

Mr. Raffaele Fitto

Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms

Mr. Apostolos Tzitzikostas

Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism

Brussels

July 23, 2026

Honorable Executive Vice-President Fitto,

Honorable Commissioner Tzitzikostas,

Today the European Union is facing multiple challenges in an increasingly changing environment shaped by the developments that we never thought of experiencing in the twenty-first century. In response, the European Union is undertaking significant efforts to adapt to the new security realities and to keep up with the global competition. The EU's Multiannual Financial Framework is at the center of all these policy discussions and will play an important role in shaping our Union's future.

At this time of uncertainty for our citizens, particular attention should be given to the tourism sector that is facing serious challenges. As ministers responsible for tourism, we highly appreciate the efforts of the Cypriot Presidency and Commissioner Tzitzikostas for placing tourism high on the political agenda and for facilitating the discussions held during the May COMPET Council.

As highlighted during the discussions in the framework of the May COMPET Council, geopolitical developments and security concerns have had a significant impact on tourism in the eastern border regions of our countries. Tourism flows have declined considerably in most of these regions. Moreover, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are facing reduced investor confidence, increased operational uncertainty and limited access to finance at a time when seasonal revenues are crucial for their year-round viability.

As stated during the Europe day celebrations in Alexandroupoli this year, the heart of Europe beats in all corners of the European Union. The Commission Communication "Strong regions for a safe Europe" clearly proves it. We therefore welcome the Commission's commitment to *address the key challenges facing tourism in the eastern border regions in the upcoming EU strategy for sustainable tourism*.

In this context, we look forward to the measures that the Commission will present for eastern border regions in EU strategy for sustainable tourism. We encourage targeted actions to strengthen the resilience and competitiveness of SMEs and tourist destinations, improve connectivity, enhance resilience, and restore confidence in the region.

We stand ready to engage in a constructive dialogue and contribute to the development of this important upcoming Strategy that will shape the future of the EU's tourism sector, and we remain committed to working together with the Commission to build a resilient, competitive and sustainable tourism sector across all regions of the European Union.



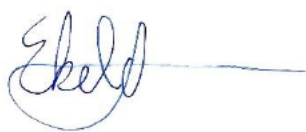
Mr. Viktors Valainis

Minister of Economics of the
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Dr. Ilin Dimitrov

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Mr. Erkki Keldo

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Mr. Edvinas Grikšas

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Mr. Ireneusz Raś

Secretary of State at the Ministry of Sport
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Mr. Ambrozie-Irineu Darău

Minister of Economy, Digitalization,
Entrepreneurship and Tourism of Romania



Ms. Jana Štilichová

The State Secretary for Tourism
on behalf of Mr. Rudolf Huliak,
the Minister of Tourism and Sports
of the Slovak Republic