on 11 April 2017 an own-initiative report from MEP Borzan (Croatia, S&D) on "[initiative on resource efficiency: reducing food waste, improving food safety](#)". The report mostly supports the revision of the waste framework Directive. In particular:

- It confirms the EP plenary position on the Waste Framework Directive concerning food waste reduction targets;
- It recognises that the measures to reduce food waste should primarily focus on the biggest wasters (households/processing);
- It calls on the Commission to change the VAT Directives in order to make food donated to charities subject to zero VAT;
- It calls on public authorities to consult all relevant stakeholders before adopting measures aimed at reducing food waste;
- It calls on Member States to use economic and fiscal incentives/support to facilitate the reduction of food waste.

#### Next Steps:

Concerning the Waste Framework Directive, the Council is expected to adopt soon a common position on the main points of the proposal. Trilogue negotiations will be initiated during the Maltese Presidency of the EU. Concerning the own-initiative report on food safety, it will be adopted in plenary session on 15 May 2017.

#### HOTREC position:

- *The hospitality industry is a small waster compared to other segment of the food chain, but is nonetheless acting in a responsible manner by promoting best practices to reduce food waste;*
  - *HOTREC welcomes the European Parliament plenary position, which opts for an obligation of means for Member States to help achieving a Union food waste reduction target, as it leaves the necessary flexibility to adapt to national/local circumstances;*
  - *HOTREC also welcomes the own-initiative report from MEP. Borzan, as it clearly indicates that food waste reduction measures should primarily focus on bigger wasters;*
  - *Funding should be provided to incentivize the development of schemes meant to collect unsold food in restaurants in view of their re-use as a source of feed or energy. Similar funding should be available for donations to charitable organizations;*
  - *Measurement of food waste should be the responsibility of the Member States authorities.*
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## Acrylamide: Commission draft regulation to be released soon

The European Commission is expected to release in May 2017 its proposal for a Commission Regulation on the application of control and mitigation measures to reduce the presence of acrylamide in food.

The last draft text of the proposal was incorporating stakeholder's code of practice directly into the body of the Regulation and annexes.

### Next Steps:

Once released, the draft Commission regulation will be subject to a four-week stakeholder consultation, for a possible approval by the Member States before the end of June.

### HOTREC position:

- *Given the potentially carcinogenic effect of acrylamide, HOTREC is taking its responsibility by promoting a flexible code of practice for the restaurant sector, with a focus on concrete and easy to follow recommendations, so as to diminish acrylamide levels in food served by restaurants, without burdening them un-necessarily.*
  - *HOTREC supports the Commission's intention to make industry codes of practices binding and calls on the Commission and the Member States to strictly adhere to the HOTREC code of practice, so as to ensure that restaurants can achieve high safety standards, while preserving the necessary flexibility they need to be able to operate and cook a variety of products.*
-

## HEALTH

### Alcohol labelling: Industry invited to launch self-regulatory campaign



On 13<sup>th</sup> March 2017, the European Commission published a report on the mandatory labelling of the list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration of alcoholic drinks ([link](#)).

According to [Regulation 1169/2011](#), alcoholic beverages are not covered by the provisions regarding mandatory list of ingredients and mandatory nutrition declaration (including energy value). The European Commission recognised in its report that current voluntary initiatives were deployed across Europe, but should develop further so as to provide a list of ingredients and nutrition declaration. Nevertheless, it invited the industry to respond to consumer's expectations and present within one year time a self-regulatory proposal that would cover the entire sector of alcoholic beverages. If the proposal will be considered unsatisfactory by the Commission, an impact-assessment will be launched. The latter will consider regulatory and non-regulatory options, in particular information on the energy value of the alcoholic beverages. The assessment will take into account different options in the internal market, on the economic sectors and on consumer's needs.

#### Actions:

HOTREC was present at the ad-hoc working group meeting of the Advisory Group on the Food Chain together with the other alcohol producers and Euro Commerce.

#### HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC strongly supports and encourages members to implement measures that enforce age limits when serving and selling alcohol and develop information programmes on responsible drinking as part of its commitment to the European Alcohol and Health Forum;*
  - *HOTREC advises members to get in touch with the alcohol producers at national level in order to help build the best voluntary strategy possible on the matter.*
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# TOURISM

## Schengen internal border controls prolonged



On 2 May 2017, the European Commission announced that countries carrying out internal border controls could continue applying the measure for an extra six months period. Currently, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Norway are applying this system in certain parts of their respective borders.

The Commission added that controls should only be carried out in a targeted manner and only in last resort. Dimitris Avramopoulos, European Commissioner in charge of the migration portfolio, explained that although the general situation is stabilising, there are still a significant number of illegal migrants and asylum seekers in Greece. This is why, as a precautionary measure, the Commission is recommending that the Council extends controls for the last time and that these should be lifted in six-month time.

### HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC believes that the freedom of movement of people across Schengen is one of the fundamental pillars of the EU;*
- *HOTREC hopes that the reintroduction of border controls, which is having a detrimental effect on tourism, is only a temporary measure and that the free circulation will be installed as soon as possible, within a secure environment.*

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## Systematic controls on all travellers crossing Schengen border is in force



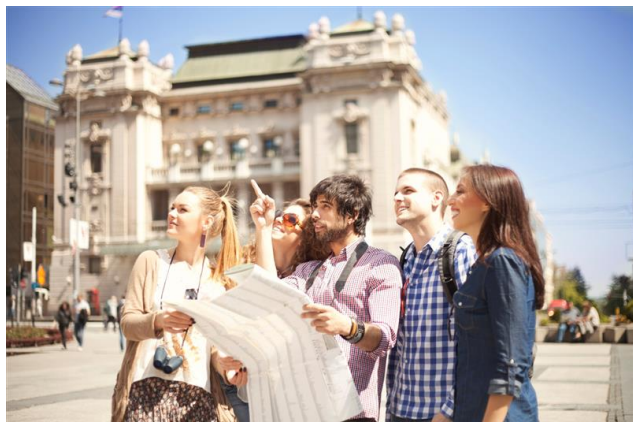
On 7 April 2017 the amendment to the Schengen Border Code bringing in systematic controls on travellers crossing the external Schengen borders, including European nationals, entered into force.

Travellers will be checked against European police files, such as the Schengen Information System or Interpol databases. At airport borders, Member States will be allowed to carry out "targeted" controls over a six-month transition period. This deadline might be extended for an extra 18-month period in exceptional cases, namely if airports need to adapt because they do not have the required infrastructure.

### HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC welcomes measures that prove that Europe is a safe tourist destination;*
  - *Long queues in airports and land borders might demotivate tourists to visit Europe. Member States should implement the necessary measures for waiting times to be reduced to the very minimum.*
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## Visa waiver to continue being applied to US citizens



On 2 May 2017, the European Commission issued a written statement confirming that it had no intention of reintroducing the visa requirements for American citizens wishing to travel to the EU, even though the US is not currently applying the visa reciprocity mechanism to citizens coming from Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland and Romania.

The Commission is in this way replying to the European Parliament's non-legislative Motion for a Resolution adopted on 2 March 2017, which was encouraging the Commission to adopt a delegated act to temporarily suspend the visa-waiver mechanism.

### Next steps:

The European Commission will continue diplomatic talks with the US and issue a state of play of the current situation soon.

### HOTREC's position:

- *HOTREC fully supports the Commission's intention of continuing diplomatic negotiations with the US representatives, so that the visa waiver becomes fully applicable;*
- *Currently, travellers from the U.S. and Canada account for the largest percentage of all European arrivals. Arrivals from the two markets reached 30.3 million tourists;*
- *The economic impact that closing the doors to U.S citizens would have for tourism purposes needs to be taken into account, as well as the damage of the external relations between the EU and the U.S.*

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## Trilogues on "smart borders" ready to begin!

On 27 February 2017, Members of the European Parliament of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs committee adopted a report on the "smart borders" system.

The system seeks to store the data of travellers crossing EU's external borders in an "entry/exit" system. The latter will replace the stamping of passports with an electronic system that gathers traveller's data. The objective is to detect people exceeding the validity period of their visa facility, false documents, etc. On 2 March 2017, the COREPER ratified the Council of the EU position on the entry/exit system or smart border system that is due to register all travellers crossing the EU's external borders.

### Next steps:

Informal trilogue negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council will start soon to try finding an early agreement.

### HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC welcomes procedures that facilitate the entry of third country citizens in the Schengen zone. This will boost tourism, business and trade in the EU. Consequently, growth and jobs will increase in the sector;*
  - *The entry-exit system should be built in a way that truly minimise time spent at the border by third country nationals willing to visit Europe.*
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## UNWTO to work on tourism and security

On 11 and 12 May 2017, UNWTO held a first High Level meeting on Tourism and Security in Madrid, gathering representatives from private tourism organisations, UNWTO Member States and related UN Organisations.

The issues discussed turned around the integration between tourism and security, through public and private cooperation in operational crisis management and communications. The future work will focus on supporting the sector in setting crisis management plans and protocols, to have travel advisories, to further enhance safe, secure and seamless travel including visa facilitation and crisis communication.

### Next steps:

The different aspects are going to be addressed by specific working groups to develop recommendations and guidelines, as well as to define trainings for the employees of the tourism sector.

### HOTREC position:

- HOTREC will participate closely wherever possible to the development of guidelines and of customised trainings as envisaged by UNWTO in terms of future developments.

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## CLASSIFICATION

### Slovenia is the 17th country to join HotelStars Union



On 26 April 2017, at the latest meeting of the [Hotelstars Union](#), which was created under the patronage of HOTREC, Slovenia committed itself to the implementation of harmonised classification criteria which will be introduced mandatorily for every Slovenian Hotel this year.

Thus, Slovenia has become the 17th country in Europe, which is implementing Hotelstars Union's common criteria for hotel classification. Together with Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland which were the founding countries of Hotelstars Union, and the countries joining before 2017, namely Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Malta, Slovenia will provide the guest and hotelier more transparency and security in the field of hotel classification and contributes to the further expansion of the system in Europe.

### HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC welcomes Slovenia as the 17<sup>th</sup> member of Hotelstars Union.*
  - *HOTREC believes that the initiative of the HOTREC Members for the creation of the Hotelstars Union and its continuous expansion demonstrates the effectiveness of industry driven harmonisation in the field of accommodation services*
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## STATISTICS

### Spain is the main destination in Europe in terms of nights spent



[Most recent data on European tourism \(Eurostat\)](#): in 2015, Spain was the main destination in Europe for tourists coming from abroad with 270 million nights spent in tourist accommodation corresponding to a share of over 21% of the EU total.

Regarding tourism receipts, in absolute terms Spain (50,9 billion EUR), France (41,1 billion EUR) and the UK (41,1 billion EUR) are the top 3 countries, while regarding receipts share to GDP, this contribution in Croatia (18,1%), Malta (13,4%) and Cyprus (12,7%) is the most relevant.

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## GENERAL ACTIVITIES

### Next Meetings and General Assemblies

In the coming months, HOTREC will organise and/or participate to the following meetings:

- 22 May 2017 (Malta) - High-level Conference on the Circular Economy organised by MEP Miriam Dalli and in the framework of the Maltese presidency of the EU;
- 25-26 May 2017 (Malta) - High Level Tourism Conference "Enhancing Europe's Competitiveness through New Products" organised by the Maltese presidency of the EU. HOTREC will participate as panellist;
- 24-26 May 2017 (Panama City, Panama). ISO Working Group on accessibility and ISO TC 228 Plenary meeting. HOTREC will participate.
- 1 June 2017 (Brussels, Belgium) – Plenary meeting of the EU platform for action on diet, physical activity and health. HOTREC will participate.
- 14 June 2017 (Brussels, Belgium) - Plenary meeting of the EU platform on food losses and food waste. HOTREC will participate.
- 14 June 2017 – UNWTO working group on the Convention on the protection of tourists and on the rights and obligations of tourism service providers. HOTREC will participate.
- 27 June 2017 (Brussels, Belgium) – Final conference of the Erasmus+ funded APPTOURYOU project. HOTREC will participate as panellist
- 19-20 October 2017 (Antwerp, Belgium) – HOTREC holds its 75<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.