



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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New tourism quality principles – Good for tourists, good for small enterprises

The European Commission proposed today a set of voluntary European Tourism Quality Principles to ensure that tourists travelling to other Member States or visiting our continent from third countries will get value for their money. These principles cover four main areas: staff training under the supervision of a quality coordinator, consumer satisfaction to ensure that tourist can rely on handling of their complaints, cleanliness and maintenance, and correctness and reliability of information in at least the most relevant foreign language. Such access to reliable and up-to-date information on the quality of tourism services enables tourists to differentiate among competing products, to make an informed choice and to overcome linguistic difficulties. Small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) will find it easier to emphasize that they are providing a high quality service by sticking to the principles. The proposal will therefore help SMEs which make up over 90% of the EU tourism sector.

European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani, Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship commented: *"Tourism service providers will be able to assure customers of the high quality of their services, which means a strong competitive advantage for businesses, especially SMEs. The current proposal represents an important tool for further promoting tourism, Europe's growth champion in the past five years. Promoting the high quality of European tourism services will contribute to improving tourism flows of travellers within the EU and from outside Europe. This complements other European initiatives which follow the same aim, such as visa facilitation for third-country tourists and branding Europe as a set of high-quality destinations."*
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/quality-label/index_en.htm

More information

European principles to help businesses and consumers

The recommended principles will help tourism service providers to gain visibility in wider markets, in particular in countries outside Europe. The existing differences in the quality evaluation of tourism services can generate confusion among tourists. For example, cross-border tourists may not find consistent information to easily understand what service quality they can expect from various service providers. This impairs their ability to make informed choices, particularly when travelling to another Member State or from third countries. Hence, they do not reward those businesses that invest in quality. This situation discourages the industry, particularly SMEs with limited financial resources, from doing so. And this is why the Commission proposed today the **following principles**, which enterprises have to respect if they decided to follow them:

1. Tourism service providers following the principles should **ensure the training of all employees** involved in the provision of services directly to consumers in order to ensure the satisfactory delivery of the tasks assigned to them. This recommendation also requires them to:

- **record the attended training** by the employees in a training register
- appoint a **quality coordinator** in order to ensure a coherent approach towards the quality management of the services provided and
- **involve the relevant employees in the quality process.**

2. Apply a **consumer satisfaction policy**, including the establishment of a mechanism for the handling of consumers' complaints at the place of the delivery of the service or via the Internet and ensuring that complaints are responded to without delay. Moreover tourism providers should carry out consumer satisfaction surveys and taking into account the results thereof to improve the quality of the service.

3. Tourism service providers should keep a **documented cleaning and maintenance plan** for the facilities.

4. Tourism service providers should make **information available to consumers** on local customs, heritage, traditions, services, products and sustainability aspects etc.

5. Ensure that this **information is correct, reliable, clear and accessible** in at least the most relevant foreign language, if appropriate to the location and business concept.

How will the principles work in practice?

This initiative will be voluntary for Member States. In this way no unnecessary burden is imposed on Member States' administrations. They are however invited to coordinate, monitor and promote the application of the Principles within their respective territories. The proposed recommendations will now be discussed by the Council during the Greek and Italian EU Presidencies.

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