

Travelife statement on Schyst Resande's report *Travelife's broken promises to hotel workers* 08/09/15

Travelife for Hotels and Accommodations welcomes the report and any debate that brings the issue of human rights in tourism to the forefront of the discussion and we remain open and available for further dialogue.

After having committed to an open dialogue with Schyst Resande since 2013, Travelife is disappointed with the misleading representations of facts and arguments made by the authors, as well as the unfounded negativity in this report. Also, contrary to the authors' statement we were not given the opportunity to comment on the findings of their report.

Travelife for Hotels and Accommodations is one of very few sustainable tourism certification schemes which undertakes to tackle the issue of human rights in tourism. Auditing human rights is a complex issue, one which we take very seriously. As such, we recognise that our auditing process alone is not the only tool by which one may identify all potential human rights violations, and therefore we have been transparent about these issues when speaking to the authors. Travelife will continue working with our partners and stakeholders to rise to this challenge.

Specifically, the report purports to criticise Travelife's approach to labour conditions and human rights. On the contrary, the report in fact focuses on the structural challenges in the Turkish tourism sector (for instance, seasonality and seasonal contracts; the level of Turkish legal minimum wage), issues which we take into account but are outside the scope of Travelife's published standard. This has been extensively explained to the authors.

The report, in material aspects, fails to present evidence supporting its claims. For instance, in relation to Turkish hotels, key claims about discrimination, missing employee registration, written contracts and insufficient payment of legal minimum wage are made without the provision of any supporting evidence.

As the authors of this report point out, the "interviewed hotel workers in Turkey do not constitute a representative sample", and it is noted that a number of the employees interviewed had only commenced employment on the very day of the interviews.

Finally, we welcome the authors' comments and recommendations on the clarity and the wording of our criteria related to Freedom of Association.

ENDS