

## EU plans to develop a common tourism strategy

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 11 December, 2025



Dhaka: The European Parliament hosted the conference Sustainable Tourism: The Challenges of the Decade, organized by Portuguese MEP Sérgio Humberto, to address the future of tourism in Europe.

European Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, emphasized the sector's economic significance, noting a 50pc increase in tourism over the past 15 years.

Despite tourism contributing 10pc to Europe's GDP, Tzitzikostas highlighted the lack of a dedicated tourism portfolio in the European Commission, calling himself the first Commissioner for tourism.

Tzitzikostas outlined a European tourism strategy due in 2026, focusing on three priorities: maintaining Europe's position as the world's top tourist destination, ensuring local communities benefit from tourism, and transforming challenges into opportunities via innovation and

digitalization.

Portugal's Tourism Strategy 2035 aligns with these goals, aiming for sustainable growth, balanced territorial development, and climate action.

Key industry players, including Ryanair, ANA Aeroportos de Portugal, and HOTREC, also participated.

Ryanair's Steven Fitzgerald warned that the green transition could burden families and regional economies, calling for more European investment in sustainable aviation fuel.

ANA's Thierry Ligonnière highlighted the need for airport growth that aligns with sustainability, while HOTREC's Marta Machado stressed the importance of supporting small tourism businesses through better financing and regulations.

The conference stressed the need for a unified European tourism strategy to ensure that tourism remains a driver of economic prosperity while balancing sustainability and social responsibility.

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