

Classification

SERVICES IN THE INTERNAL MARKET AND HOTEL CLASSIFICATION

Directive [2006/123/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market

Objective

In order to achieve a “genuine” internal market for services by 2010, the Directive aims to remove barriers to the freedom of establishment for service providers in Member States and barriers to the free provision of services between Member States. It also aims to increase the choice offered to recipients and improve the quality of services for consumers and businesses.

Relevance for the hospitality industry

The Directive is relevant to the sector for several reasons (see sheet on the Directive on services in general). Inter alia, it calls for more transparency in information to be provided to consumers in relation to services offered. Direct reference is made to tourism and the hotel business, mentioning hotel classification as a special area of concern.

State of progress

Adopted. Member States shall bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive before 28 December 2009.

Content

The Directive is calling directly for more transparency at European level in the field of hotel classification. Member States have to ensure that the information on the significance of certain labels and the criteria for applying labels and other quality marks relating to services can be easily accessed.

For a detailed summary of the Directive you can visit the [SCADPlus](#) website (European Commission).

HOTREC position

HOTREC member associations fully agree with the call for more transparency in relation to classification. HOTREC therefore established a specific website, www.hotelstars.org, providing information on what hotel stars mean in the different countries.

Furthermore, in 2005, HOTREC launched, at its own initiative, a benchmarking exercise, aiming at bringing national/regional classification systems closer to one another. Classification systems in the HOTREC countries are widely following some 15 recommendations (soon 21) for the setting-up of and/or the review of national/regional hotel classification systems in Europe.

The benchmarking exercise stimulated new cooperation: The Nordic and Baltic countries are closely cooperating, whereas Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary and the Czech Republic are working on a Central European classification system.

HOTREC member associations will continue to oppose any attempt by the public authorities or the standardisation bodies at European or international level to initiate work on a European-wide or world-wide classification system. Differences in culture and geographical

situations explain the differences between the criteria and methodology of the classification systems in the European countries. Therefore a top-bottom approach is not appropriate with regard to bringing the classification systems closer together.

See also:

www.hotelstars.org

Official reference

Directive [2006/123/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market, O.J. L 376 of 27.12.06

See also:

Own-initiative report by the European Parliament ([T6-0575/2007](#)) on a renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism