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Articles of your interest

GENERAL POLICY ISSUES

Interview of Mr. Carlo Corazza, Head of Unit F4- Tourism, Textile, Emerging and Creating Industries. DG Grow – European Commission



Mr. Carlo Corazza is Head of Unit of Tourism, Emerging and Creative Industries at DG GROW from the European Commission. Since he was appointed Head of Unit, Mr. Corazza has participated to different meetings organised and hosted by HOTREC, amongst which the joint HOTREC-UEAPME Conference of 15 September on "unlocking SMEs' potential for jobs creation and growth: the digital challenges".

Mr. Carlo Corazza will also participate as a key note speaker to the next HOTREC General Assembly to be held in The Hague on 5 and 6 November 2015.

HOTREC asked Mr. Carlo Corazza to share his views on the mid-term Commission priorities for the tourism sector.

1. Could you please list and briefly describe the Commission priorities for the tourism sector for the coming years? What are your views on the role that HOTREC can play, together with the Tourism Unit, to develop the Commission policy actions for this sector?

Tourism is a key contributor to President Juncker's priority of creating more jobs and growth. In fact 25 million jobs and 10% of the EU GDP are directly or indirectly related to this sector, which has a huge impact also on construction, transport, agro food, fashion, cultural and creative industries or retail. In 2030 the number of global international arrivals will double, reaching 2 billion. This represents huge opportunities that Europe, as number one tourism destination of the world, cannot miss.

The Commission's tourism policy is very ambitious. The 2010 Communication outlined a very comprehensive set of actions aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of the sector.

Our primary objective is to support the efforts of the industry to respond to the main challenges that it faces. Europe should compete on quality and be capable to attract a larger share of international tourists, in particular from new emerging markets.

To this aim, it is essential to improve the business environment and access to finance, particularly for micro enterprises, also through a better use of the Structural Funds. We should also take full advantage of the digital revolution which is changing consumer behaviour and business models. Improving skills, in particular digital skills, as well as training mobility, are also priorities. Finally we need to enhance the visibility and promotion of Europe as a unique tourism destination through joint promotional actions and partnerships between private and public stakeholders.

HOTREC, as one of the main representatives of the EU tourism industry, plays a fundamental role in fulfilling the above mentioned priorities. In particular, it contributes to the development of a meaningful tourism policy at EU and national level, supporting the efforts to mainstream the interest of the sector in other policies. Moreover it helps the industry, including micro enterprises, to make their voice heard in EU and national policy making.

At the same time, it has the power, also in cooperation with other representatives of the sector, to reach out to the EU tourism business. HOTREC is therefore a relevant ally to support the implementation of several Commission actions, such as upgrading of skills and training mobility, joint promotion or digitalisation.

2. On 15 September 2015 you participated to the joint HOTREC-UEAPME conference untitled "unlocking SMEs' potential for jobs creation and growth: the digital challenges". Can you tell us how does the Commission intend to help the tourism sector overcoming these digital challenges faced by tourism SMEs?

Digitalisation is at the heart of the competitiveness of the EU tourism industry. We also share your views that it has a huge potential to boost economic growth and job creation.

The Commission has already implemented a number of initiatives to improve the uptake of digitalisation, in particular by SMEs. Just to mention a few, we created the Tourism Business Portal, which helps tourism SMEs with useful information, tutorials and tools about setting-up, managing and promoting their business. We supported the creation of a B2B platform called Tourism Link, which enables the integration of tourism SMEs into global distribution value chains to which HOTREC also contributed.

We organised several YouTube live events on digital tourism. Our focus was to improve the entrepreneurs' awareness

about the opportunities offered by online marketing, in particular on social media. We will continue to produce further webinars on various digital and e-management skills.

We also launched a dedicated Digital Tourism Network, which offers all the sector representatives, both digital and traditional ones, an opportunity to discuss about common and specific issues in tourism digitalisation.

Within the framework of the Digital Tourism Network we are now looking at mapping the state-of play, challenges and opportunities of digitalisation in EU tourism. The final aim is to see whether policy actions are necessary. HOTREC has already contributed to the success of the first meeting and is also supporting the Commission in the ongoing mapping exercise.

3. One of the biggest digital challenges faced by the tourism sector is the development of accommodation services offered on a commercial basis through "sharing economy" platforms which directly competes with the hospitality industry, but which does not apply the same tax, security and safety legislation. As Head of the unit dealing with Tourism in the European Commission, how do you think this issue should be addressed? Should a level playing field be provided?

Indeed, as you mentioned at the beginning, we have already had a few exchanges at various meetings. The Commission is therefore well aware of the difficulties the traditional tourism industry faces vis-à-vis the sharing economy. DG GROW has established a dedicated Task Force, which looks at sharing economy and its impacts across a series of sectors. This Task Force, in which my unit represents the tourism industry's interests, is currently working on the analysis of the sharing economy market and the regulatory and administrative measures put in place by certain Member States and regions.

The Commission is therefore appraising the possible need for policy actions, so that all tourism actors, both traditional and new business models could compete at a level playing field. At the same time it is important that public and consumer interests are also taken into account. Therefore DG GROW works in close cooperation with other relevant services of the Commission, such as, for example, the Directorates-General responsible for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE), Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) and Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT).

However, it is important to underline that there is a limit to what the Commission can do. The industry should also take its own initiative to find a way to work together with the actors of sharing economy and seek possible self-regulatory solutions. I would like to applaud HOTREC for opening the dialogue, in partnership with UEAPME, at the recent conference on digitalisation. I encourage you to pursue further this line of action in the spirit of open communication between market players.

Unlocking SMEs' potential for jobs creation and growth: the digital challenge



On 15 September 2015, HOTREC and UEAPME jointly organised a high-level event entitled "Unlocking SMEs' potential for jobs creation and growth: the digital challenge". The event, which was co-hosted by MEP Othmar Karas (EPP, Austria), chair of the European Parliament SME intergroup, and MEP Claudia Tapardel (S&D, Romania), co-chair of the European Parliament Tourism intergroup, was articulated around two main panels: "Promoting fair competition and practices on the online market" and "Boosting SMEs' presence on the digital value chain and embracing digital opportunities".

The event was well attended and saw the participation of various high-level speakers, such as:

- MEP Eva Paunova (EPP, Bulgaria)
- MEP Claudia Monteiro de Aguiar (EPP, Portugal)
- Ms. Anna Herold (Member of the cabinet of Commissioner Oettinger)
- Ms. Kristin Schreiber (Director for the COSME Programme, DG Grow, European Commission)
- Mr. Carlo Corazza (Head of Unit Tourism, Emerging and Creative Industries, DG Grow, European Commission)
- Dr. Euro Beinart (Professor, University of Salzburg)
- Mr. Patrice Chazerand (Director of the Digital Economy, DigitalEurope)
- Mr. Michel de Blust (Secretary General, ECTAA).

Most speakers and participants agreed on the need to allow SMEs to benefit from fair competition and practices on the online market, and that the dominance of some major online players was creating difficulties, as a result of a major power asymmetry. The sharing economy was also a major source of discussion, and participants broadly agreed on the need to ensure a level playing field, while at the same time re-assessing the fitness of some regulation affecting the hospitality sector, in order to allow innovation to thrive.

Finally, participants agreed that SMEs' challenges are not limited to the framework in which digital markets operate. Indeed, SMEs should aim at increasing their visibility online, embracing new technologies and benefit from the necessary public

support, training and funding, when necessary, as this is part of unlocking SMEs potential for jobs creation and growth.

The press release which followed the event is available here: [link](#)

HOTREC meets the Minister of Tourism of Bulgaria to discuss how to develop the competitiveness of the European Union vis a vis the rest of the world



At the kind invitation of the Ministry of Tourism of Bulgaria, HOTREC CEO, Christian de Barrin, and HOTREC Public Affairs Manager, Isabel Sobrino, met Ms. Nikolina Angelkova, Minister of Tourism and MEP Andrey Novakov on Wednesday 30 September, together with their advisers.

The Minister presented her key priorities such as the adoption of the visa package, the access to finances for SMEs, as well as the development of a voluntary quality label in Bulgaria and the implementation of an Hotelstars classification system; not to forget the organisation of an informal Council of Ministers of Tourism and the creation of a Council for Labour; all proposals that HOTREC CEO on behalf of HOTREC Members welcomed and applauded.

Exchange of views focused on how to unlock tourism businesses' potential for jobs creation and growth, notably by reducing taxes, levies and VAT when possible, in order to increase both the EU's competitiveness vis a vis other regions of the world and also to foster innovation and investment in the tourism sector to make Europe an even more sustainable, innovative, attractive and competitive model. Christian de Barrin also mentioned the need to set up a level playing field vis a vis the "sharing" economy and to promote a fair competition and fair practices in the online distribution market.

In-depth discussions concerned the need to raise the profile of the industry and to promote the attractiveness of the sector, which fights against youth employment (e.g. 20% of the jobs in the hospitality industry are held by people aged of less than 25 years) and which facilitates integration and social inclusion as 1/3 of the jobs are held by relatively unskilled people.

The Minister of Tourism is about to launch a voluntary quality label in Bulgaria and showed interest in the European Hospitality Quality Scheme (EHQ) developed by HOTREC and already implemented in countries such as Germany and most recently in Hungary. The classification of hotels was also discussed and HOTREC proposed for the Hotelstars Union Secretariat to meet with the Cabinet or the expert team of the Minister to discuss how to implement Hotelstars Union in Bulgaria. HOTREC CEO mentioned the need for Bulgaria to join HOTREC Membership and therefore a meeting should be fixed soon to discuss with the local Association of Hotels and Restaurants their Membership to HOTREC.

HOTREC CEO thanked Ms. Angelkova and MEP Novakov for their invitation and look forward to their further meeting in Sofia.

TOURISM

European Parliament own-initiative report on tourism: adoption of the TRAN report



On 15 September 2015, the TRAN (Transport & Tourism) Committee of the European Parliament adopted its report on "New challenges and concepts for the promotion of Tourism in Europe". The report touches upon several important issues for the tourism sector.

In particular:

- It recognises the economic importance of tourism and its contribution to employment;
- Promotes the HotelStars Union initiative and calls on the Member States to collaborate and define with tourism stakeholders classification systems for tourism services;
- Recognises that the current legislative framework is not suited for the sharing economy and stresses that consumer protection, security, safety and health regulation applicable to the traditional tourism sector should also apply to tourism services provided on a commercial basis in the sharing economy;
- Calls on the Commission to issue recommendations on the digital single market to ensure fair competition and a level playing field for all actors;
- Urges the Commission to reduce the "*disproportionate regulatory burden that negatively impacts on the competitiveness of SMEs in the tourism sector*";
- Calls on the Commission to propose minimum standards for tourism safety in holiday accommodation.

The TRAN report is available here: [link](#)

Next Steps:

The TRAN report will be approved by the European Parliament in plenary session by the end of October.

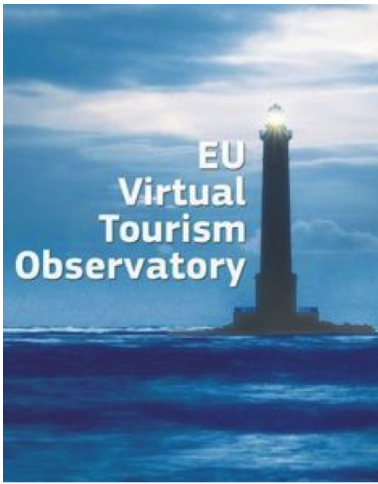
Actions:

HOTREC will lobby MEPs before the plenary session to convince them to table an amendment aiming at deleting the call for EU safety standards in tourism accommodation.

HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC welcomes the provisions of the TRAN report which calls for a level playing field applicable to all actors in the tourism sector, including the sharing economy;*
- *HOTREC also welcomes the recognition and the promotion of the HotelStars Union initiative and understands that in the field of hotel classification this is the system to be further promoted across Europe;*
- *However, HOTREC considers that the call for the adoption of EU safety standards is inappropriate, as the recent Eurobarometers carried-out by the European Commission clearly show that there is no safety issue in the hotel sector, while the recent Green Paper on Tourism accommodation safety shows that Member States unanimously consider existing legislation and standards as appropriate.*

Virtual Tourism Observatory



On the occasion of the European Tourism Forum (16-17 September 2015), the European Commission publicly displayed the new website of the Virtual Tourism Observatory (VTO).

The VTO provides access to a broad collection of information, data and analysis on current trends in the tourism sector. As an open website, it aims at supporting policy makers, tourism stakeholders and business to develop better strategies for a more competitive tourism sector.

The observatory consists of 5 sections:

- Country profiles – This section offers the possibility to view and compare key tourism indicators of the Member States;
- Tourism Statics Illustrated – this section is a powerful visualization tool that displays monthly and annual data on tourist flows, accommodation capacity, occupancy, expenditure and other data on the trips of EU residents. It has been developed together by the Directorate-General (DG) for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, and Eurostat;
- Eurobarometer Surveys – In this section you can find the outcomes of the past flash Eurobarometer surveys that reveal preferences and attitudes of Europeans towards tourism.
- Studies and reports – This section is a repository for reports, studies and papers about the tourism sector.
- More data sources – the section contains a collection of links to national and international organizations and observatories providing facts and figures on the tourism sector in Europe and worldwide.

The platform will be constantly updated. Tourism stakeholders and other key representatives of the tourism sector are invited to send their comments in order to improve the content and format of the observatory.

For more information, follow [link](#).

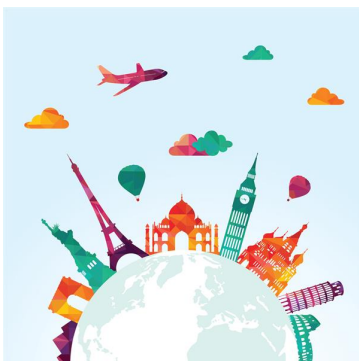
Actions:

HOTREC will carefully monitor the VTO website to see if it can send additional comments.

HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC welcomes the launch of the new website of the VTO;*
- *HOTREC is confident that the information and data gathered in the VTO will help the hospitality sector and its businesses to develop better strategies in order to become more competitive and create more jobs.*

European Tourism Industry Manifesto



On 1 September 2015, the European Travel Commission (ETC) and the European Cyclists Federation together with MEP Ujhelyi and MEP Cramer hosted the European Tourism Industry Task Force that brought together key stakeholders of the tourism and transport sectors.

The ETC proposed to the participants to set-up an alliance/network of tourism representatives to join forces in order to represent the tourism sector. The alliance will be an inclusive network based on the principles of transparency, flexibility and

respect for the individual interests of each of the associations. The network will serve to unify the tourism voice before the European Institutions and will act as a forum of discussion for opportunities and challenges faced by the tourism sector.

At the meeting, the ETC also presented a draft of a future European Tourism Industry Manifesto that will be the visible face of the network. The first 2 pages of the Manifesto will present important data of the tourism sector. The rest of the Manifesto will focus on the priorities for the tourism sector.

Next steps:

The tourism industry Manifesto will be presented on 16 December 2015, on the occasion of the European Tourism Day.

Actions

HOTREC has sent its comments to the draft Manifesto. HOTREC priorities for the Manifesto are the following:

- Digitalisation of SMEs, including a level playing field to ensure fair competition in the area of the sharing economy;
- Taxation: reducing taxes in Europe so SMEs can become more competitive and create more jobs;
- the attractiveness of the tourism sector in Europe, including upgrading skills and competences across the tourism sector;
- Adopting the visa package.

HOTREC position:

HOTREC welcomes the initiative of creating an alliance of tourism stakeholders as well as the elaboration of the Manifesto. For more information follow [link](#).

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Package Travel: the Council opens the way for a final adoption of the Directive



On 18 September 2015, the Council officially adopted, by qualified majority, its position in first reading on the new Package Travel Directive, on the basis of the agreement reached in trilogue during the spring 2015.

Next Steps:

The European Parliament is now expected to adopt without debate the Council position in plenary session in October or November.

Actions:

HOTREC will inform its members once the new Directive is formally adopted and when it will enter into force.

Upcoming new Guidance document to the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive

The European Commission is working currently on the revision of the Guidance Document to the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive. This revision aims at providing a revised guidance in order to allow a more harmonised and effective enforcement of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, taking into account last years' court decisions as well as new online marketing practices.

On 9 September 2015, the European Commission organised a stakeholder forum outlining the main reasons behind the change and showing some directions for the change. The revised document will however not be available for stakeholder comments.

Changes might affect, among others, the description of traders, requirements of professional diligence, misleading actions and clarifications on pricing. Furthermore, at least part of the recent work of the Multistakeholder Dialogue on Comparison Tools shall also flow in into the revised Guidance document.

Next Steps:

After taking last comments into account, the Commission aims at the soon adoption of the revised Guidance document.

Actions:

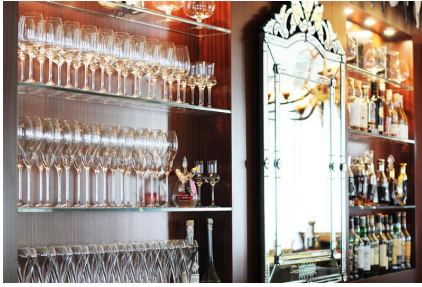
HOTREC contributed to the work of the revision of the Guidance via the Multistakeholder Dialogue on Comparison tools and has put forward comments to the general discussion as well.

HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC welcomes the revision of the Guidance document taking into account the changes in online trading practices.*
- *HOTREC considers that the issue of 'traders' should be further clarified. The concept of the trader is already covering "any natural or legal person who is acting for purposes relating to his trade, business". It should be clarified that natural persons trading via sharing economy platforms should be covered under this concept as well.*
- *HOTREC welcomes that some elements of the work of the Multistakeholder Dialogue on Comparison Tools are intended to be part of the Guidance document and is looking forward to finish soon the work of this Multistakeholder Group on the key principles on comparison tools.*

HEALTH

Slovenia pushes for a new Alcohol Strategy



During the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council, which took place on 18 and 19 of June 2015, a majority of ministers backed a call of the Slovenian delegation to present a new framework for the EU's alcohol policy.

The note provided by the Slovenian delegation states that according to WHO, alcohol is the third leading risk factor for disease and mortality in Europe. At the same time, the societal costs of alcohol consumption in the EU for 2010 were estimated at €155.8 billion. The note explains that Member States are addressing alcohol related harm at national level, however many of the evidence based policy measures related to alcohol prevention also need to be addressed at an EU-level. According to the note, a majority of the Member States had backed the call for a new comprehensive strategy to tackle harmful use of alcohol and alcohol related harm, during the Riga informal Council meeting (20-21 April 2015). Slovenia invited the Commission to inform the Council on how it intends to proceed on the matter.

Background information

Commissioner Andriukaitis, responsible for the portfolio of Health and Food Safety, announced during the last European Alcohol and Health Forum (EAHF), taking place on May 2015, that the intention of the Commission was to include harmful alcohol consumption into a wider strategic approach to tackle chronic diseases. He mentioned that the Commission intended to continue supporting the EU Alcohol Strategy 2006-2012.

HOTREC position

- *HOTREC fully supports the EU Alcohol Strategy 2006-2012 and is for this reason an active member of the EAHF;*
 - *HOTREC would support a new strategy, as long as the main objective would continue to be to decrease alcohol-related harm;*
 - *HOTREC calls on its members to enforce national legislation on the age limits;*
 - *HOTREC also encourages its members to develop information and education programmes on responsible drinking;*
 - *HOTREC deeply regrets the fact that NGO's have left the EAHF. The EAHF should be a place where all interests should be represented (e.g. alcohol producers, on trade, off trade, consumers, NGOs) otherwise it risks to become void;*
 - *A list of voluntary measures developed by HOTREC national associations to decrease alcohol related harm can be found [here](#).*
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VISA POLICY

HOTREC pushes forward the swift adoption of the Visa Package



On 14th September 2015, MEP Aguilar (S&D/Spain) presented his report on the Visa Code recast (2014/0094(COD)) at the LIBE committee. The report defends the following points:

- Definition VIS registered traveller – extension of the definition to those travellers who have lawfully obtained two visas in the last 18 months (instead of 12 months). In this way a traveller who comes to Schengen on an yearly basis will also benefit from the provision;
- Further use of online applications by travellers;
- The possibility for the traveller to apply at a consulate located closer to his/her place of residence would save time and money to the traveller. This possibility is especially important if the consulate competent for issuing the visa is located far away from his/her place of residence;
- The proof of accommodation is not mandatory as a supporting document. Applicants can also show "proof of sufficient means to cover the costs of the accommodation";

On the same date, MEP Hortefeux (EPP/France) presented his report on the Touring Visa (2014/0095(COD)) also at the LIBE committee. The rapporteur defended that the scope should be reduced and include only performing artists and elite sports people. The rapporteur proposed to delete tourist's form the scope of the proposed Regulation as the latter can usually not provide a planned itinerary that lasts for more than three months. The rapporteur also defends that touring visa can only be renewed for 60 days.

Next steps:

- 25th September 2015 – deadline for amendments on the draft reports;
- Vote at the LIBE committee to be scheduled.

Actions:

- HOTREC launched another lobbying campaign, together with NET (the Network of the European Private Sector in Tourism) presenting its position and proposal of amendments to the rapporteurs, shadows, other MEPs of LIBE;
- HOTREC to continue lobbying the Permanent Representations in Brussels;
- HOTREC members to continue their lobbying activities (by informing ministries at national level, Permanent Representations in Brussels and also Members of the European Parliament) about HOTREC position;

HOTREC position

- *HOTREC position on the Visa Package: [link](#);*
- *HOTREC fully supports the Visa Package as a way to help Europe keep its position as world's destination number one;*
- *Regarding the Visa Code, HOTREC's priorities are the following: reinforced consular cooperation, extension of the definition of the VIS registered regular traveller; not to make the proof of accommodation compulsory; making the deadlines to issue a visa shorter;*
- *Regarding the Touring Visa, HOTREC fully supports the Commission proposal. Tourists should be part of the scope, especially if they are visa free travellers. In his case, it is believed that no security problems would be found in relation to those travellers.*

FOOD

Official controls: Luxembourg presidency wants an agreement favouring subsidiarity



Following the failure of the Latvian Presidency to reach an agreement in the Council on the Official Controls Regulation, the new Luxembourg Presidency is now pushing for an agreement on the financing of hygiene inspections during its presidency.

The Luxembourg Presidency will try to present a proposal strongly focusing on subsidiarity, where fees would be mandatory for only a limited set of sectors with a strong cross-border dimension (e.g. imports from third countries, slaughterhouses and intra-EU cross-border trade), therefore leaving at national level the decision on inspection fees for other sectors (among which the restaurant sector).

Next Steps:

The Luxembourg Presidency intends to reach an agreement on the financing of food inspections by the end of October or beginning of November.

Actions:

- HOTREC will continue to monitor the issue.
- HOTREC members should continue to lobby their governments against an EU obligation to charge control fees in restaurants.

HOTREC position:

- *Restaurants provide solely local services: an EU obligation to charge inspection/control fees would breach the subsidiarity principle;*
- *HOTREC welcomes the proposal of the successive EU Presidencies to exempt restaurants from an EU obligation to charge control/inspection fees.*

Revision of the EU guidance document on the implementation of HACCP principles



The European Commission is currently reviewing its existing "Guidance document on the implementation of procedures based on the HACCP principles, and on the facilitation of the implementation of the HACCP principles in certain food businesses". The revision of the existing guidance document aims in particular at broadening the guidance on Food Safety Management Systems as a whole, including prerequisite programs (GHP, GMP), HACCP and their flexibility. It also tries to explain further the terminology.

As a guidance document, it does not affect in any manner the existing EU legal obligations concerning HACCP principles, but may however influence existing national/sectoral guidance document meant to explain how existing rules should be implemented/understood.

As part of the revision process, and after having consulted the Member States, the Commission informally consulted EU stakeholders throughout September. The consultation ended on 30 September. The draft revised guidance remains largely the same as the previous one. Novelties mostly include:

- A new annex and new guidance on prerequisite programs
- A new detailed guidance on HACCP documentation (annex II)
- New provisions on flexibility in the implementation of food safety management systems (annex III)

- A new practical box explaining which businesses are eligible for flexibility in HACCP procedures (Annex III)

Next steps:

Based on the various comments received, the Commission will further amend its draft revised guidance document.

Actions:

HOTREC, which has commented on the draft revised guidance document, will inform its member associations once the final guidance will be issued.

EU General Food Law Regulation: fit for purpose according to Commission assessment

On 22 September, the European Commission presented to the EU advisory group on the food chain (a consultative body made of stakeholder organisations representing consumers, farmers, the food industry and retailers) with the result of the study it has commissioned to AGRA Consulting to assess the fitness of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 also called the General Food Law Regulation (as it forms the basis of all others EU food legislation).

The study shows that the General Food Law Regulation largely achieved its objectives (human health protection and proper functioning of the internal market). Moreover, the study shows that:

- The core requirements imposed on food Business Operators have entailed a fair and proportionate burden;
- The risk analysis approach allowed for important cost savings;
- The low level of prescriptiveness, mixed with a self-regulation approach and an adaptation to local markets and culture allowed for an efficient and fit for purpose Regulation.

The main conclusion is that the Regulation is still fit for purpose with limited potential for legislative simplification and reduction of regulatory costs. The main recommendations of the study are:

- To consolidate the list of definitions;
- To issue guidelines for risk analysis and the precautionary principle;
- To review existing guidelines on the allocation of responsibilities among Food Business Operators;
- To generalise in secondary legislation the application of exemptions/simplified rules for micro-enterprises from certain detailed legal requirements.

Next Steps:

Based on this study, the European Commission will assess by the end of 2015 or beginning of 2016 the need to take further actions.

Actions:

HOTREC keep monitoring the issue and inform its members about the next steps envisaged by the European Commission.

HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC welcomes the result of the study, which shows that the General Food Law Regulation does not need major updates;*
 - *HOTREC also welcomes the recommendation made by the study to generalise exemptions for micro-enterprises from certain legal requirements, in order to avoid un-necessary burdens when risks are extremely limited.*
-

ACCESSIBILITY

HOTREC, ENAT and their partners officially launch a project aiming at enhancing information provision to people with special needs



HOTREC, together with inter alia the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) and TANDEM, the project coordinator, is now officially launching a project called 'App Tour You', in order to develop an online training tool for especially small and micro enterprises to enhance their accessibility.

It is important for tourism services suppliers to learn about aspects regarding the accessibility of their facilities and the way they could inform customers about the accessibility features of their services. This aspect is crucial for the customers who can get a better service but also a big possibility to increase the business of tourism operators.

There is still a large share of tourism operators who do not have the necessary skills to meet the needs expressed by customers with disabilities, which consist, primarily, in receiving accurate and reliable information on the characteristics of the tourism facilities in order to decide if they are suitable for them.

Next Steps:

The official launch of the project is on October 2015 and the duration of it is 24 months.

Actions:

HOTREC, as the partner in the consortium of the project, will actively participate in the work by providing inputs on the material to be developed and, together with its Member Associations, especially on the dissemination of information on the project and its results.

HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC is pleased to participate in this project through which hospitality enterprises will have access to a tool enabling them assessing and communicating their offer in terms of accessibility better, thus making travelling for people with special needs easier.*
 - *HOTREC believes that awareness raising, information provision to guests and the support of SMEs in that can mark considerable steps forward making tourism more accessible for all.*
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PAYMENT SERVICES

Payment Services Directive II: the European Parliament adopts the trilogue agreement

The European Parliament will adopt on 8 October in plenary session the trilogue agreement reached with the Council on the Payment Services Directive II.

The Directive covers various issues (e.g. regulation of new entrants on the payment market, supervision, security standards for online payments, surcharging, etc.). Concerning surcharging, the text allows to surcharge non regulated payment cards, unless Member States ban surcharging at national level.

Next steps:

The Council is expected to adopt quickly the new Directive, therefore marking the end of the legislative process.

Actions:

HOTREC will inform its members when the new Directive is officially adopted.

HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC welcomes the adoption of the new Directive, which will give the freedom to surcharge non-regulated payment cards when deemed appropriate.*
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DATA PROTECTION

Trilogues continue behind closed doors



The formal trilogues between the European Commission, European Parliament (EP) and the Council are on-going on a regularly basis since July 2015. The objective of the trilogues is that an agreement is found between the institutions on some major blocking points, namely:

- Risk based approach – the Council introduced the concept in the proposed Regulation, according to which the controller should be compelled to implement appropriate measures and be able to demonstrate the compliance of the processing activities with the Regulation. The measures should take into account the nature, scope, context and purpose of the processing and the rights and freedom of individuals. Risk should be evaluated by an objective assessment, based on whether data processing operations involve a high risk.
- Threshold of 5000 data subjects – the EP defends that this threshold is the reference that obliges a company to follow or not certain obligations foreseen in the proposed Regulation, namely:
 - Designation of a DPO;
 - Presumption that the company is likely to present specific risks;
 - Obligation of developing an impact assessment

Both EP and Council aim at achieving a compromise until the end of 2015.

Next steps:

- Formal trilogues to continue on a regular basis.

Actions:

- HOTREC to continue its lobbying activities vis-à-vis the Latvian Permanent Representation, rapporteur and shadow rapporteurs;
- HOTREC members to continue their lobbying activities (by informing ministries at national level, Permanent Representations in Brussels and respective MEPs) about HOTREC position;

HOTREC position

- *HOTREC position for the trilogues: [link](#).*
 - *HOTREC welcomes the risk based approach presented by the Council and the fact that a Data Protection officer is not mandatory, unless this is required by Union or Member State Law;*
 - *HOTREC defends that the processing of personal data for the purpose of direct marketing for own or similar services should be presumed as carried out for the legitimate interest of the controller;*
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ONLINE DISTRIBUTION

European Commission launches consultation on geo-blocking and online platforms



On 24 September 2015, the European Commission launched a public consultation on geo-blocking as well as on platforms, data, cloud computing and the collaborative economy. The consultation is part of the European Commission's Digital Single Market Strategy, as announced on 6 May 2015.

The consultation of geo-blocking tackles the issue of restrictions or the application of different conditions to potential customers based on their nationality or place of residence. Under current EU rules, such a restriction is prohibited. The aim of the Commission is to come up early 2016 with legislative proposals to put an end to unjustified geo-blocking.

The consultation on platforms seeks for evidence and input of the current use of online space. Aspects of the consultation include the role of platforms in online distribution, how to handle illegal content (e.g. hate speech) and what duty of care they should have towards their users. On the basis of the consultation the Commission will come forward with an assessment on the role of platforms for the first part of 2016.

In relation to platforms in the so-called collaborative economy, the Commission is seeking for the stakeholders' views on the role of platforms operating in this field, their impact on rights and liabilities, existing suppliers, innovation and consumer choice.

Next Steps:

The consultation is running until the end of 2015. The results of the consultation will feed into the Commission's future work on the different areas covered by the consultation.

Actions:

HOTREC will analyse the consultations and will seek for the views of its members

HOTREC position:

- *HOTREC made its position on various aspects of the consultation already clear in various previous position papers and communications (especially on online distribution, the sharing economy).*
- *HOTREC will coordinate its position on the various issues raised in the consultations with its members before submitting an industry response.*

SUSTAINABILITY

Commission proposes a single A to G energy label



As part of its Energy Union Strategy, launched in February 2015 (for more information please see Live from Brussels N°70), the Commission launched on 15 July 2015 a proposal to revise the current energy efficiency labelling laws. ([Proposal](#) for a regulation on setting a framework for energy efficiency labelling and repealing Directive 2010/30/EU COM (2015) 341)

The Commission proposal to revise the energy system consists of:

- A single energy labelling scale from "A to G": The Commission proposes to return to the well-known and efficient A to G label scale for energy efficiency products which are currently classified in different scales (from A to G; from A+++ to D etc.). One single "A to G" energy label will make it easier for consumers to understand and compare products. Please see [here](#) the difference in the labelling systems;
- A digital database for new energy efficiency products: the Commission proposes that all new products that are placed on the EU market are registered on an online database, allowing greater transparency. The database will allow manufactures and importers to upload information that is obligatory under current EU laws. Key information regarding product compliance will, in this way, be available for enforcement authorities in the Member States.

When approved by the co-legislators, the Commission proposal will be implemented as follows:

1. Products already on the market will be sold with no change;
2. New products will be sold with the new scale. Old labels, such as those with A+ to A+++ scales will be removed by retailers;
3. Producers will register their products. The information will be accessible to Member States Authorities to facilitate compliance check and increase transparency;
4. Consumers will be informed through dedicated information campaigns undertaken by Member States, in cooperation with retailers.

Next Steps:

The Commission proposal for a regulation will be discussed under the ordinary legislative procedure by the Parliament and the Council. The Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) Committee, will be leading the discussions on the dossier. The Rapporteur has still not been appointed. It is expected that the EU institutions will reach a quick agreement on the dossier (around one year).

HOTREC position:

- HOTREC welcomes the Commission proposal to revise the energy efficiency labelling system as it will provide clearer and simpler information about the energy efficiency of products, facilitating also the comparison of products;
- It will bring clarity to consumers and also to companies, contributing, thus, to additional savings in energy consumption.

STATISTICS

International tourism arrivals keep growing, especially in Europe

UNWTO World Tourism Barometer: The number of international tourist arrivals grew by 4% in the first half of 2015 according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.

Destinations worldwide received some 538 million international tourists between January and June 2015, an increase of 21 million compared to the same period of 2014. Europe, the most visited region in the world, led growth and increased international arrivals by 5%, benefiting from a weaker currency in the euro area. Growth was driven by the recovery in Central and Eastern Europe (+6%), while Western Europe, Northern Europe and Southern Mediterranean Europe (each +5%) all outgrew the worldwide average. (Read further in the UNWTO publication)

US and Russia account for a third of all non-EU tourism nights in the EU: In the European Union (EU), tourism is above all an internal affair. Nearly 90% of tourism nights in the EU are spent by EU residents, meaning that tourists from outside the EU account for only around 10% of the total. And when travelling, EU residents spent almost 85% of their tourism nights within the EU, with only just over 15% in extra-EU destinations. Nevertheless, more than 300 million nights were spent in the EU by non-EU visitors in tourist accommodation in 2014. With 17.8% and 14.9% respectively of all nights spent by non-EU tourists in the EU in 2014, tourists from the United States and Russia were the main visitors from outside the EU, while those from China (5.0%), Japan (3.7%) and Brazil (2.5%) each represented less than 5% of nights spent by non-EU tourists. (Read further in the Eurostat publication)

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Next meetings and General Assemblies

In the coming months, HOTREC will organise and/or participate to the following meetings:

- 7-9 October 2015, (Ibiza, Spain) - International Nightlife Congress – HOTREC CEO, Christian de Barrin, will participate as a key note speaker under the panel "Nightlife and alcohol" to promote HOTREC's commitment to curb alcohol related harm;
- 13 October 2015 (Poreč, Croatia) – Croatian Tourism Forum – HOTREC CEO, Christian de Barrin, will participate as a speaker to a panel on the "sharing" economy;
- 14 October 2015, (Brussels, Belgium) – Meeting on capacity Building Support for Social Partners – Capacity building support for social partners has been identified as one of the key challenges of the so called 'new start for social dialogue';
- 14 October 2015 (Brussels, Belgium) – Meeting with Commissioner Bińkowska - HOTREC President, Susanne Kraus-Winkler, and HOTREC CEO, Christian de Barrin, meet Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, Elzbieta Bińkowska, to exchange views on the tourism sector;
- 15 October 2015 (Brussels, Belgium), - Restaurant and Pub Task Force – HOTREC national associations to discuss key topics impacting restaurants, pubs and similar establishments, such as food waste, nutrition, alcohol etc.
- 15 October 2015 (Milano, Italy) – Conference on "fight food waste, feed the planet" – The Commission organises this Conference to gather the views of experts and interested stakeholders on the best ways to prevent, reduce and tackle food waste;
- 19 October 2015 (Brussels, Belgium)- Meeting on late night entertainment – HOTREC and the Chair of the Working Group on late night entertainment will meet the Tourism Unit representatives to exchange views on the late night entertainment sector;
- 21 October 2015 (Brussels, Belgium) – Conference on "Mapping and performance check of the supply side of tourism education and training" – HOTREC SSD Committee Chair, Mr. Jean-Marc Banquet d'Orx, will participate as key note speaker and moderator to the Conference;
- 29 October 2015 (Vilnius, Lithuania) - Lithuanian Tourism Forum - HOTREC CEO, Christian de Barrin, will participate as a speaker to a panel on the "sharing" economy;
- 4 November 2015 (The Hague, The Netherlands) – Hotels Stars Union meeting will take place on the occasion of HOTREC 71st General Assembly;
- 4 November 2015 (The Hague, The Netherlands) – HOTREC Working Group on late night entertainment will take place on the occasion of HOTREC 71st General Assembly;
- 5-6 November 2015 (The Hague, The Netherlands) – HOTREC holds its 71st General Assembly;
- 19 November 2015 (Brussels, Belgium) – Spirits Summit - HOTREC CEO, Christian de Barrin, will participate to the Summit as a key note speaker to promote HOTREC and its members' best practices to curb alcohol related harm;
- 24-25 November 2015 (Warsaw, Poland) – Hotel and Tourism Trends 2015 Poland & CEE– HOTREC CEO will participate to the Conference as a key note speaker;
- 26-27 November 2015 (Prague, Czech Republic) – Leaders in HORECA Summit – HOTREC CEO, Christian de Barrin, will participate to the Summit as key note speaker;
- 6 December 2015 (Algarve region, Portugal) - APAVT (Portuguese Travel Agents Association) annual congress – HOTREC CEO, Christian de Barrin will participate as a speaker to a panel on the "sharing" economy;
- The Spring General Assembly will take place on 28 and 29 April 2016 in Bratislava

