EUROPEAN TRADE UNION LIAISON COMMITTEE ON TOURISM (ETLC)
c/o EFFAT Rue Fossé aux Loups 38 B - 1000 Bruxelles Tel: ++32-2-218 77 30 Fax: ++32-2-218 30 18

ETLC Declaration

The impact of the terrorist attacks in the US and of the subsequent events on tourism

Having discussed the impact of the terrorist attacks in the US and of the subsequent events on tourism, and having assessed the current situation in different sub-sectors and countries, the ETLC issues the following declaration:

Tourism activities have been seriously hit by the slowdown in travel and tourism that followed the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11. The ETLC is concerned about the consequences of the crisis on tourism in all countries which comes on top of economic problems already prevailing in some companies or sectors.

It is too early to determine the length and the depth of the crisis in the tourism sector. But statements on worst-case-scenarios and announcements of travel and tourism companies about cut backs undermine the confidence of the consumers and are counter-productive to any attempt to reassure travellers and tourists that travelling is safe.

Workers in the tourism sector are likely to suffer most of the downturn in the tourism sector. Airlines have already announced job cuts by thousands, large tour-operators are considering measures to adapt to the loss of activities, hotel chains encourage “voluntary economic leave” and start relocating jobs to other departments, cost-cutting measures like closure of floors and facilities are on the agenda.

As trade union committee, our first priority is to maintain jobs and working conditions as a basis for quality of service in the tourism sector. In these circumstances it is crucial that proper consultations and negotiations take place between employers and trade unions to find socially agreeable solutions to temporary economic difficulties. Measures like increased vocational training to employees during the crisis time would ease the current situation, help companies to retain their employees and provide the tourism sector with better-qualified staff, something the industry is in need for to provide high-quality tourism services in future.

The tourism industry, in which our members work, is particularly dependent on the freedom to travel, the freedom to select places to visit and people's curiosity about other countries and the way of life there. Tourism can build bridges and be a driving force for peace, tolerance and mutual understanding.

In the globalization process currently under way, security cannot be guaranteed through more refined control systems or by military means, but our security ultimately depends on worldwide social and economic justice. The more deep-seated causes of international terrorism and conflicts must be combated. This means also stepping up efforts to ensure that differences of political, economic, social and cultural interest between all societies around the world are settled peacefully.

Brussels, 18 October 2001

A cooperation of:

EFFAT
European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions

UNI-Europa
Union Network International – European regional organisation

ETF
European Transport Workers' Federation

IUF
International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations

UNI
Union Network International

ITF
International Transport Workers' Federation