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THE EESC AND OVERTOURISM

Tourism accounts for 10% of the European Union's GDP and supports over 12 million jobs, making it a key sector for economic growth, employment and social development in the EU. The importance of tourism in many Member States also highlights the sector's potential to generate new competitive advantages for the EU and to strengthen the Union's global competitiveness. However, the phenomenon of overtourism can undermine social cohesion, as it forces workers to move away from population centres, resulting in a shortage of workers essential for the provision of public services. Similarly, competitiveness is also affected, as workers cannot live near their place of work and are forced to commute, with repercussions for mobility and environmental sustainability as well. The EESC (European Economic and Social Committee), in the Opinion INT/1113, adopted during the April Plenary Session and specifically addressing this issue, highlights that any strategy aimed at combating overtourism must also take into account the potential consequences for the housing sector and the labour market, in order to ensure access to affordable housing, particularly for workers, young people and long-term



residents, so as to ensure that tourist flows do not force the local population to move away. According to Councillor Ulgiati «coordinated action by the EU is needed to support Member States in developing solutions aimed at better managing tourist flows, not only through digital monitoring systems, diversifying tourist destinations and promoting tourism in the low season, but also through collaborative governance models involving businesses and trade unions, with the aim of strengthening the links between sustainable, durable and regenerative tourism and the local economy, local culture and traditional crafts».

EU COMMISSION: "PASSENGER PACKAGE" UNVEILED

Whilst the conflict in the Middle East continues to constrain oil and refined product routes, and the Strait of Hormuz, a tiny corridor on the map but a giant in energy balances, continues to play a strategic role on a global scale, the European Commission presented the new "Passenger Package" ("One journey, one ticket, full rights") ahead of a summer season that promises to be potentially more unstable. With rising energy costs and jet fuel prices, uncertainty surrounding flight bookings, and general economic insecurity, an increasing number of people are considering closer-to-home holidays this summer and opting to travel by train instead, following a trend that was already on the rise in 2025. The aim of the "One journey, one ticket, full rights" Package is to make travel in

Europe simpler by offering a single ticket for train journeys that speeds up and simplifies the booking of rail services and grants passengers more rights, including assistance and refunds. Buying train tickets valid for cross-border travel within the European Union is therefore set to become easier: with a single click, European citizens will be able to plan, compare and book cross-border multimodal journeys, whilst enjoying greater rights and better protection at every stage of their journey. In addition to making bookings easier, the reform will strengthen passengers' rights: those who miss a connection will be protected even if the trains are operated by different railway companies. Passengers will also have the right to be re-routed to their final destination without having to buy a new ticket and to receive

compensation for the entire delay, as well as the right to assistance, which may include meals and even overnight accommodation if missing a connection means they have to stay overnight. Already included in 2024 by President Ursula von der Leyen in the policy guidelines for her second term, the proposed Regulation will now be forwarded to the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, in accordance with the legislative process, before coming into force.

