



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY & HEALTH

Sectoral Committee

Weekly Update

16.04.10



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... Presidency

Informal Meeting of Tourism Ministers

Tourism ministers met in Madrid this week and discussed strategies to maintain the EU's status as the world's leading tourist destination.

The EU received 380 million international tourists in 2007, which represents 42% of all international visits worldwide. Tourism generated nearly 5% of European GDP with about 1.8 million enterprises employing around 5.2% of the total labour force (approximately 9.7 million jobs). When related sectors are taken into account, the estimated contribution of tourism to GDP creation is much higher: tourism indirectly generates more than 10% of the European Union's GDP and provides about 12% of the labour force.

Apart from its key role in the European economy, tourism has proved to be one of the most crisis-resistant sectors and even shows signs of a slight recovery and growth. The job-creation rate in the tourism industry is greater than the average for the European economy as a whole.

The Treaty of Lisbon expressly recognises the importance of tourism and, for the first time, provides for a specific EU authority in the field, where decisions will be adopted by co decision and qualified majority voting.

At the Madrid meeting, measures were studied for improving the relationship between competitiveness, quality and sustainability, not only to increase long-haul market share, but also to contribute to internal European market retention. The idea is to make European destinations more attractive, by means of cultural and gastronomic offerings, to tourists from the European Union, who make up 85-90% of international tourism in the EU.

At the Informal Meeting of Ministers, the '**Madrid Declaration**' project on the future framework of European tourism was presented. This declaration incorporates a series of recommendations to the European Commission to implement a European tourism policy through a "Communication on the EU's new tourist policy framework", that the Commission will present to the European Council before the end of the year.

The declaration places emphasis on the role of innovation and information and communication technologies for maintaining the competitiveness of tourism companies, largely SMEs, in a globalised economy.

During the meeting, Ministers spoke of "promoting the Europe brand" abroad, by campaigns to improve the cultural, historic and gastronomic heritage image of European destinations.

Making progress in consumer protection by harmonising legislations, as well as integrating sustainability in tourism-related sectors, was also discussed (transport, waste treatment, water management, among others).



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A European Tourism Stakeholders Conference was held in Madrid this week prior to the informal meeting of Ministers. The conference explored ways and means to strengthen the visibility of tourism at a European level.

Various themes were discussed at the conference including innovation and competitiveness, sustainable and socially responsible tourism, as well as ways of reinforcing the image of Europe as a tourist destination.

The outcome of the Conference will pave the way for a coordinated and coherent approach on forthcoming initiatives on tourism policy to be undertaken at European level since it was taken into consideration by the Ministers when presenting the Madrid Declaration which will then be presented to the Commission.

More information on the European Commission's tourism policy:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/index_en.htm

...Commission

Resistance to Antibiotics

COM (2010) 141 - SECOND REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL ON THE BASIS OF MEMBER STATES' REPORTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION (2002/77/EC) ON THE PRUDENT USE OF ANTIMICROBIAL AGENTS IN HUMAN MEDICINE.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0141:FIN:EN:PDF>

In November 2001, the Council adopted a Recommendation on the prudent use of antibiotics in human medicine (2002/77/EC). The first report on the implementation of the Recommendation by Member States was issued in 2004. In August 2008, the Member States were once again asked to report to the Commission on the state of implementation as a contribution to the follow up of the Recommendation.

Based on the replies, this second Report summarises the main actions taken at Member State and at European Union level and compares the situation in 2008 with the situation in 2004. This report placed a strong emphasis on the use of indicators to follow up the implementation of the action plan. It also highlights in its conclusion the areas of the Recommendation needing further attention. It is accompanied by a Commission Staff Working Paper providing a more detailed technical analysis of the Member States' replies.



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€21 million for breast and kidney cancer research

The European Commission has earmarked €21 million for two new research projects on cancer, as part of an international research effort by the International Cancer Genome Consortium (ICGC). This research aims to elucidate comprehensively the changes in the human genome (the organism's hereditary information, including genes) present in many forms of cancer. Understanding these changes is paramount for advancing prevention, early detection, monitoring and treatment of the disease.

The two new projects, BASIS and CAGEKID, are expected to receive €10.5 million each from the EU and to involve 27 research institutes from 10 countries throughout Europe and the USA. They will focus on unlocking the genetic code of breast cancer (the most common class of cancer diagnosed in women worldwide with more than 1,000,000 cases diagnosed annually) and kidney cancer (of particular importance in Europe where the highest global incidence rates are observed).

This research approach will open the path to a more personalized medicine where the prescription for cancer treatment will be based on the genetic fingerprint of the tumour and the individual patient. To maximize the public benefit from the International Cancer Genome Consortium (ICGC) member research, the data obtained after examining over 10,000 cancer tumours will be made available to the entire research community as rapidly as possible.

ICGC was founded in 2007 to provide a forum for collaboration among the world's leading cancer and genomic researchers and help coordinate large-scale projects to understand the genomic changes involved in cancer.

More information:

www.icgc.org

http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/health_problems/cancer/index_en.htm

A 'Joint Programming Initiative' to boost research on Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases

Leading researchers from across Europe met in Stockholm to develop a European-wide research strategy to tackle neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease. Joint Programming Initiatives aim to confront these common challenges through publicly funded research, by bringing together researchers and existing research evidence by sharing resources more efficiently among Member States. Such efforts can make a substantial contribution to achieving the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, which focuses on research and innovation as the key means of delivering both improved quality of life and new sources of growth.

Tel. 2200 3300 Fax 2122 7580 Email: consult.meusac@gov.mt



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Neurodegenerative diseases are strongly linked to age and Europe has a rapidly ageing population. Currently, 16% of the European population is over 65, and this figure is expected to reach 25% by 2030. In 2006, it was estimated that neurodegenerative diseases cost European health services approximately €72 billion to treat.

Existing treatments for neurodegenerative diseases are limited, and mainly treat the symptoms, rather than addressing the cause. Alzheimer's disease is particularly expensive to manage due to its insidious onset, its ever-increasing levels of disability and the length of time over which the condition extends itself. The average duration of this disease is between 2 and 10 years, during which patients will require special care that is a significant burden for both caregivers and for society as a whole.

The ultimate goal of the Joint Programming Initiative on combating neurodegenerative diseases, in particular Alzheimer's Disease is to accelerate progress in understanding the causes of these conditions, leading to early diagnosis, the development of new treatments and prevention and the provision of more effective medical and social care to improve the quality of life for patients and care givers.

The European Commission will be supporting the work of the Initiative through coordinated action with an EU contribution of close to €2 million.

More details at:

<http://www.neurodegenerationresearch.eu/news/>

http://ec.europa.eu/health/major_chronic_diseases/diseases/alzheimer/index_en.htm

Monthly Labour Market Monitor April 2010



The labour market in the EU is continuing to deteriorate at a moderate pace, though more consistent signs of stabilisation in some Member States can be seen.

According to the latest Monthly Labour Market Monitor from the European Commission, rises in the unemployment rate eased in most EU countries, with only Latvia recording a steep increase, while the rate stabilised in several countries, including Germany and the UK.

As the economic recovery is still facing headwinds, latest forecasts suggest that the EU's labour market will just level off during 2010.

This month's edition of the Monitor focuses on recent developments in the ICT and retail sectors.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=113&newsId=751&furtherNews=yes>



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Health-EU Newsletter Issue 48

4th European Patients' Rights Day
18 April 2010



Other articles include:

A Eurobarometer survey on antimicrobial resistance.

A Special Eurobarometer Survey on Sport and Physical activity.

(These articles may be accessed through hyperlinks in the newsletter)

http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/newsletter/48/newsletter_en.htm

**An information session is being organised by
the Medicines Authority on the**

**Implementation of Legislation regarding
Herbal Medicinal Products**

Date: Thursday 29 April 2010

Time: 19.15hrs

Venue: The Palace Hotel, Sliema

Please confirm your attendance by Monday 26 April 2010 by sending an e-mail to herbals.adm@gov.mt

For more information visit: <http://www.medicinesauthority.gov.mt/herbalmeds.htm>