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PRESS RELEASE

HOTREC launches the European Hospitality Quality scheme

“Quality Label for Swiss Tourism”, the first national scheme to be accredited at European level

(Brussels / Saignelégier, 31 August 2007) HOTREC*, the Confederation of National associations of hotels, restaurants, cafés, and similar establishments in Europe, launched today the European Hospitality Quality scheme (EHQ) and, on the same occasion, accredited the Swiss quality label “Q”, the first national quality scheme to be recognized at European level. The EHQ is the umbrella quality scheme, developed and managed by HOTREC, on a voluntary basis and on initiative of the hospitality sector itself. It serves as a reference model at European level for national and regional quality schemes aiming at ensuring and improving the quality of services in the hospitality sector.

HOTREC President, Bernd Geyer, explained the objectives of this new HOTREC initiative as follows: “*The EHQ is not intended to replace the numerous existing schemes at national or regional level. It rather provides a system for evaluating them as well as information on their meaning. Hereby our guests obtain a valuable tool for comparison and the hospitality entrepreneurs a relevant and practical benchmark to develop their quality efforts.*”

Switzerland is the first country to obtain the accreditation by HOTREC of its “Quality Label for Swiss Tourism” under the European Hospitality Quality scheme. Enterprises entitled to bear the Swiss “Q” are now entitled to use additionally the EHQ label for advertising purposes.

On the occasion of the annual general assembly of the Swiss Tourism Federation in Saignelégier (Jura), Markus Luthé, Chairman of HOTREC Quality Board and CEO of German Hotels Association (IHA), presented the EHQ certificate to Géraldine Zuber Luder, Head of the Swiss Q-label Unit of the Swiss Tourism Federation. The accreditation is valid for a five years period. The EHQ label is in the process of being registered as a Community trademark (CTM) with protection within the European Union and beyond, in countries such as Switzerland, Norway, FYR of Macedonia, Liechtenstein and Monaco.






Photo: Tomas Wüthrich

* HOTREC represents the hotel, restaurant and café sector at European level. This sector counts 1.5 million businesses and provides 8 million jobs in the EU alone. HOTREC brings together 39 National Trade and Employer Associations representing the interest of the sector in 24 different European countries.

In spring 2007, in view of the rising international interest in the Swiss “Q”, the management of the “Quality Label for Swiss Tourism” decided to apply for accreditation under the HOTREC EHQ scheme. On 17 April 2007, Géraldine Zuber Luder presented the Swiss programme in detail to the HOTREC Quality Board in Brussels. She also answered the various questions of the Board. Earlier in the year, in March, a delegation of the Quality Board had already visited the headquarters of the Swiss Q-label in Berne and, on the basis of their audit, had recommended the accreditation of the programme. The Swiss quality programme has been working satisfactorily for ten years already and has gained a prominent reputation across Europe: these arguments led HOTREC to make the Swiss Q one of its pilot EHQ projects!

The EHQ includes three levels (Q', Q'', Q''') with criteria setting practical requirements for proper quality management.

 <p>European Hospitality Quality</p>	<p><u>Basic level of quality:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest oriented processes, • One quality-coordinator per establishment, • Internal/self-assessment of the establishment, • Systematic complaint management, • Action plan with relevant measures at least once a year, • Limited duration of Q-assessment.
 <p>European Hospitality Quality</p>	<p><u>Second level of quality:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria of basic level of quality and additionally • Revision of the action plan on the basis of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guest surveys and ○ Written report of mystery check, • Employees' involvement.
 <p>European Hospitality Quality</p>	<p><u>Total Quality Management (TQM):</u></p> <p>Implemented and documented by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System equivalent to • ISO 9001:2000 certificate or, • EFQM certificate (≥ 300 points).

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