



Upcoming Spanish EU Presidency urged to prioritise tourism and hospitality

27 April 2023, Costa Adeje, Spain – HOTREC members from over 30 European countries reunited today on the occasion of the 86th General Assembly of the Association.

Ahead of the Spanish Presidency of the EU that will begin on 1 July, representatives of the European hospitality sector are meeting in Tenerife to kick-off two days of discussions that will focus on post-COVID challenges and the support to companies. Ms Rosana Morillo, Spanish State Secretary for Tourism, anticipated the upcoming priorities of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU concerning tourism and hospitality. We trust in the Spanish government's vision to prioritise our sector during its term of office. We are also pleased to note that, next Autumn, the Presidency will organise the European Tourism Forum.

As emerged from the day's discussions, businesses in the sector have reopened, but are still facing worrying issues, that we believe should be put at the top of the EU agenda. Delegates voiced their concerns over increased inflation, interest rates and energy and food prices, but also on crippling staff shortages, increased regulatory burdens, and the many challenges posed by the digital and green transitions.

We renew our commitment to digital and sustainability goals. Nevertheless, recent Eurostat statistics warned of increased bankruptcies in our industry compared to the pre-pandemic period. Over 97.7% more establishments permanently closed their doors in Q4 2022 than in Q4 2019: behind this number, thousands of hotels, restaurants, and bars, that we are no longer able to visit. This is especially true for the more vulnerable SMEs, which, without concrete and impactful support, will struggle to succeed in the transition to a more digital and greener business model.

HOTREC invites the Spanish Presidency to progress on key legislative files: among others, the EU proposal for a Regulation to enhance transparency in short-term rentals accommodations and VAT in the digital age package, where HOTREC has been calling for a level playing field amongst all accommodation providers.

"I am delighted to join HOTREC members in beautiful Tenerife for my first General Assembly as HOTREC President." Stated Mr Alexandros Vassilikos. "The road ahead is challenging, yet exciting. European hospitality is facing important challenges, but we at HOTREC are well-placed to deliver an ambitious agenda to support our members and our industry".

The General Assembly in Tenerife also marked a meaningful time for our membership. We are glad to announce that, as of today, the Portuguese Association of Hotels, Restaurants and Tourism (APHORT), and the Armenian Hotel Association (AHA), joined HOTREC, which now represents 47 national associations in 36 European countries.

"It is an honour to welcome two new members to the HOTREC family. We look forward to working with APHORT and the Armenia Hotel Association to further strengthen European hospitality." Commented Marie Audren, Director General of HOTREC.

The General Assembly elected Mr Morten Thorvaldsen (Norway) as Vice President of HOTREC, Mr Dirk Beljaarts (the Netherlands) as Chair of the HOTREC Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee, and Mr Ludo Geurden (Belgium) as a member of its Executive Committee.

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What is HOTREC?

HOTREC is the umbrella association of Hotels, Restaurants, Bars and Cafés and similar establishments in Europe, which brings together 47 National associations in 36 countries, and is the voice of European hospitality. HOTREC's mission is to represent and champion its interests towards the EU and international institutions, foster knowledge sharing and best practices among its members to further promote innovation, and act as a platform of expertise for the hospitality sector.