

International Conference Human Rights in Tourism
28 June 2017, 10.30-17.30h
Haus am Dom, Frankfurt am Main

10.30 Welcoming remarks, introductions, agenda

Antje Monshausen, chair of the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism, welcomes all participants and [speakers](#). The moderator Dr. Minu Hemmati explains the [agenda](#) of the day. After a brief period of introductions, it is noted that the 43 participants present bring more than 350 year of experience in working on the issue of human rights in tourism to the table.

11.00 National and international trends around the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

Key Note by Deniz Utlu, German Institute on Human Rights

Due to illness, Deniz Utlu (German Institute on Human Rights) provided his key note in written form "[National Implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights \(UNGPs\): Where we are, where we could go](#)", which was read out by Sören Stöber. The paper shows the status quo of the current efforts to implement the UNGPs in France, UK and Germany, highlights the lessons learnt from these processes and ends with a plea to boost ambitions from a human rights perspective on part of all stakeholders involved.

**11.30 Working conditions and human rights along the supply chain
– the hospitality sector**

Lucie Servoz, ILO: [cf. Presentation](#)

- Potentials and challenges inherent to the tourism sector to put the concept of decent work into practice
- New modalities, trends and developments require new legal frameworks
- [ILO guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism](#) are available online and will be officially adopted in November 2017.

Sotiris Milonas, Travelife: [cf. Presentation](#)

- Presentation of the analysis of the most recent Travelife audits of hotels in Sri Lanka with particular focus on Human Rights issues
- Major challenges include decent work (no living wages, discrimination re. distribution of service charge, over-time, staff accommodation) as well as water usage and waste water treatment

Kevin Curran, Unite the Union: [cf. Presentation](#)

- Presentation of key findings on workers' rights situation in London (for more information cf. publication [Unethical London](#)).
- None of the large hotel chains in London are allowing for collective bargaining, freedom of association, trade union access and pay living wages.
- Severe violations of workers' rights result in an insecure and vulnerable workforce trapped in poverty with little or no chance of social or economic progress.

Massimo Frattini, IUF comments on workers' rights in the sector at global level

- The high level of outsourcing weakens collective bargaining rights of the workers around the globe.
- Lack of implementation of the ILO core conventions is i.a. due to weak national laws and/or weak enforcement mechanisms.

Nicolas Perin, International Tourism Partnership: [cf. Presentation](#)

- Due to the highly fragmented nature of the hotel business many different stakeholders with different levels of bargaining power are involved in the recruitment and employment processes.
- This makes the enforcement and monitoring of workers' and human rights within the labour supply chains extremely difficult.

Human rights in the hospitality sector: Strategies for further engagement

The speakers as well as the participants were asked to name 1-2 concerns that are particularly important from their perspective. The audience chose the first three topics for further discussions in working groups. However, all five mentioned issues will be reflected particularly in the activities of the RT.

- non-standard and informal working arrangements (> 15 votes)
- fragmented ownership structure of the industry (> 15 votes)
- consumer awareness (> 15 votes)
- freedom of association / collective bargaining rights (< 10 votes)
- distribution of service charges (<10 votes)

Working Group: Consumer Awareness

The group discussed how to communicate businesses' due diligence activities in order to bridge the gap between consumers' intentions to travel sustainably and the actual purchase decision without any change in legislation. It was proposed, that RT could offer a platform to facilitate the exchange amongst members on the issue.

Working Group: Non standard and informal working arrangements

The group identifies outsourcing as a major challenge as it makes it extremely difficult to control contract conditions and to protect employees. Furthermore, the seasonality of jobs increases workers vulnerability as concepts to ensure constant pay, social security and/or job security during off seasons are not well established yet. Legal complexity and uncertainty are a major issue as employment standards differ from country to country, and may in some countries not exist at all. It is hard for businesses to pay living wages as they are usually not congruent with minimum wages. There is a strong need for internationally agreed upon labour standards that are enforced on the ground. As a first step, a database of world-wide regula-

tions would help tour operators to gain an overview of existing labour standards in the respective country.

Working Group: Fragmented ownership structure of the industry

The group was aware that issues such as outsourcing and/or franchising is widespread along the sector and that the level of influence of individual tour operators is extremely limited. Therefore clear and binding regulation is urgently needed. Travel and tourism associations, have a very crucial role to play, because they could organize joint interventions and coordinate among their members. Concretely the idea occurred to assess the experience with other issues, where such a sector-wide initiative gained momentum and changed the situation tremendously (e.g. swimming pool security). Secondly it was suggested, that franchise manuals and contracts are important and that a first and pragmatic step would be to identify one concrete dimension on human rights and to advocate intensively for the inclusion. Thirdly the issue of shareholders pressure was mentioned. There might be a dynamic, if investors and or equity funds would be addressed by the RT.

15.00 Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIA)

Phillip Bleckmann, Global Compact Network: [cf. Presentation](#)

Gives an overview of current HRIA approaches as well as instruments and tools.

Matthias Leisinger, Kuoni Switzerland: [cf. Presentation](#)

Feeds in lessons learnt from Kuoni's HRIA in Kenya and India.

Beth Verhey, UNICEF: [cf. Presentation](#)

Puts an emphasis on children's rights within HRIA and presents UNICEF's tools and guidance documents in this context.

After the presentation **6 working groups** discussed the following topics in a world café format:

Working Group: Stakeholder Mapping

How to select the key stakeholders along the value chain, that should be consulted for a trustworthy HRIAs?

- Carefully analyse power centres, leadership roles and underlying power structures. Be aware of hidden agendas and identify potential power gaps.
- Collaboration is crucial. Bring together tourism industry (associations, tour operators, etc.) as well as CSOs (as genuine power centres).
- Defining a focus is crucial.

Working Group: Land Rights

What are current or potential human rights risks concerning competition for access to land and how to address them?

- Tourism fuels land and resource conflicts (evictions due to infrastructure developments, land/ocean grabbing in the name of environmental conservation, commodification of land/resources, gentrification processes).
- Land and access to land-/ocean-based resources are inseparably linked to livelihoods and to various human rights. Free prior and informed consent must be ensured especially in the tourism development process and beyond. Lack of binding regulation and functioning enforcement mechanisms (from international down to local level).

Working Group: Children's Rights

What are the advantages and disadvantages to conduct child-rights impact assessments in comparison to Human rights Impact Assessment with a special focus on children?

- Both processes offer advantages. In an optimal scenario, both assessments would be conducted.
- The RT can be an important platform to share experiences of different stakeholder groups in this regard and to develop practical guidance documents and trainings based on members' experience and expertise.

Working Group: Information Collection

How to collect and assess critically the quality and relevance of information? How to handle contradictions from different stakeholders?

- Information must be analysed carefully with due diligence
- Assessment of information must be as balanced as possible taking into account the context (where does the information come from? Who provided it and what are their motivations to share this information?)
- Quality > Quantity

Working Group: Salient HR issues

Where are the potentially highest risks? How to prioritize risks?

- Introduction of the concept by video: <https://vimeo.com/154834462>
- Salient HR risks can be prioritized based on scale (how bad is the impact?), scope (how many people are affected?) and remediability (how easily can it be put to right?).
- Consequent change in perspective: from company-focused to people-focussed. This might lead to different prioritization.

Working Group: Tourism businesses: cause, contribute or linked to?

How to identify the own connection and power to address human rights risks?

- Introduction of the concept ["Cause, contribute or linked to"](#)
- Concept seems helpful in the context of assessing the role of other stakeholders and to identify synergies. Cooperation is key to address challenges that are not directly caused by one stakeholder.

16.45 Grievance Mechanisms – Experience from other sectors

Online-Presentation by Tulika Bansal, Danish Institute for Human Rights

The audience thanked Tulika for her interesting presentation, which provided a lot of information. Although there was no time to deepen this issue during the conference, the audience agreed that it is a very crucial and important issue that should be adressed again on another ocaasion with more interaction and sharing of practical ideas.

17.15 Closing

Peter-Mario Kubsch, chair of the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism thanked the speakers and all participants for their contributions. Many of the ideas and suggestions raised during the day, will be further discussed during the Annual General Meeting of the Roundtable on the coming day.