



**COUNCIL OF
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To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Proposal for a Council Recommendation on European Tourism Quality Principles - Presidency compromise text

Delegations will find attached a Presidency compromise text of the Council Recommendation on European Tourism Quality Principles, which will be examined by the Tourism Working Party on 8 April 2014.

All changes to the previous text have been indicated in **bold underlined** or ~~strikethrough~~.

Proposal for a
COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION
on European Tourism Quality Principles¹

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 195 and 292 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) The Commission recognises in its Communication of 30 June 2010, "Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for Europe"², the need to promote the development of sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourism, as part of the overall objective of promoting the Union as a collection of high-quality destinations in third countries.

¹ **DE: general scrutiny reservation on the entire text. PL: parliamentary scrutiny reservation.**

² **COM(2010) 352 final Doc. 11883/10 of 6 July 2010.**

- (2) The promotion of high environmental performances of tourism accommodations and campsites and best environmental management practices of the tourism sector are already specifically addressed at Union level through the application of Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council³ and by Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁴.
- (3) A wide variety of public and private quality schemes already exists in the Union, aiming at providing information to ~~consumers~~ **customers** on the quality of tourism services and providing guidance to tourism professionals. Those schemes show significant diversity in scope, governance, methodology and criteria. Moreover, their operation is limited to certain sub-sectors or geographic areas, which results in a highly fragmented environment in respect of the evaluation of tourism service quality.
- (4) Because of this fragmentation and the lack of consistent assessment across the existing quality schemes, ~~consumers~~ **customers** travelling cross-border within the Union or to the Union from third countries may find it difficult to compare the services covered by different quality schemes. That lack of consistency limits ~~the consumers'~~ **customers'** capacity to make fully informed choices.
- (5) Due to the lack of ~~consistent~~ **consistency in** assessment ~~across~~ **under** the existing quality schemes, tourism ~~businesses~~ **entities** have so far had **only** limited capacity to gain visibility vis-à-vis ~~consumers~~ **customers** and to benefit from coordinated actions. This is especially true for micro and small enterprises, which often do not have ~~the~~ adequate tools and resources to promote themselves and the high-quality service they provide.

³ Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the EU Ecolabel (OJ L 27, 30.1.2010, p. 1).

⁴ Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS), repealing Regulation (EC) No 761/2001 and Commission Decisions 2001/681/EC and 2006/193/EC (OJ L 342, 22.12.2009, p. 1).

~~(6) In order to boost the tourism industry's competitiveness, it is necessary to make the Union's tourism businesses attractive for third country nationals.~~

(6) In order to increase the competitiveness of the tourism sector and to provide added value, the present initiative will help tourism entities, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, to enhance the visibility of their high-quality services and to improve their ability to reach out to a wider circle of customers. This will give them the possibility to extend their activities to new markets, in particular in third countries, thereby improving their competitiveness both within and outside the Union.

(7) It is therefore appropriate to outline a set of European Tourism Quality Principles acknowledged by ~~consumers~~ **customers** and the industry.

(8) In order to ensure the coverage of the largest possible range of tourism subsectors, **while** ~~and~~ at the same time to ~~preserve~~ **preserving** the diversity of the Union's tourism offer, the European Tourism Quality Principles should be of general nature, but offer an added value in line with ~~consumers'~~ **customers'** expectations ~~towards~~ **of** high quality tourism services.

(9) To ensure the satisfactory provision of tourism services, it is necessary to provide adequate training to the relevant employees on the tasks assigned to them. The same reason prompts that the attended training is recorded in a ~~training~~ register.

(10) To facilitate continuous improvement of tourism service quality to meet the requirements of ~~consumers~~ **customers**, it is important to ~~carry out consumer~~ **obtain feedback from** **customers** surveys and ensure a ~~response~~ **follow-up** to complaints.

(11) To promote the authenticity and diversity of the Union's tourism offer, it is necessary that ~~consumers~~ **customers** are provided with up-to-date information on local customs, heritage, traditions, services and products.

- (12) To enhance the awareness about the European Tourism Quality Principles, and therefore gain consumer **customer** confidence, it is key that tourism organisations **entities** provide information and guidance related to ~~those~~ **the** Principles to consumers **customers**.
- (13) In order to facilitate the application of the European Tourism Quality Principles within their territories ~~as well as the coordination of their actions~~, Member States ~~should~~ **are recommended to promote** ~~coordinate~~, and monitor ~~and promote~~ the European Tourism Quality Principles in a transparent manner.
- ~~(14) In order to ensure that the European Tourism Quality Principles are applied on a voluntary basis by tourism organisations operating in more than one Member State (transnational organisations), it is essential that Member States cooperate with each other in view of the application of the European Tourism Quality Principles by those organisations.~~
- ~~(14)~~ In order to facilitate the consistent application of the European Tourism Quality Principles and of their ~~coordination~~, **promotion and** monitoring ~~and promotion~~ throughout the Union, the Member States are invited to exchange information and experiences **and to cooperate with each other with a view to the application of the Principles by tourism entities operating in more than one Member State**. The Commission should facilitate such exchange of information.
- ~~(15)~~ To complement the action of the Member States in promoting the competitiveness of the tourism sector, it is important to inform ~~the consumers~~ **customers** and raise their awareness of the European Tourism Quality Principles through appropriate promotional and information actions within the Union, but also and in particular in third countries, in view of the objective of promoting the Union as a collection of high-quality destinations. Moreover, in order to encourage the creation of a favourable environment for the development of the tourism sector, it is also important to make the European Tourism Quality Principles attractive to tourism organisations **entities**. It is therefore important that the Member States and the Commission cooperate in this respect.

(17) To facilitate the monitoring and assessment of the application of the European Tourism Quality Principles, the Member States have a strong role by informing the Commission of the application of the European Tourism Quality Principles in their territories, in particular within the framework of the Tourism Advisory Committee ~~meetings~~.

(17) To respond to the rapidly changing market conditions in the area of tourism and to ensure the added value of the European Tourism Quality Principles in the long term, the Commission should monitor their application and should evaluate the implementation **and effectiveness** of this Recommendation after three years of its ~~publishing~~ **publication** in the Official Journal of the European Union. For the same reason, the Commission should also assess whether additional measures are needed to ensure the achievement of the objectives reflected in this Recommendation.

HEREBY RECOMMENDS:

1. SUBJECT MATTER AND SCOPE

This Recommendation lays down a set of European Tourism Quality Principles (hereinafter referred to as "Principles") ~~to~~ **that may** be applied by tourism ~~organisations~~ **entities**.

2. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Recommendation the following definitions shall apply:

- (a) 'tourism ~~organisation~~ **entity**' means a public or private ~~organisation~~ **entity**, established in the Union and providing services to ~~consumers~~ **customers** in the field of tourism at local, regional, national or transnational level;
- (b) 'transnational tourism ~~organisation~~ **entity**' means a tourism ~~organisation~~ **entity** carrying out activities in the territory, or parts thereof, of more than one Member State.

3. EUROPEAN TOURISM QUALITY PRINCIPLES

Where appropriate to the size and business concept, **and in particular considering the need to keep additional administrative costs to small businesses to a minimum**, tourism organisations **entities** are recommended to apply the following Principles to their activities:

- (a) Ensure the training of employees, including the following:
 - i) training of all employees involved in ~~the provision of~~ **providing** services directly to consumers **customers in order** to ensure the satisfactory delivery of the tasks assigned to them;
 - ii) recording the ~~attended~~ training **attended** by the employees in a ~~training~~ register established for this purpose;
 - iii) ~~appointment of a quality coordinator in order to ensure a coherent approach towards the quality management of the services provided and the involvement of the relevant employees in the quality process;~~

- (b) Apply, **where appropriate to the size of the entity concerned**, a consumer **customer** satisfaction policy, including the following:
 - i) ~~establishment of~~ **establishing** a mechanism for the handling of consumers' **customers'** complaints at the place of the delivery of the service or via the Internet;
 - ii) ensuring that complaints are ~~responded to~~ **followed up** without delay;
 - iii) **obtaining feedback from customers on the services provided** ~~carrying out consumer satisfaction surveys,~~ **where appropriate on-line**, and the taking into account the results thereof **in order** to improve the quality of the service;

iv) appointing a quality coordinator in order to ensure a coherent approach towards the quality management of the services provided and the involvement of the relevant employees in the quality process;

- (c) Keep and adhere to a documented cleaning and maintenance plan for the facilities or equipment where appropriate;
- (d) Make **clear, reliable and up-to-date** information available to ~~consumers~~**customers in at least the most relevant foreign language, if appropriate given the location and the business concept of the entity,** including the following:
- i) information on local customs, heritage, traditions, services and products;
 - ii) information on accessibility with respect to the services provided;
 - iii) information on sustainability aspects with respect to the services provided;
 - iv) information on **the use of** the Principles **by the entity concerned.**
- ~~(e) Ensure that this information correct, reliable, clear and accessible in at least the most relevant foreign language, if appropriate to the location and business concept.~~

4. ACTIVITIES BY THE MEMBER STATES

4.1. Member States ~~should~~ **are recommended to promote** ~~coordinate,~~ **and** monitor and ~~promote~~ the application of the Principles within their respective territories. For those purposes, Member States are invited to:

- (a) monitor the application of the Principles set out in point 3 by tourism ~~organisations~~**entities**;
- (b) ~~coordinate~~ **co-operate** with the other Member States, **via the Tourism Advisory Committee, in undertaking** the activities related to the Principles and their application;
- (c) promote the Principles among tourism ~~organisations~~**entities**;

- (d) ensure, in cooperation with the other Member States, that adequate information and guidance on the Principles is made available to tourism ~~organisations~~entities;
- (e) cooperate with each other in order to facilitate the application of the Principles by transnational tourism ~~organisations~~entities.

4.2. It is also recommended that the **the activities undertaken by the Member States in relation to the application of the Principles are** conducted ~~of the Member State's activities~~ in a transparent manner.

5. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION

(a) Member States are invited to inform the Commission of the activities referred to in point 4 and to cooperate with the Commission in view of their monitoring and assessment as well as of their awareness raising and promotional initiatives.

(b) The Commission will, within the competences conferred to it by the Treaty, take adequate action and provide guidance to Member States with reference to the activities mentioned under Paragraphs 4 and 5 (a).

6. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

6.1. The Commission should assess the implementation **and effectiveness** of this Recommendation by *[date to be defined 3 years after the publication of the Recommendation in the Official Journal]*

6.2. The Commission should also assess whether further measures to improve the consistency of tourism service quality in the Member States reflected in this Recommendation should be proposed.

7. FINAL PROVISIONS

This Recommendation shall be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Council
The President*