



IP(86)601

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ΑΝΑΚΟΙΝΩΣΗ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΝ ΤΥΠΟ • INFORMAZIONE ALLA STAMPA • MEDEDELING AAN DE PERS**

Brussels, 5 December 1986

COMMUNITY TOURISM CAMPAIGN IN THE UNITED STATES

For the first time the Community will advertise tourism for its Member countries in the American market or indeed in any market. A large advertisement with the title "There's no place like Europe", pictures of European culture, sport, countryside and gastronomic life, the emblem of the European Community and addresses of the Twelve National Tourist Offices in the United States, will appear on Sunday 7th December in the New York Times, Boston Globe, Washington Post, Philadelphia Enquirer, Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times and San Francisco Examiner/Chronicle.

This action is a response to a dramatic drop in American tourism to Europe this year as a consequence of terrorist incidents, the fall-out of the Chernobyl accident and the very substantial fall in the value of the U.S. dollar. The highlighting of these factors in the American media and concurrent promotion of "safe destinations" within the United States, Canada, Alaska or the Carribean, have caused a drop, for the first eight months of the year, of some 30 % American visitors in the United Kingdom and Spain, over 33 % in Italy and France and more than 60 % in Greece. The estimated loss of revenue for European countries from this withdrawal of American tourists is estimated at between 2 and 3 Billion U.S. dollars.

As alarming reports in the media of the drop of American arrivals in Europe started to arrive at the Commission earlier this year, President Delors and the Commissioner responsible for Tourism, Mr. Ripa di Meana, requested the President-in-exercise of the Council to convene a meeting of the Tourism Ministers of the Twelve, in order to examine this problem as well as the Communication and proposals of the Commission on Community action in the field of tourism. Such a Council has not yet been convened but the Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers discussed briefly the effects of terrorism on tourism last June, heard a report of Mr. Ripa di Meana on the expected damage to tourism this year and agreed that certain actions, particularly in the information field were needed.

Under the impetus of Mr. Ripa di Meana, the Commission's specialised Service on Tourism then approached the European Travel Commission, the organisation having a long tradition of promotion of Western European tourism in third countries. It was agreed that the two institutions join their efforts in a publicity campaign in order to reverse the trend in the United States, already this autumn. The Twelve National Tourist Organisations of the EEC countries and the European Parliament, which has provided the budget necessary for actions in the field of tourism, welcomed this initiative. The Commission intends to continue its efforts with the objective of a return to a normal high season in 1987.