



## Background paper

### Introduction

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It is important that Quality Assurance National Reference Points are supported so that they can engage with stakeholders and draw on the experience of quality assurance in the different VET sectors. This support will ensure an important contribution to the effective implementation of the Recommendation of the [European Parliament and Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework](#) (EQAVET) for initial and continuing VET. The EQAVET Sectoral Seminars provide this needed support as they create an opportunity to bring together Social Partners, Quality Assurance National Reference Points and representatives of a particular sector together.

The second sectoral seminar is aimed at targeting the Tourism and Catering sector. It is intended to facilitate a reflection by key players on how quality assurance of VET is addressed and managed. This second Sectoral Seminar will focus on the quality assurance of vocational training in the Tourism and Catering sector. The main objective is to analyse topics of crucial importance with a view to formulating guidelines and/or principles for supporting quality assurance of VET or its process in the continuing education training sector. The different key players will be encouraged to reflect on how quality assurance of VET is addressed and managed as well as highlight the need to involve the Social Partners in quality assurance procedures for the provision of VET in line with the EQAVET Framework. The participants will be involved in identifying the challenges or condition to succeed in the implementation of EQARF within the Tourism and Catering Sector.

### Tourism and catering sector and quality assurance

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This short paper focuses on the key challenges in relation to quality in vocational education and training within the European Tourism and Catering sector and on how the EQAVET Recommendation can support the development and improvement of national Tourism and Catering education and training systems.

The aims of the paper are twofold:

1. To provide a short introduction to quality assurance in the tourism and catering sector; and
2. To raise a number of questions and issues to participants in their preparation for the seminar.

It is our hope that the different national representatives participating at the seminar will share and express their opinions and concerns, inspiring each other in the process, and to then use this inspiration in the development and implementation of quality assurance related procedures within the Tourism and Catering sector in their own countries.

### The Tourism and catering sector in Europe

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The Lisbon Treaty acknowledges the importance of tourism outlining a specific competence for the European Union in this field. The Treaty contains a specific [reference to tourism](#), acknowledging that “the Union shall complement the action of the Member States in the tourism sector, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings in that sector”.

The Tourism and catering sector in Europe comprises a wide variety of products and destinations and involves many different stakeholders, both public and private, with areas of competence which are very much decentralised, often at regional and even local levels.

Tourism is defined in [the Official Journal of the European Union \(22.7.2011 L 192/19\)](#) as “the activity of visitors taking a trip to a main destination outside their usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose, including business, leisure or other personal purpose, other than to be employed by a resident entity in the place visited.” Tourism plays a crucial role in supporting economic growth and development and in sustaining employment. During the last 20 years, the growth rate of international tourism arrivals in OECD countries has averaged 2.8% per year, well ahead of the GDP growth rate of 2.4% for the zone. In the OECD area, tourism GDP accounts for up to 11% of GDP and even more in terms of employment.

The EU tourism industry generates more than 5% of the EU GNP, with about 1,8 million enterprises (European Commission Communication COM (2010) ) employing around 5.2% of the total labour force (approximately 9,7 million jobs). When related sectors are taken into account, the estimated contribution of tourism to GDP creation is much higher: tourism indirectly generates more than 10% of the European Union’s GDP and provides about 12% of the labour force.

The visitor level was in 2010 still below Europe’s 2008 peak, but with visitor growth for the vast majority of destinations. However, the prospects for the global economy are clouded with some uncertainty by the continuing European sovereign debt crisis and a tenuous consumer outlook. Notwithstanding these risks, Tourism Economics’ baseline forecasts scenario anticipates overnight visitor growth to Europe of 3% in 2011 and 4% in 2012. Travel within Europe has benefited from a steady economic recovery in parts of Europe with intra-regional travel continuing to comprise the bulk of arrivals. However, the economic outlook for Europe holds particular risks of slowdown in 2011.

European tourism and catering labour markets are dynamic. They have to respond to demographic change, general economic conditions, relative earnings and career prospects, and regulatory change such as worktime directives. Tourism has been hit by the financial and economic crisis that hit the world economy. Tourism flows started to decline in the second half of 2008. That decline deepened at the beginning of 2009. International tourism has been affected more than domestic tourism, business tourism more than leisure tourism, hotels more than other types of accommodation and air transport more than other types of transport. Paradoxically, certain forms of tourism have been impacted on only slightly or have even experienced growth in this crisis period.

There is a trend that traditional models of tourism have been supplemented and in some cases succeeded by new concepts with wellness tourism, increase of individualised services, easy access for all, demand for authentic and memorable experiences.

Tourism in the European Union is essentially driven by the demands of its citizens as it remains largely internal with 73,9% of visitors coming from Europe (UNWTO, 2009). To retain its position on global markets, the European tourism sector has, according to Cedefop (2005), to compete with other up-and-coming destinations around the world and attract worldwide visitors. This will not be achieved without efficient human resource development policies and practices. The competitive advantage of European tourism on global markets in the long run cannot be based on the low cost of labour, but should rather focus on the quality, diversity and unique character of tourism services and travel experiences offered. The importance of skills and competences to provide such quality service is obvious.

Tourism and catering in Europe covers a wide range of types of vocational education and training. In line with NACE classification, the sector includes domestic, inbound, outbound, national and internal tourism together with tourist accommodation establishment, non-rented accommodation, same-day visits together with gastronomy, events, restaurants, catering. There are also different types of occupations in the sector. In the German “dual system” there are for example the following training occupations: cook, specialist in the hospitality service industry, specialist in the hotel business, hotel clerk, restaurant specialist, professional caterer, tourism and leisure agent.

The Tourism sector, however suffers (Cedefop 2005) from low pay, very high demand for staff flexibility and mobility, high staff turnover, high share of informal employment arrangements and persistent skill shortages. Additionally, the sector has a highly seasonal character and is vulnerable to external political and economic factors. Over 95 % of companies employ fewer than 10 people (ETC, 2004) and the sector is practically non-unionised.

At the same time, qualifications in the tourism sector are appreciated by other sectors because of many transversal skills in demand across occupations. Many qualified people leave the tourism sector. Recruitment practices often demonstrate preference for low skilled workers (normally cheaper) over qualified personnel. Conversely, qualifications from other sectors are easily exercisable in tourism.

## Tourism and catering sector and quality assurance

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Quality has been a keyword within the Tourism sector for centuries. The quality of the vocational training provided in the sector is dependent on and challenged by: the low wages; the high demand for staff flexibility; the often limited training provision; and the specific nature of the company size structure in tourism where the majority of companies are small or micro enterprises. OECD (2010) recommends the countries to promote an attractive workplace. This can be achieved by rising the skills in the tourism sector and improve quality and productivity of tourism's labour forces, via e.g. quality assurance standards and awards for quality achievements. The promotion of environmental sustainability for green growth and the stimulation of innovation are among the other recommendations made by OECD.

The knowledge and skills required are highly interdisciplinary (Cedefop 2005). New social trends generate new occupations. Multiskilling and new hybrid occupations reflect the trend of the demand for new types of tourism products and services (which are more complex and sophisticated) and the growing demand for functional flexibility of the labour force. In some cases the trend is the opposite: e.g. fast food chains require standardised skills with little room for creativity and manoeuvre. In terms of specific skill requirements, personal and social skills are most sought after across all countries. Apart from interpersonal communication, a capacity to learn and work independently is also gaining in importance. There is also a lack of knowledge of foreign languages and specific knowledge and skills linked to technological innovation and information technologies penetration to the sector.

## Conclusion

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There is a need to invest in developing further quality assurance in the Tourism and Catering sector, both for ensuring that students are provided with training of high standard as well as for providing the sector with workers who possess the necessary skills.

## Sources and suggestions for further reading

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### General international sources:

[http://studyvisits.cedefop.europa.eu/assets/upload/documentation/doc\\_year\\_catalog/Aboutdocumentation\\_TOURISM\\_sector.pdf](http://studyvisits.cedefop.europa.eu/assets/upload/documentation/doc_year_catalog/Aboutdocumentation_TOURISM_sector.pdf)

[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/2304-att2-1-Halle\\_2004\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/2304-att2-1-Halle_2004_Summary.pdf)

[Journal of the European Union \(22.7.2011 L 192/19\)](#)

ETC – European Travel Commission. [European tourism: facts and figures](#). Brussels: ETC, 2004

Cedefop skillsnet sectorflash tourism October 2005.

[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Upload/Projects\\_Networks/Skillsnet/Flashes/Flash\\_2005\\_Tourism.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Upload/Projects_Networks/Skillsnet/Flashes/Flash_2005_Tourism.pdf)  
[cited 15.1.2009]

[Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework](#)

[OECD Tourism Trends & Policies 2010](#)

[European Tourism 2010. European Travel Commission](#)

[European Employment Observatory](#)

[Official Journal of the European Union](#)

[http://www.hotrec.eu/pages/about\\_hotrec/facts\\_and\\_figures/](http://www.hotrec.eu/pages/about_hotrec/facts_and_figures/) – facts concerning the hospitality industry in Europe

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home>

[Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe, 2010. European Commission Communication COM \(2010\) 352/3.](#)

<http://unwto.org/en> – UNWTO, 2009

To download material about the EQAVET reference framework, click [www.eqavet.eu](http://www.eqavet.eu).

### German sources:

[www.bibb.de](http://www.bibb.de) – the official website of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training.

[www.dgb-jugend.de/ausbildung](http://www.dgb-jugend.de/ausbildung) – Statistics and reports on education and apprenticeship see from the students' and apprentices' points of view.

[www.servicequalitaet-deutschland.de](http://www.servicequalitaet-deutschland.de) [www.wak-sh.de/kern2.html](http://www.wak-sh.de/kern2.html) – a regional quality projects within the service sector in general

<http://www.driv.de/index.php?id=547> – German Travel Market 2010 at a glance: Facts and Figures

[www.driv.de](http://www.driv.de) – the official homepage of the German Travel Association (DRV)

[www.zukunft-buchen.de](http://www.zukunft-buchen.de) – the DRV webpage for enterprises interested in education within the travel sector

[www.tourismus-azubi.de](http://www.tourismus-azubi.de) – the DRV webpage for young people (occupational orientation) interested in education within the travel sector

[www.driv-ausbildung.de](http://www.driv-ausbildung.de) – the DRV webpage for employees (further education) interested in education within the travel sector

<http://www.dehoga-bundesverband.de/daten-fakten-trends/> – general data about the hospitality industry in Germany

<http://www.dehoga-bundesverband.de/daten-fakten-trends/gastgewerbe-im-ueberblick/> – general data about the hospitality industry in Germany

[Zahlenspiegel. 1/2011. DEHOGA Bundesverband.](#) – facts and figures about the number of enterprises in different sub-sectors of the hospitality industry, turnover and numbers of employees and apprentices in it

<http://www.dehoga-bundesverband.de/ausbildung-karriere/> – data about vocational training in the industry

<http://www.btw.de/der-btw/die-branche-in-zahlen/> – data about the whole German tourism sector