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PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN TOURISM NEEDS JOINT EFFORTS TO STIMULATE GROWTH

Brussels, 24 July 2013 Data for the pre-Summer period points to a tempered growth for European tourism. The vast majority of destinations reporting figures through March-June post positive growth, according to the just released report on 'European Tourism in 2013 – Trends & Prospects' released by the European Travel Commission (ETC). ETC expects that the upcoming peak summer season will consolidate its positive expectations for 2013 (+1% to +3%). Yet, the persistence of a negative economic climate calls for a joint effort of both the public and private sector to create coherent stimuli and to sustain future growth.

Data for the pre-Summer period points to a tempered growth for European tourism, despite the persistent economic malaise of the Euro-area. Out of 22 destinations reporting foreign visitors' arrivals through March-June 2013, the vast majority post positive growth. As tourists remain cost conscious, the growth in overnight stays remains subdued compared to that of arrivals. Capacity growth has also been constrained, despite demand expansion.

Smaller destinations lead growth in foreign arrivals. Figures available to date show Iceland (30%) and Slovakia (20%) as top performers in terms of foreign tourist arrivals growth. Montenegro, Latvia and Croatia follow with a growth around 9%, Hungary and Poland with a growth of 7%. On the other end of the spectrum, Cyprus marked a depressed -12%, due to negative publicity received at the beginning of the year.

Growth in overnights remains subdued compared to that of arrivals, as travellers remain cost conscious. Notable exceptions are Latvia (+9% in arrivals and +14% in overnights), Croatia (+9% and +11% respectively), Malta (+7% and +10% respectively) and Czech Republic (+3% and +4%). The reverse trend in these destinations finds its roots in increasing visits from long-stay markets and segments, the establishment of new connections with medium and long-haul markets or reduced fiscal pressure on tourism services.

First months' performance reflects robust outbound travel from key markets

Overall data paints a positive picture for outbound travel from intra-European markets. After few years of weak demand, most destinations report growth from the French and UK markets, and the German market consolidates the positive performance of past years. Russian demand also persists strong, bringing conspicuous gains to the Eastern European destinations. The picture looks weaker instead for the Dutch and Italian market, as a result of stalled economic growth.

Long-haul markets continue to lead the growth in relative terms. Chinese travel, fostered by the emerging middle class, remains well ahead of economic growth, with the majority of destinations reporting double digit increases in terms of arrivals and overnights. Travel from US remains solid for the majority of reporting destinations. Outbound travel from Japan looks pale against expectations, as currency depreciation offsets the positive effects of economic stimuli.

Harmonized stimuli to sustain future growth

As the year progresses, Europe's economic outlook looks brighter and consumers become less pessimistic about their future economic prospects. Yet, the persistence of uncertainties related to intra-European markets and their consequences on travel patterns calls for strong stimuli to sustain future tourism growth. To effectively steer the industry and achieve growth objectives, both the public and private sector need to unify behind the ambition for growth. The coordinated effort of tourism authorities and industries can produce durable effects in the short-term only if well orchestrated. The threat, otherwise, is for individual efforts to vanish.

The full report can be downloaded from ETC's corporate website under the following link: <http://www.etc-corporate.org/reports/tourism-trends>.

Note to editors:

The European Travel Commission is an association of National Tourism Organisations (NTOs). It was created in 1948 to promote Europe as a tourism destination to the long-haul markets outside Europe, originally in the USA and later in Canada, Latin America and Asia. It currently has 33 member NTOs, including 9 from outside the European Union. ETC is an independent body which is financed entirely by annual membership contributions and partnership funding.

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Press Releases: <http://www.etc-corporate.org/press1/current-press-releases>.

For further information: ETC's corporate website www.etc-corporate.org is aimed at industry, government and educational personnel interested in tourism to Europe.

Tourists seeking travel-specific information and ideas are directed to ETC's consumer portal www.visiteurope.com.