

## **Tourism in the EU**

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, tourism is characterised by one of the highest markers of world economic growth (over the course of the last four decades it on average amounted either to 7%, as based on the number of tourists visiting particular countries, or to 12%, as based on the countries' generated revenues).

Since the beginning of the activities centered on establishing the EU internal market, it has been constantly emphasised in the EU documents that the tourist industry plays a vital role in the economies of the member states. Even during the times of economic recession, a stable 3-4% rise has been observed. The growth of tourism positively influences money balance and gross domestic product, as well as it decreases the rate of unemployment, especially in the less economically developed regions.

As evidenced by the current statistics, the prospects for the development of tourism in the EU are bright, which is the consequence of the growing demand for tourism-centred services, the widening of the array of the afore-mentioned services, active involvement in the creation of novel tourist products as well as supporting EU enterprises, including the ones of the tourist branch.

Major challenges facing tourism economy have not changed since the early 1990s. It is still essential to ensure the highest quality of services available to clients, to include the interests of the tourist industry in programmes concerning other branches and sectors of the EU economy, to resist seasonality, to minimise the clients' risk and maximise their security, and, finally, to customise the EU tourist services, making them adaptable to fluid globalised markets and subsequent competitiveness.

The most notable EU documents regarding the development of the tourist industry include: *Plan Działań na Rzecz Turystyki* (1992), *Zielona Księga Turystyki* (1995), *Philoxenia 1997-2000* (1996), *Agenda XXI na Rzecz Zrównoważonej i Konkurencyjnej Turystyki Europejskiej* (2007).

At present the public debate in the EU focuses primarily on the ways of supporting the balanced growth of tourism, however, the issues concerning the division of competence between the EU institutions and the member states themselves are still of topical importance.

