

JOINT DECLARATION

BETWEEN

**THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL TOURISM COMMITTEE (CETS)
OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF SOCIAL TOURISM (BITS)**

AND

**THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS
IN THE FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM SECTORS
AND ALLIED BRANCHES (EFFAT)**

BRUSSELS, 16 SEPTEMBER 2005

1. BITS and EFFAT

The **International Bureau of Social Tourism (BITS)** is an international non-profit-making organisation set up in 1963 to promote access to leisure, holidays and tourism for as many people as possible and to encourage the implementation of this objective and of the related means by the actors sharing this responsibility, namely States, social players and operators. The mission of BITS is also to promote sustainable tourism based on solidarity which ensures that the local populations draw some benefit and which respects the natural and cultural heritage.

The action of BITS essentially takes the form of representation activities involving the dissemination of information, participation in research, cooperation projects and expert missions, and the organisation of a biennial congress and of specialised seminars. BITS also has theme-based committees and regional sections. The European Social Tourism Committee (CETS) of BITS is the body which coordinates action with partners and European institutions.

BITS' members include public and private bodies, profit-making and non-profit-making organisations, which share the objectives of BITS as expressed in the Declaration of Montreal "Towards a Human and Social Vision of Tourism". They include tourism associations, holiday centres and youth hostel networks, tour operators and agencies, trade union organisations, cooperatives, NGOs, educational institutions and official tourism bodies which are all involved in useful work in the field of social tourism.

The **European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)** was founded in 2000 through a merger of the European Committee of Food, Catering and Allied Workers' Unions (ECF) and the European Federation of Agricultural Workers' Unions (EFA). EFFAT is a member of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and also a regional organisation in the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF).

EFFAT is representing over 2.6 million workers in all branches of agriculture, in food processing, and in the hotel, restaurant, catering and tourism sector, affiliated to more than 120 trade union organisations in 37 European countries, being a single umbrella organisation of trade unions throughout the food processing chain, "from field to fork".

EFFAT pursues a Europe where workers have guaranteed rights, where high-quality jobs are guaranteed, where products and services are of the highest quality, where the environment is protected, and where men and women enjoy equal treatment and equal opportunities. EFFAT promotes sustainable food, agriculture and tourism policies, high social standards and effective health and safety legislation.

EFFAT represents the interests of its members vis-à-vis the EU institutions, and EFFAT experts are consulted as advisers by these institutions.

EFFAT is recognised by the European Commission as the representative Social Partner organisation. In the Social Dialogue EFFAT negotiates agreements and makes arrangements with European employers' organisations aimed at improving the conditions of workers in the sectors and industries represented.

EFFAT organises the representation of workers and trade unions vis-à-vis transnational companies, supports the activities of European Works Councils and promotes the co-ordination of national collective bargaining policies across Europe.

The general aims for the hotel, restaurant and catering sector are the amelioration of employment and working conditions, the improvement of vocational and continuous training and the recognition of qualifications, the strengthening of information and consultation rights of workers, the promotion of equality and equal opportunities, facilitating the mobility of workers and the support of the member organisations in the EU enlargement process.

2. General comments

Access to leisure, holidays and tourism for as many people as possible and the implementation of this objective and of the related means by actors who are responsible are values shared by BITS and EFFAT.

Trade union organisations, thanks to which a large number of workers can now enjoy paid holidays – a vital pre-condition for tourism – were in fact involved in the establishment of BITS and played an important and historic role in developing “holidays for all” in many countries and more particularly in Europe.

The values shared by BITS and EFFAT also concern the state of working conditions of employees in the tourism sector. This matter is laid down in the Montreal Declaration adopted by BITS in 1996, Article 14 of which states that “Personnel management is in accordance with social legislation, and undertakes to promote job satisfaction and deliver appropriate on-going staff development training”.

More generally, BITS and EFFAT agree on the principles laid down in the Conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and they undertake, in the countries that come within the scope of this declaration, to comply with the fundamental labour rights (see Annexes 1 & 2) and the collective agreements in force.

These values, recognised in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), are in line with the concept of sustainable development of tourism which reconciles tourism development, environmental protection, respect for local identity and the benefits for local host communities.

Based on these considerations and on the various meetings and contacts that have taken place between the two organisations, notably via the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) to which EFFAT is affiliated and with which BITS has a cooperation agreement, the two organisations would like to take a step forward and formalise their relationship in order to be able to cope with the new challenges arising in the tourism sector.

3. Common challenges

The tourism industry is currently characterised by a large proportion of SMEs, a high degree of seasonality, a tendency to subcontract activities, an acceleration of the processes of concentration and integration and a low level of unionisation.

The main issues of interest to BITS via its European Social Tourism Committee (CETS) and EFFAT include the improvement of the working conditions of social tourism employees, the promotion of training, the development of the social dialogue, the mobility of workers and corporate social responsibility within the European Union.

In order to have significant influence in the debates and policies at European Union level, the two organisations intend to join forces to meet these challenges and to put forward a number of proposals which could help improve working conditions, ensure better training courses, greater recognition of qualifications, the promotion of equal opportunities, greater employee mobility and the development of a real European social dialogue in the social tourism sector.

Lastly, in the context of a new Europe, BITS and EFFAT also share the same will to promote these issues in a special way in the new Member States of the European Union in order to encourage greater harmonisation aimed at improving the working conditions of employees in the social tourism sector.

4. Areas of cooperation

The signatories undertake to implement this Declaration by means of joint action carried out according to procedures to be defined by agreement. They agree in particular to work in the following areas:

- The carrying out of a study on employment in the social tourism sector in Europe.
- The organisation of vocational training seminars in the social tourism sector.
- The drafting of a document on corporate social responsibility in the social tourism sector and the identification of “good practices” in this sector.
- The promotion of employee mobility in the social tourism sector by means of exchanges and training courses, and by a harmonised policy on seasonal workers, in particular on a transnational basis.
- Efforts to promote a common holiday timetable harmonised at European level to permit better staggering of holidays and better use of tourism facilities.
- The carrying out of activities and projects linked to the themes mentioned in the context of the European institutions’ financing programmes.

The signatories also agree to disseminate this joint declaration as wide as possible and to meet officially at least once a year to assess progress in the cooperation under way and to define future actions.

Signed in Brussels on 16 September 2005

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François Soulage
Coordinator
CETS of BITS

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Harald Wiedenhofer
General Secretary
EFFAT

ANNEX 1

Respect for fundamental rights at work

Building on the principles set out in the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions, BITS, in the countries covered by this declaration, agrees:

- To respect the right of workers, in accordance with applicable legislation in each country, to form a trade union or to join the trade union of their choice;
- Not to resort to methods designed to deter trade union membership, including anti-union meetings, tracts, or verbal communications;
- That trade union representatives, elected or designated in accordance with applicable legislation in each country, and trade union members are not subject to any discrimination in employment, salary, working conditions, access to vocational training and career development by reason of their trade union membership or activity;
- To communicate to concerned trade union organisations the information required under applicable national legislation regarding general operations and, where required, operations of the site concerned, in order to allow them to conduct collective bargaining in keeping with such legislation in their respective countries.
- To allow contact between trade union representatives and employees, as provided for under applicable legislation, collective bargaining agreements and national or local practices.
- Not to tolerate any form of forced or compulsory labour as a method of coercion or sanction against persons expressing political opinions; methods of using labour for economic purposes; measures of work discipline; penalty for strike action; discrimination based on race, social or national origin, or religious beliefs. The term “forced or compulsory labour” means any work or service required of an individual under threat of any sanction and for which the said individual has volunteered.
- To respect the effective elimination of child labour, with the minimum age for employment being set at 15 years of age regardless of local legislation provisions, or 18 years of age in the case of work activities liable to endanger the health, safety or morality of youth.
- To respect the principle of equality of opportunities and treatment in employment, meaning to refrain from any discrimination, distinction, exclusion or preference based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion or political opinions.
- To ensure, through adapted means, the application to all employees of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value between male and female employees;

ANNEX 2

ILO Conventions

Forced or Compulsory Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)

Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)

Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)

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Equality Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)

Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1971 (No. 135)

Elimination of child labour Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)

Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, 1977

Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)