

HOTREC strongly supports the revision of EU Visa Policy

HOTREC General Assembly - Vilnius, 17 May 2013 – HOTREC, the business association representing the hospitality sector in Europe, strongly supports the revision of the current Visa Code and calls for an extension of the visa waiver scheme for citizens coming from third countries, especially the BRIC countries.

During its 66st General Assembly, CEO's and Presidents representing the hospitality sector in more than 27 different European countries, supported the European Commission Communication on Visa Policy ([COM \(2012\) 649 final](#)) and expect that a complete revision of the [Visa Code](#) will be done, as a result of the on-going consultation on its implementation. In particular, HOTREC advocates that the number of countries which do not require visa to enter the Schengen area, included in [Regulation 539/2001](#), is increased in order to facilitate the entrance of tourists from BRIC countries and other countries representing important tourism source markets in the Schengen space.

“According to statistics provided by Tourism Economics, the EU-Schengen area has the potential of increasing between 8 and 46 million additional inbound travel tourists by 2015, if flexibility in the current EU visa policy would be fully applied. Those potential tourists would be fundamental in keeping Europe as number one tourist destination in the world”, commented Mr. Kent Nyström, President of HOTREC.

In addition, HOTREC calls the EU institutions to take further measures regarding the EU Visa Code, which should include, amongst other:

- the revision of the obligation for the visa applicant to appear in person in the consulate/external service provider to get their biometric data collected;
- the clarification of the notion of main destination; and
- the enforcement of the time to grant an appointment and to decide on the outcome of the visa application.

What is HOTREC?

HOTREC represents the hotel, restaurant and café industry at European level. This industry includes around 1,7 million businesses, of which 99.5% are small and medium sized enterprises (92% of them micro enterprises, i.e. employing fewer than 10 people). These businesses make up some 62% of industry value added. The hospitality industry provides some 9,5 million jobs in the EU alone. Together with the other tourism industries, the sector is the 3rd largest industry in Europe.

HOTREC brings together 44 national associations representing the sector in 27 different European countries.

For further information: www.hotrec.eu

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