

Abstract: Training and education trends in European tourism

For the duration of the three years of the **Leonardo Da Vinci** pilot project of EU-EQT (European supplementary qualification in tourist management) the **Deutsche Angestellten-Akademie** (Mittelhessen and Braunschweig) in co-operation with seven other European partners will develop a supplementary qualification according to the requirements of the European tourism and leisure sector.

In this frame the University of Gießen (spring 2003) carried out a study about "training and education trends in European tourism".

The tourism qualification systems in Europe are highly differentiated organizational systems. The business activities contain both, academic and non-academic offers for further education. Furthermore various national disparities need to be considered.

Analyzing the dialogues of **experts**, referring to necessary components of tourism education and further training, the following topics obtained the majority:

- § Lifelong in-service-training in order to adapt to a dynamic, permanently changing tourist industry
- § Increased strengthening of practical training in education and further education
- § In every tourism education system the difference between incoming-tourism and outgoing-tourism needs to be more obvious
- § Improvement of commercialization and network for tourism offers

The following essentials and challenges were generated by the standardized survey concerning the development of European education and further education-systems:

- § The afore mentioned **deficiencies concerning marketing** strategies were confirmed by the results of the standardized survey
- § Dealing with the **core** topics concerning the tourism training and further education the following subjects were identified: sales training, intercultural communication and management, foreign languages, customer orientation, new markets, new media, social competence, personnel-competence, human resource management. The theoretical, transnational European topics on the other hand were classified as less important. It again proves the need of more practical experience in tourism education and further education.
- § The **special** topics (Business, Health/Wellness, Cultural, Event, Sports Tourism) were evaluated as very important. The special topic, ecological tourism as an independent tourism form seems to be problematic. Aspects of sustainability, social acceptance and ecological compatibility are cross-sectional areas of all tourism offers.

It needs to be said that tourism terms defined by the survey often can not be distinguished. Frequently a link happens among different kinds of tourism offers (e.g. business-tourism and wellness-tourism). Regarding the concept they seem to contradict each other, but they actually complete each other in a concrete offering and can even develop their own quality. By combining different tourism offers (e.g.: Sport and culture in Tuscany, skiing and wellness in Austria) offerings and geographical regions become even more attractive for the consumer. The combination of various offers carries lasting interest and demand.

Concerning the integration possibilities of newly developed, European oriented, tourism-specific contents in already existing or upcoming national education and further education can be derived from both: from the analysis of the expert conversations, as well as from the results of the standardized survey:

- § To provide training of multipliers or trainers

- § Supporting the process of integration by:
 - European exchange programs
 - Acknowledgment of the modules in a so-called Euro-pass (passport of skills)
 - Bilateral acknowledgment of tourism training and tourism further training
 - European wide self-organized, accepted and acknowledged certification
- § Supplementing these priorities they are flanked by:
 - Marketing and public relations
 - Distribution via Internet