



European Trade Union Charter on Tourism

The **European Trade Union Liaison Committee on Tourism, ETLC**, is a cooperation platform of the European Trade Union Federations **EFFAT**, **ETF** and **UNI Europa**, and the Global Union Federations **IUF**, **ITF** and **UNI**, representing workers in the various tourism sub-sectors, such as hotels, restaurants, catering, transport, travel agencies, tour operators, leisure parks, tourist offices, tourist guides, etc.

The trade union federations represent and support the interests of the workers in their sectors vis-à-vis institutions, transnational companies and employers' associations, at the respective level of their responsibility and in cooperation with their affiliates.

The ETLC identified the main challenges for the tourism sector and agreed to jointly pursue the objectives laid down in this Charter.

1. Quality employment

Tourism workers need stable jobs with foreseeable working time schedules, allowing them to combine professional and private/family life, providing them with income families can live on and adequate social protection, i.e. 'decent work'. They also need to get qualifications and acquired skills recognised and rewarded, and to find career paths in the sector.

The ETLC underscores that employment in tourism has to be made more sustainable, by reducing the precariousness of employment and by improving the social conditions through collective bargaining at the various levels. Tourism has to be an attractive sector to work in, with income levels and working conditions at least similar to those of other economic sectors. This includes the combat of all forms of undeclared work.

The ETLC supports measures for the extension of the holiday periods, e.g. by a better staggering of school holidays, making tourism available to more people, guaranteeing workers a re-employment in successive seasons or training workers in the inter-season, which are examples showing how employment in tourism can be made more sustainable.

2. Workers' and trade union rights

The ETLC will assure that tourism companies comply with the principles and rights as defined by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ILO Conventions, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the UNWTO Code of Ethics, the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights, the European social legislation, and respect fundamental human rights and workers' and trade union rights at the workplace, such as the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. This also includes workers' rights to information and consultation within the company, such as laid down in the European Works Council Directive. Trade unions will also assure that companies facilitate the fullest access to these rights for workers throughout their operations.

3. Social dialogue

Employment related challenges and problems have to be dealt with at the most appropriate level, by those who through their investment and through their daily work provide tourism services, i.e. in the social dialogue between employers and workers and their representative organisations, at local, national, European or global level. Here, tailor-made solutions to jointly identified problems can be found, agreements concluded and implemented. This includes e.g. collective bargaining, information and consultation in European Works Councils, sectoral social dialogue, negotiation of global framework agreements, etc.

The ETLC demands the establishment of a Social Dialogue Committee for the tourism sector and calls upon the European Commission to take all pertinent initiatives to ensure that all relevant social counterparts take part in such a dialogue.



4. Mobility and migration

Tourism is a sector with a high percentage of migrant workers and cross-border vocational mobility. The ETLC declares that the right of workers to free movement shall not result in social dumping and unfair competition. Workers who work in another country have to be entitled to working conditions and social protection at least equivalent to those of workers of the host country, as laid down in laws and collective agreements. All workers working at a certain location have to be treated equally, and migrant workers shall not be discriminated against. Specific arrangements including training, housing, etc. aimed at integrating migrant workers in receiving countries should be negotiated between employers and trade unions.

5. Outsourcing and subcontracting

Transport and tourism companies are increasingly outsourcing parts of their businesses to external service providers, e.g. airlines: ground handling and catering; hotels: cleaning and maintenance; tour operators: booking as well as recruitment and allocation of staff for the destinations.

The ETLC claims that such outsourcing must not serve the goal of reducing wages and undermining collective agreements. Companies have to guarantee that all their service providers and suppliers respect workers' and trade union rights, and adhere to legal and collectively agreed obligations, including those covering transferred staff. Trade unions and workers' representatives shall be informed and consulted on all subcontracting measures, and must have the right to intervene in case of workplace related or social problems with subcontracting companies or suppliers.

6. Restructuring

The ETLC underlines that workers and their representatives shall be regularly kept aware of the situation of the companies they are working for. Trade unions have to be informed and consulted on planned restructuring measures in due time. The objective should be to avoid negative consequences of such restructuring on employment and working conditions. Agreements on conditions and consequences of restructuring should be negotiated between companies and trade unions at every relevant level including European/global level.

This is of particular importance in periods of economic recession. Such periods should not be used to cut back employment or to undermine social achievements, but rather to renew and up skill the tourism sector, e.g. by training workers during periods of reduced working time (which could also be a model to overcome the disadvantages of seasonality) or by investments in infrastructure and renovation, to make sure that tourism is even more competitive in times of recovery. Any state subsidy for tourism companies in restructuring should be granted on the condition of social commitment to maintaining jobs and promoting employment.

7. Capital investment in tourism

Tourism companies are increasingly subject to take-over or buy-in by investment capital (private equity funds, hedge funds, real estate investment trusts, etc.).

The ETLC alleges that before the entry of investment capital in a company, workers have to have the right to information and consultation. Changes in companies' structures and policies following the entry of investment capital have to be subject to information and consultation of the workers' representative bodies at the appropriate levels. New structures of involvement are necessary to give trade unions access to the management of capital investment companies.

The global financial crisis underlined the urgent need for stricter legislation and tighter rules in order to control private equity and to make their transactions more transparent, as trade unions have been claiming for a long time.

8. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

The ETLC calls upon tourism companies to promote equal opportunities, and to work against all types of discrimination because of gender, age, ethnic or national origin, colour, disability, trade union or political affiliation, religion, sexual orientation or other distinguishing characteristics.

Companies shall in cooperation with trade unions develop explicit policies to assure equal treatment of women and men in hiring, salary, promotion, training or termination of contract, and a better reconciliation of private/family life and work.



9. Social responsibility of companies

Companies are not only responsible for their products and services, but also for the conditions under which these are produced. Corporate Social Responsibility implies the adherence to existing legal obligations at international, national and local level (see point 2), and the will to go beyond obligatory legal and contractual requirements.

Tourism companies can make a contribution to sustainable development by making social and environmental concerns an integral part of their management. This involves adhering to fundamental employment and environmental standards, and regular reporting on the way how these are being put into practice, as well as undertaking measures going beyond legal and contractual obligations.

The ETLC underlines that companies only do genuine justice to their social responsibility when they involve trade unions and workers' representatives in the planning, implementation and evaluation of such measures.

10. Sustainable tourism

The ETLC emphasizes that the sustainable development of tourism can only be achieved when – alongside the economic aspects and the protection of environment and cultural heritage – the social dimension is taken into account. This means first of all the need to create sustainable employment in the tourism sector, as the quality of services depends largely on employment conditions, qualification of workers and workers' motivation. Furthermore, for the sustainable development of tourism also a fair distribution of revenues from tourism activities between sender countries and host communities in the destinations is needed.

The vicious circle of 'cheap bargain' travel and tourism has to be stopped, as it undermines the viability of transport and tourism businesses, cuts profit margins, has negative effects on employment and eliminates financial room for manoeuvre to offer socially responsible and environmentally sustainable tourism. With a view on the impact of tourism on the environment and the consequences of the climate change on tourism, new approaches must be taken to make tourists aware that sustainable tourism offering high-quality services has its price.

11. Impact assessment

The ETLC advocates that impact assessments are carried out for all policies and initiatives in the field of tourism at European level. These assessments shall particularly examine the potential effects such policies and initiatives could have on employment and social conditions in the tourism sector. The social partners have to be involved in this process.

12. Observatory

The ETLC proposes the establishment of a European social observatory on tourism, with full involvement of the social partners, to facilitate the monitoring of developments in the tourism sector and the assessment of the social sustainability of the tourism industry.

13. Public funding

The ETLC proclaims that any public subsidy to tourism projects or tourism companies shall be closely tied to the full respect of social standards and labour legislation. Support shall be provided only to initiatives that make an explicit contribution to the creation of sustainable jobs, improve the living and working conditions of workers and their qualification, and include the participation of workers and their representatives. In this respect, social counterparts including the ETLC on the trade union side should be regularly informed and consulted on projects supported by public funding at European and national level.

14. Cooperation with institutions and organisations

To pursue the above mentioned objectives, the ETLC will continue to cooperate with institutions and organisations operating or having responsibilities in the field of tourism, e.g. governments, international or European institutions, universities or research institutes, NGOs, etc.



Our demands

The ETLC calls upon employers in the tourism sector to:

- facilitate the fullest access of tourism workers to workers' and trade union rights at the workplace, such as the freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining and the right to information and consultation
- fully comply with the principles and rights as defined by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ILO Conventions, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the UNWTO Code of Ethics, the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights, the European social legislation, etc.
- strive for making tourism an attractive sector to work in, and create permanent and sustainable employment in the sector
- apply the principle of equal treatment, i.e. ensure that all workers at a certain location get equal pay and equal working conditions for equal work, as laid down in laws and collective agreements
- negotiate all outsourcing or subcontracting plans with trade unions/works councils, monitor compliance of suppliers and sub-contractors with laws and collective agreements, and inform and consult properly on all restructuring plans
- pursue constructive industrial relations and social dialogue with trade unions at all appropriate levels, establish a social dialogue committee for the tourism sector at European level, and negotiate global framework agreements

The ETLC calls upon political actors in charge of tourism at national, regional and European levels to:

- support the creation of permanent and sustainable employment in tourism and the establishment of instruments to monitor the development of employment in the sector
- engage in targeted promotion of economically, environmentally and socially sustainable tourism, and promote consumer awareness that high-quality tourism services have their price
- safeguard and extend social achievements such as the right to paid holiday and regulation of working time, since these are basic preconditions for tourism
- give social partners a key role in shaping tourism policies
- grant public funding only if workers' rights are respected and sustainable tourism is pursued

The ETLC calls upon tourists / consumers to:

- consider social, environmental and economic impacts in their choice for travel and destinations, before making a decision, and to opt for activities that promote sustainable tourism, reduce their carbon footprint and contribute to sustainable employment and the preservation of natural and cultural heritage

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