

Paris April 7, 2026,

Dear Executive Vice-President Fitto,
Dear Commissioner Tzitzikostas,

Ahead of the adoption of the European Strategy for Sustainable Tourism, we would like to share the perspective of HomeExchange, the world's leading home-swapping community. Founded in the 1990s, HomeExchange today connects more than 280,000 members across 155 countries and offers a **community-based way to travel**.

HomeExchange enables people to exchange their homes for holidays **without any monetary transaction**. Travel is based on reciprocity and a flat annual membership fee, rather than rental income. Every member who wants to go somewhere also needs to offer their home to a stranger, creating a true community. As a result, the vast majority of homes on the platform, around 83%, are primary residences, meaning that **homes remain part of the residential housing** stock and are not removed from the long-term rental market.

At a time when European destinations are striving to balance tourism growth with the well-being of local communities, we believe that home exchange offers a practical and positive contribution to the EU's sustainable tourism objectives. On average, an overnight stay in a HomeExchange home generates 49%¹ fewer emissions than a stay in a hotel or short-term rental.

By relying on existing housing rather than purpose-built tourist accommodation, this model avoids adding pressure on local housing markets. It also encourages **longer stays, supports travel to less-visited areas, and fosters deeper engagement with local communities**.

For many families, it provides **an affordable way to travel** while promoting cultural exchange and mutual trust. Indeed, 18% of our members say they would not have been able to travel without our platform.

For these reasons, we respectfully encourage the Commission to acknowledge non-commercial platforms such as HomeExchange as a distinct and positive model within the upcoming Strategy for Sustainable Tourism. Clear recognition of such community-based approaches would support the EU's broader objectives of sustainable mobility, territorial cohesion, and socially inclusive tourism.

In addition, we would welcome the Strategy shedding light on the policy direction regarding the **forthcoming initiative on Short-Term Rentals**. In this context, it will be essential **to clearly differentiate non-commercial platforms such as HomeExchange from monetised short-term rental activities**. While both involve temporary stays, the underlying dynamics and impacts on housing markets are fundamentally different.

¹ Number from our carbon footprint study:
<https://www.homeexchange.com/p/homeexchange-carbon-impact-study>



Providing clarity on this distinction would ensure that future EU measures effectively address housing pressures linked to commercial short-term rentals while safeguarding sustainable, community-based travel models that align with Europe's policy objectives.

We would be pleased to contribute further to the Commission's work on sustainable tourism and remain at your disposal for any additional information.

Emmanuel Arnaud
Co-CEO

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'E. Arnaud', written in a cursive style.