

# EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS COULD EARN 114 BILLION EUROS WITH A NEW VISA POLICY



The European Travel Commission (ETC) wants to change the current visa policy in order to target distant markets, which could bring more money. With a new visa policy, the European destinations could reap 114 billion euros from export revenue by 2020.

The European Travel Commission (ETC) wants to speed up the process of relaxing the visa requirement for recreational and leisure travelers. The organization responsible for promoting European destinations, quotes **benefits for the European economy of around 114 billion euros in export revenues and the creation of 615,000 new jobs by 2020.**

Peter De Wilde, Chairman of the ETC, stated: "Europe is losing market shares in terms of world tourism (...) Liberalization is essential to maximize the benefits that can be taken from the growth of tourism on a global scale."

The measures are supported by the World Travel & Tourism Council that recommended governments to adopt facilitation of visa acquisition in a proactive way. However, European visa policy is among the most restrictive in the world. 56% of visitors from non-European markets in 2014 needed a visa. Currently ETC plans to focus on visitors from distant foreign destinations who travel longer and spend more.

According to Mark Henry, the vice president and coordinator of the defense speech activities related to visas from the ETC, there are three possible scenarios. The first one is to adopt "best practices" in order to facilitate administrative formalities for tourists, such as the implementation of simplified visa application processes, reduced costs and longer lengths of stay.

The second one is to introduce new types of visas, particularly electronic visas and visas issued on arrival. The third one is to increase the number of countries that are "exempted from having a visa."

According to Tourism Economics, to reform the visa policy in order to adopt the "best practices" for the ten major European priority markets that are limited by visas, **would bring an additional 3.4 million arrivals per year. This would generate 18.3 billion euros in related expenses by 2020 and 95.000 new jobs.**

The introduction of new types of visa (eVisa or visa issued upon arrival) would allow the arrival of 8.5 million visitors per year, which would represent 45 billion euros in related expenses and more than 200.000 extra jobs created.

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