Studienkreis
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Entwicklung e.V.

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“TO DO Award Human Rights in Tourism“ for UNITE – the union

For the first time, the Institute for Tourism and Development (Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e.V.) honours initiatives and projects for the protection of human rights in the context of tourism; the German Commission for UNESCO has taken over the patronage

Seefeld, 13/02/2017 – The British trade union *UNITE – the union* will be awarded with the first ”TO DO Award Human Rights in Tourism“, launched in 2016 by the Institute for Tourism and Development in cooperation with the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism and Studiosus Reisen München. The award will be handed over on 9th March, 2017 during the TO DO! award ceremony at ITB Berlin.

UNITE – the union is the biggest trade union in the UK in terms of membership: It mainly organises workers in the hospitality sector and various other service sectors close to tourism. For many years, the trade union has vehemently been fighting for basic labour rights, against wages that undercut the cost of other producers, unpaid overtime and extremely precarious working conditions in the hotel sector, which are often a consequence of comprehensive outsourcing programmes.

According to UNITE, the working conditions especially in hotels in London in many cases resemble wage slavery. The right to join a trade union is often restricted. Many of the employees do not have any health coverage or legal protection. Workers who complain about these matters are often reprimanded or dismissed. For many employees, extremely long working hours and permanent psychological pressure lead to health problems. *UNITE – the union* fights against the exploitation of staff in the hospitality sector and makes a valuable contribution to the protection of human rights in tourism. *UNITE – the union* incessantly works to improve the working and living conditions of salaried and waged employees.

The “TO DO! Award Human Rights in Tourism“ will be awarded for the first time. Upon the initiative of the Institute for Tourism and Development and in close coordination with the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism (an association of stakeholders from civil society, the tourism industry and politics), criteria for the award were elaborated. From now on, the award is to be given annually to initiatives, projects and individuals who make outstanding efforts to protect

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human rights principles along the entire touristic value chain. The award cannot be applied for. An expert jury will observe the market on a continuous basis, select potential award winners and evaluate their efforts.

“Human Rights must no longer be considered as an option during times when business is going well, but need to be a basic element in any tourism activity. Understood in this way, the human rights of people working in tourism and of the local population in the destinations are non-negotiable,“ says Claudia Mitteneder, managing director of Studienkreis, with regard to the medium and long term objectives of the award. And: “We are particularly glad that Studiosus Reisen München supports the award and that the German Commission for UNESCO also supports these efforts and has taken over the patronage for the first award ceremony in March“.

The newly launched ”TO DO Award Human Rights in Tourism” will be handed over during the TO DO! award ceremony on Thursday 9th March, 2017 at 16:30 Uhr at Palais am Funkturm. Representatives of *UNITE – the union* will be present and will receive the award. The laudatory speech will be held by Bärbel Kofler, PhD, Human Rights Commissioner of the German Government.

After the award ceremony, Studienkreis invites participants to a reception with international delicacies. There will be a possibility to interview representatives of UNITE – the union.

Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung (Institute for Tourism and Development) focuses on development related information and education in tourism. In this context it brings out publications, organises international contests, offers training and seminars for people employed in the tourism sector, carries out tourism research and consultancy, and is involved in dialogue on issues related to tourism development.

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