

Annex 2. Questionnaire on the first draft of the European Charter for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism

Q0: Please indicate the capacity in which you are responding to this consultation:

a) As an individual

If so, please state your name

b) On behalf of an organisation

If so, please state the name of your organisation:

Leaseurope, the European Federation representing the leasing and automotive rental industries in Europe.

Boulevard Louis Schmidt 87

B - 1040 Brussels

Belgium

Tel : +32 2 778 05 60

Fax : +32 2 778 05 78

r.knubben@leaseurope.org.

Q1: Do you think the overall structure of the Charter as proposed is adequate?

Yes

No,

(If no, please indicate which changes you would suggest)

Q2: Do you think the Charter in length should be:

a) A simple and short document (including only general principles) – shorter than the current first draft?

b) As long as the proposed draft

c) A more detailed and comprehensive document with detailed guidance for stakeholders – longer than the draft proposed?

Q3: How general/ or specific-detailed the content of the Charter should be? Do you think that the Charter should provide:

- a) A set of general principles
- b) a) + general guidelines as lines of actions but without specific recommendations for actions for the different target groups (without bullet points in "lines of actions" as currently presented)
- c) a) + **general guidelines as lines of actions with specific recommendations for actions for the different target groups (as in the current first draft of the Charter)**
- d) c) + more developed guidelines/lines of actions than in the current draft of the Charter

Q4: Do you agree with the identified target groups of the Charter (national/regional administrations, tourism destinations, tourism businesses, tourists)?

Yes

No

(If no, please indicate which changes you would suggest.)

Currently, under the third heading titled “*Key Functions and Target Groups*” the Charter identifies “*transport providers*” as one of the key players influencing the functions such as “*the choices made and actions taken by tourists*” and “*the operation and performance of all businesses within the industry*”. Leaseurope feels that car rental companies should be explicitly identified as providers of a flexible means of transport in the tourism industry, given their importance in helping tourists to get to their destinations, including remote locations which are difficult to reach by fixed route transport solutions.

Approximately one-fifth of all rental transactions involve one-way trips, which underscores the extent to which car rental solutions are being used to access or connect with other means of transport, including rail and air travel.

Q5: Do you agree with the list of “*Principles for a sustainable and responsible Tourism*” as presented in the current draft of the Charter? (point IV of the current draft Charter)

Yes

No

(If no, indicate which changes you would suggest)

Point (f) of the general principles for sustainable and responsible tourism states that:

- *The direct beneficiaries of tourism, including businesses and tourists, should be aware of the external costs associated with their activities and be prepared to contribute to their mitigation.*

A distinction should be made between compulsory taxation collected by public authorities and the voluntary investment of companies to make their industry more sustainable. Leaseurope's members actively endeavour to mitigate the external costs associated with their business activity by offering the newest, cleanest and best maintained motor vehicles on the market. This enables tourists to travel as sustainably as possible.

By exposing consumers to the most environmentally friendly and fuel efficient cars with the latest safety features, the industry helps to promote and facilitate the take up and use of ultra-low carbon vehicles (plug-in hybrid, electric and others).

,

Q6: Do you agree with the list of "lines of actions" as proposed in the current draft of the Charter? (point V of the current draft Charter)

Yes

No

(If no, indicate which changes you would suggest)

The third line of action listed in section V of the Charter states that the competitiveness and viability of the tourism industry should be ensured. In particular, the Charter states that:

- *Legal and fiscal requirements of tourism businesses should be fair, simple and transparent. They should be co-ordinated and avoid the duplication of taxes and regulation.*

It is important to highlight the existing barriers to the cross-border movement of rental vehicles within the European Union. The inability to temporarily shift fleets to meet peak demands in popular holiday destinations leads to vehicle shortages and higher prices for consumers. Leaseurope estimates that in 2010 in Spain and Italy alone, over 100.000 customers were denied the opportunity to book a rental vehicle with their preferred provider due to demand being greater than supply. The same restrictions also make it extremely difficult to complete a 1-way cross border rental that is economically viable.

Leaseurope recommends the Charter focuses more on the removal of legislative barriers which prevent the establishment of a well functioning Internal Market for tourism.

Turning to the eighth line of action which seeks to ensure that tourism respects and benefits local communities, it is worth noting that the car rental industry enables tourists to reach destination in rural areas which are not easily accessible by fixed route transport solutions, thereby benefiting both the tourists as well as local communities.

The tenth line of action, which is to promote awareness and commitment to responsible tourism, suggests:

- *The use of certification and award schemes, to provide businesses and destinations with sustainability criteria, examples of good practice and targets and to inform tourists' choice-making, should be encouraged.*

Leaseurope would welcome a more focused and detailed line of action. The development of a pan-European trademark/logo for industries/companies willing to sign up to the Charter would greatly enhance its value, and enable consumers to make a more informed choice.

Finally, Leaseurope feels a charter on “sustainable tourism” should also involve providing tourism solutions for less mobile or disabled travellers. Most car rental companies have procedures in place to enable use of vehicles by people with particular requirements, and a substantial number of disabled people do make use of these options.

Q7: Are the concepts and language used in the Charter sufficiently clear?

Yes

No

(If no, indicate which changes you would suggest)

Q8: Do you consider the Charter, as currently presented, to be an inspirational tool for the sector? Would it motivate stakeholders to get involved in the initiative?

Yes

No

(If no, please indicate which changes you would suggest)

Q9: In your opinion, the public and private stakeholders endorsing the Charter should express their endorsement and commitment by:

- a) Only signing the charter (excluding individual citizens as residents or visitors)?
- b) Only publishing the charter (e.g. on the stakeholders' websites/publications)?
- c) Signing and publishing the charter (e.g. on the stakeholders' websites/publications)**
- d) Other (Using a logo which can be displayed at point of sale as well as commercial communications)**

Q10: Do you think that the implementation of the Charter by the stakeholders who chose to endorse it and committed to follow its principles and lines of action should be monitored?

Yes

No

In case you think the monitoring is necessary, who should be responsible for it/be involved in it?

- a) The Commission?
- b) National/Regional Public Authorities?
- c) A specially appointed multi-stakeholder group/body?
- d) Representatives of destinations and/or businesses?
- e) Other?

Leaseurope does not oppose the concept of monitoring. However, it is unclear at this stage which body/organisation would be able to do this in an efficient manner, bearing in mind the many thousands of diverse stakeholders.

Q11: In case you think the monitoring of the implementation of the Charter is necessary, which general elements should it comprise?

- a) Periodic reporting by all relevant public and private stakeholders
- b) Verification by a responsible monitoring body – please refer to Q10 c)
- c) Other ways (please specify)

Q12: In your opinion, should there be a European platform of stakeholders established which would exchange/share practices on the implementation of the Charter?

Yes

No

Q13: Do you think it is a good idea to introduce periodic award schemes for stakeholders for exemplary practices of the Charter's implementation?

Yes

No

If yes, which of the following forms could it take?

- a) An award for destinations
- b) An award for businesses**
- c) An award for National/Regional Public Authorities

d) Other (please specify)

Q14: How stakeholders, such as e.g. destinations/businesses, could involve visitors/residents to respect the principles and the lines of action set out in the Charter?

-

Q15: How should the Charter be disseminated?

a) **Web /online publications**

b) **Paper publications, leaflets**

c) **Conferences/public events**

d) Other (please specify)

Q16: With regard to the form of the Charter, do you think that the Commission should:

a) Publish the Charter as a Working Document of the Services with mainly a communication/promotion purpose?

b) **Adopt the Charter as an EU legal but not binding act, e.g. a Recommendation of the Commission**

c) Adopt the Charter via a legislative act, e.g. a Regulation?