

**EIC- European Interparliamentary Conference**  
*Challenges of sustainable tourism*  
*Promoting Cultural Heritage and Environmental protection*

**TALKING POINTS**

**Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- We are truly happy to be in this beautiful country, Croatia, the newest member of the EU family, and a close friend of Romania. We congratulate our hosts for organizing this inter-parliamentary conference under the EU flag.
- Although we represent here the Standing Committees for Economic Affairs of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies of Romania, let me assure you that the theme of this event is of utmost importance not only for these specialized parliamentary bodies, but in fact for all Romanian Senators and Deputies. We all come from constituencies with a certain touristic potential, and we are fully aware that tourism is a key-sector that can bring multiple benefits for the overall economic and social progress of our society.
- Romania has many natural resources offering as many opportunities for tourism. One priority area we are focusing on is the seaside, because, as you know, Romania, like Croatia, and other EU countries, has a seashore.
- But my country hosts something else, quite unique: the Danube Delta, the second largest and best preserved of the European deltas, with a natural biosphere reserve under UNESCO protection due to an outstanding biodiversity, the third largest in the world, with over 5,500 flora and fauna species.
- We are ready to expand cooperation with our European partners for the development of tourism in these regions, as well as in others, such as the Carpathian Mountains. And I should mention in this respect that Romania, as an active actor in developing the European tourism, is party to the Carpathian Convention and to its three Protocols on Tourism, Forest and Biodiversity.
- Cooperation is also key in developing the cruising tourism on the Danube River and the Black Sea. At the same time, we should capitalize more on the partnerships between our cities to develop the city-break type tourism, as well.
- Another area of interest is health tourism. Romania is promoting a

national touristic brand in this field and is making efforts to expand its infrastructure by developing a network of health parks offering diversified treatment procedures based on natural resources, complex wellness type services, and geriatric treatments using the original Romanian products.

**Dear colleagues,**

- Let me add a few words about the overall situation of tourism in my country.
- At present, Romania's tourism sector is growing (as shown by indicators such as the occupancy of accommodation capacities and the number of Romanian and foreign tourists). The challenge is how to best take advantage of this positive trend in order to obtain sustainable economic benefits.
- Our priority is to attract more European funds to develop tourism. To this end we are taking steps for improving the transparency of procedures, facilitating communication with potential beneficiaries, raising the quality of touristic services and infrastructure, and for providing an adequate training to those working in the tourism industry.
- We want Romania to become a competitive tourism destination at global level. From this perspective tourism is approached as a genuine ambassador of the country's main cultural and natural assets.
- Another aspect of interest is environmental protection, a *sine qua non* development principle to be promoted by and integrated in all sectoral policies, including tourism. Investments in tourism must be adapted to climate changes. This might generate increased costs, but longer term benefits for a healthy environment. Therefore, I believe that our cooperation should focus on increasing financial support, exchanges and technical cooperation in this field.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- Tourism should be approached as an engine of economic growth, which provides new jobs and produces gross domestic product.
- Although in Romania, we do not have yet a specific law on tourism, we have programs for the different categories of tourism. Tourism-related provisions are integrated in normative acts regulating environmental protection, transports, health, education and culture, small and medium enterprises, and taxation.

➤ We have also put in place a series of strategic documents which facilitate coordinated actions involving the various economic sectors, aimed at developing tourism in Romania by supporting and protecting the natural, cultural, archeological and industrial heritage.

➤ I will conclude by mentioning that just a few days ago, on 5 September, the Romanian Government issued for public debate and subsequent adoption the National Strategy for Competitiveness 2014-2020, which establishes 10 priority sectors to be promoted during the next financial period, one of them being tourism and eco-tourism.

Thank you for your kind attention.