“Policy discussion on the recovery of the tourism sector in Europe”

**Concept Note**

**Introduction**

Tourism has been one of the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting economies, livelihoods, public services and opportunities. It was a major shock for the European economies and an emergency for the most vulnerable people across the region.

Yet, the must also be an opportunity to rethink how tourism interacts with our societies, other economic sectors and our natural resources and ecosystems; to measure and manage it better; to ensure a fair distribution of its benefits and to advance the transition towards a carbon neutral and resilient tourism economy.

Rising vaccination rates and extended use of the European Digital Certificate combined with the easing of travel restrictions in Europe, have all helped release pent-up demand in 2021. Europe saw the strongest results by region in 2021 relative to 2020 with arrivals up 19% or 44 million more (281 million international arrivals), on the back of robust results recorded in the summer season and the last quarter of 2021. This trend has strongly consolidated in 2022.

Despite the visible improvement, major downside risks threaten the European recovery including the military offensive of the Russian Federation on Ukraine, the high energy prices and rising inflation call all disrupt a still slow and uneven pace of recovery.
Aim of the Policy Discussion

With this backdrop, item 7 of the 67th Commission for Europe’s provisional agenda is aiming to give members the opportunity to update each other on their tourism recovery efforts, share their experiences and best practices regarding the policies that have helped them to restart well as their complex challenges in accelerating recovery.

Discussion points will thus focus on the following:

- Short term prospects for tourism recovery in their country/in the region
- Highlights of members’ tourism recovery efforts and lessons learned
- Challenges being faced in members’ efforts to accelerate recovery and the ways forward

The Policy Discussion will be structured as an interactive debate moderated by Prof. Alessandra Priante, Regional Director for Europe and Ms. Sandra Carvão, Chief, Market Intelligence and Competitiveness, UNWTO.

Speakers are not expected to make formal presentations or to use PowerPoint slides and kindly invited to keep their interventions within the max 3-5 minutes time limit.

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