

Dear Deputies,
Dear Presidents,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to thank you for your welcome and tell you how much I am pleased to attend this European Inter-parliamentary Conference.

Europe is the most visited destination in the world, we host nearly 60% of international tourism, so this is a major industry.

I am going to present you an overview of tourism sector in France in order to enhance our discussions.

France is the number one destination for tourists in the world but comes only third in terms of revenue produced by tourism. Therefore, tourism is a vital sector of our economy since it represents about 8% of our GDP and more than 2 million direct and indirect jobs distributed mainly in small and medium enterprises. France attracts a huge number of foreign visitors: 84 million in 2013, mostly Europeans, and our goal is to reach at least 100 million by 2020. The attractiveness of France is mainly due to the diversity and quality of its tourism offer, such as 38 sites listed on the World Heritage Site by UNESCO and its highly developed accommodation and transport infrastructures. But tourism is a sector that is constantly evolving as demand evolves.

That is why, on June 19th, the Minister for Tourism, Fleur Pellerin, presented the government's strategy for tourism for years to come.

We have focused our efforts on training, quality of reception. We have placed digital development at the center of our tourism strategy and mobilized 15 million € investment for the future of the sector. The Louvre museum, the Chateau de Versailles and the Eiffel Tower are among the most visited sites in France, with Disneyland. But these sites are all located in Paris's area. Indeed, many tourists are coming to Paris, but do not take time to visit the wealth offered by our regions or they used to remain there too short time. That is why we strive to also develop the tourism attractiveness of our countries through, among others, the establishment of five centers of excellence: gastronomy and oenology, mountain and sports, ecotourism, skills (handicrafts and luxury) and nocturnal urban tourism; but also through a regional brand strategy.

So, our challenge now is to continue to offer the world the unique artistic, cultural, historic and landscape treasures of France, while preserving the quality of our offer ... As we already talked about it, tourism also generates significant environmental impacts such as transport, energy or waste flows. Exercise is sometimes difficult, but even more important, in the most vulnerable areas. I am referring as an exemple to the littoral tourism, fragile area that should be preserved of too impactful seasonal flows.

As for sustainable tourism that affects all of us, the French government has included it among its priorities in order to preserve our territories. This concept intends to *"conciliate economic objectives of tourism development with the maintenance of the database resources necessary for its existence. More precisely, it is tourism that ensures an economic development more sustainable in the long run, both respectful of environmental and socio-cultural resources and respectful of men, visitors, employees and host populations sector"*. This is the challenge of the future for our tourist destinations.