

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ETC, IGLTA and VISITFLANDERS explore the potential of LGBTQ travel in Europe

Educational Forum on LGBTQ Tourism to take place in Brussels on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018

*Brussels, 11 June 2018* – On 21 June 2018, the European Travel Commission (ETC), the Flemish tourist board VISITFLANDERS and the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) will host an Educational Forum on LGBTQ Tourism in Europe. The event aims at advancing knowledge on LGBTQ tourism in Europe, discussing the status quo of Europe as a safe and welcoming destination for LGBTQ tourists, investigating new ways to strengthen the region's attractiveness as a LGBTQ-friendly destination, and understanding the future evolution of LGBTQ travel.

By recognizing the economic and social significance of LGBTQ tourism, tourism businesses and destinations can become a catalyst of change in advancing and tackling social and civil issues of the LGBTQ community and improving the lives of LGBTQ residents and travellers in Europe. The forum will create a space to share knowledge and best practices and to increase social responsibility in the sector; it will provide destinations and businesses with insights and tools to understand and cater for LGBTQ travellers, to build inclusive offers that respond to the true diversity of the segment, and to become ambassadors for human rights and promoters of inclusive policy development.

The discussion will be supported by the new ETC and IGLTA Foundation joint research project on LGBTQ tourism in Europe, which focuses on the current state, prospects and opportunities of LGBTQ tourism in Europe, in view of worldwide trends and expected evolution. Findings from the report will be presented during the conference by its author, Peter Jordan. The report results will provide a framework and support for the forum conversation.

The Forum will take place at the Hilton Brussels Grand Place and will be hosted by Robert Davershot. The event will gather tourism businesses, destination tourism boards on national, regional and local levels, leading global organisations, human rights NGOs and EU policy makers. Speakers include ETC President and VISITFLANDERS CEO Peter De Wilde, Piet De Bruyn, the Council of Europe; Thomas Bachinger, Vienna Tourism Board; Matěj Valencic, Pink Week Slovenia; and Mateo Asensio, Turisme de Barcelona, among others.

The program will continue the day after, 22 June, with a technical visit that will provide insight on the current and prospective tourist offerings dedicated to LGBTQ tourists in Brussels. A guided tour of downtown Brussels and the Rainbow Village will finish with a light lunch at Mothers and Daughters pop-up lesbian bar in the city centre.

Registration is free of charge and open to all at

<http://www.etc-corporate.org/events/educational-forum-on-lgbtq-tourism>

ENDS

### Note to editors

#### **About the European Travel Commission**

The European Travel Commission (ETC) is the non-profit organisation responsible for the promotion of European tourism in long-haul markets. For 70 years, the ETC has been a state-of-the-art unique association in the public sector, and it is now representing 33 members National Tourism Organisations in Europe. In accordance with its mission to strengthen the sustainable development of Europe as a tourist destination, ETC works in areas of advocacy, best practice, market intelligence sharing, and promotion, with the long-term aspiration of setting up a new unique forum in which public and private tourism stakeholders can cooperate to create benefits and eliminate disadvantages for the travel industry in Europe. For more information: [www.etc-corporate.org](http://www.etc-corporate.org) and follow us on Twitter @ETC\_Corporate and LinkedIn European Travel Commission

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### About IGLTA & the IGLTA Foundation

The International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) is the world's leading global travel network dedicated to connecting and educating LGBTQ travelers and the businesses that welcome and support them. The mission of IGLTA is to provide information and resources for LGBTQ travelers and expand LGBTQ tourism globally by demonstrating its significant social and economic impact. IGLTA member businesses represent all travel sectors and are located in more than 80 countries. The IGLTA Foundation supports the mission of IGLTA and its membership with a focus on education, research and developing future leaders in LGBTQ tourism. For more information: [iglta.org](http://iglta.org) or [iglta.org/foundation](http://iglta.org/foundation) and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @iglta.

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### About VISITFLANDERS

VISITFLANDERS is an internal independent agency of the Flemish government and a part of the policy area 'Foreign Affairs'; it falls under the competence of the Flemish minister for Tourism. VISITFLANDERS invests in the sustainable development and promotion of Flanders and Brussels as a top tourist destination and stimulates the professionalisation of the tourist sector in order to guarantee all visitors a qualitative offer and experience. Visit Flanders Convention Bureau is the official convention bureau promoting the destination for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Congresses and Events) and assists meeting professionals in finding the right local partners and industry suppliers for their events and congresses.

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