

HOTREC position on the EU ecolabel for accommodation

Approved by the HOTREC General Assembly on 12 April 2003

1. On 4 February 2003, the Ecolabel Regulatory Committee voted the final draft criteria for the award of the Community ecolabel to tourist accommodation services. The criteria are divided into mandatory criteria, all of which must be complied with, and optional criteria, only a number of which need to be complied with. The scheme is purely voluntary.
2. Ecolabels already exist at national and regional level in most EU Member States. HOTREC always advocated that, if the idea of a EU-wide ecolabel was to be pursued, consideration should be given to a scheme whereby national and regional labels, which fulfil a certain number and type of criteria, would be automatically recognised as a EU ecolabel. Under the EU ecolabel scheme, the fact of having already been awarded a national or regional ecolabel only warrants 3 points out the total of 16.5 points to be met in relation to the optional criteria.
3. HOTREC will inform its member associations of the new EU ecolabel scheme but it will not undertake any pro-active promotion of the European scheme. It will be up to each national association to decide whether it wants to recommend the scheme to its own members. Enterprises will make their decision on the basis of a comparison between, on the one hand, the marketing advantages of and the cost-savings made possible by the scheme and, on the other hand, the investment costs required to meet the EU criteria and the administrative burdens. Similarly, a comparison will need to be carried out between the advantages/disadvantages of the EU ecolabel versus those of a national/regional ecolabel.
4. Associations in countries where a national/regional ecolabel already exists may prefer to continue to work with that instrument well known by them and for which marketing investments were already made. Associations in countries where there is no ecolabel for accommodation yet may want to support the use of the EU ecolabel or may want to adopt the regional/national scheme of another country, which has already demonstrated its efficiency (for example, several countries have shown an interest in the Danish Green Keys).
5. The platform VISIT brings together some 12 ecolabel national/regional schemes, among which ecolabels supported by our member associations. VISIT organises part of the marketing of these schemes and has identified standards for high environment quality. Provided no financial commitment is involved, HOTREC has agreed to sit on the Advisory Committee of VISIT. At a later stage, VISIT might offer the accreditation system of ecolabels HOTREC has always been calling for.