

## **AMENDMENTS PROPOSED IN THE SPANISH SEMINAR MEETING ON THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OFFICIAL TEXT, PART II (TOURISM BUSINESSES AWARD) HELD ON VALSAIN (SEGOVIA, SPAIN ON 27-29 JUNE 2012**

I am now giving you my own view about every point, as you understand the points below are not my own and I do not necessarily agree with all and every one. Anyway it would be good to know de whole STWG views, as you say.

### **1 Introduction**

8th paragraph:

*“The ECST methodology includes continuous quality management. To ensure that this methodology is always up to date with the latest knowledge and experiences, the EUROPARC Federation should revise it every 5 years”*

The Seminar considers too short the period of 5 years for revise the official text. It is suggested not to establish a fixed period and proceed according to the needs that can appear in practice.

The need for revisions should be evaluated every 5 years. If no real need is recognized, then the revisions are not processed

OK, if the need arises we can proceed, if not, the text will be validated for the next five years.

OK, Agreed

### **4 Basic criteria for Charter partnership**

Point 4 Quality and monitoring. A) *“When the businesses is accredited to an eco-label or Charter Area Quality Programme, it shall maintain this or similar accreditation during de Charter Partnership Agreement period.”*

The seminar is concerned by the difficulties that the present economic situation can produce for tourism businesses as some of the labels are quite expensive and therefore propose to exclude this requirement or at least to put it in a less demanding expression.

If the Patner business is loosing its eco-label or quality program membership and this membership is an prerequisite for its Charter Partnership, the Charter Partnership has no quality bases for continuing. Otherwise the Charter itself loses its credibility.

I didn't personally agree with this point in our Spanish Seminar, so I agree with you now.

OK, we go with this

### **6 To develop Charter Part II the Protected Area must:**

Point 14: *“Report the progress of the Charter Partnership Agreement using the agreed indicators and the Charter Partnership templates annually to the Charter Forum and to the EUROPARC Federation”.*

The seminar don't believe it possible to inform every year to Europarc Federation due to the huge number of businesses and the limited capacity to process all this information by EUROPARC Federation.

This monitoring approach is a key item for system development, if we want to keep the Charter Part II as a real sustainable development process. Monitoring data summarized give a strong information for lobby in the local level but also in EU.

The need for monitoring is not in question, only the capacity to carry it every year and specially the EUROPARC Federation (headquarters) capacity to process all the information. I think this is not realistic.

There is an initiation to take more muscles to Directorate to do this monitoring approach. There is now easy internet based data processing methods for collecting standardized data. The problem is there on the local level; to get the data out of the Partners and send it to the monitoring system over internet. I think still that we should go for it.

## **8 The mutual Action Plan**

3th Paragraph: *“The Action plan is based on the diagnosis by the business on all its valid activities. It identifies the actions contributing to sustainable tourism, which the business already is carrying out. It also defines the development targets, which the businesses identifies and agrees with the Protected Area for the forthcoming agreement period. For these development targets, the Action plan will estimate the necessary resources and time scale.”*

Concerning last sentence, the Seminar highlights the difficulty for small businesses to estimate the cost of many actions and do not consider it relevant, therefore it is suggested just to delete this requirement. The same applies to next paragraph and all referents about resources onwards in the document.

There is no realistic planning if the costs and other needed resources are not integrated with the planning. If the costs are not analyzed the plan can be very unrealistic or only wishful thinking. We do not want this in Charter management.

I understand both parts. I have a direct experience with businesses in my park, shared with many of the Spanish Seminar participants about the limited capacity of the small businesses to calculate the costs of the actions, even more if we insist on a 5 years program. At the same time I agree that a serious program must include an estimation of the costs, but this must be done in a quite flexible way otherwise again I believe it is not realistic and many businesses will be afraid to be obliged to do such estimation. And many of the actions have a value in terms of partnership and cooperation impossible to value in economic value.

I completely agree the need of rough and flexible activities. We can give that information how to make the cost estimations in guidelines. If not thinking economically at all, we are not professional and credible.

## 10. European Charter Partnership Agreement

2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph: *“The Charter Partnership Agreement is valid up to a period of 5 years and cannot be extended beyond the Charter Part I awarding period of the relevant protected Area.”*

The Seminar does not agree in the 5 years period for businesses and reaffirms the need this being limited to a shorter period, as the 3 years initially proposed in the older version. Furthermore the Seminar can't see any problem if the park lost the Charter and the businesses continue with the award until the expiration of the 3 years period.

The renewing of Charter Partnership means administrative work to the PA manager. If the Partnership period is longer, the renewing costs are almost half of that in 3 years intervals. These partnerships can be committed during the whole Charter Part I certification period. This means that there may be also shorter than 3 years Charter Partner periods. The Charter Partnership with the businesses is the second step for sustainable tourism development in the Charter area. If the park loses the Charter certificate the Charter Partnership is lost also. Certainly there may exist local partnerships between park and businesses, but the Charter system and network is not existing any more.

You are right about the administrative work for the management of the Charter partnership. Yet for businesses is scaring to face a 5 years period. Perhaps we have to work harder in convincing them. Anyway I think this is something that requires more time to be checked and finally we will need to adapt ourselves to the feeling of the businesses. If they agree with a five years period, much better. If not, we will have to change it.

In Finland and in Atlantic Isles I have met the business people who say that it is better to think a bit longer if there are not more costs on that thinking. We can communicate of that before the end of the year with Sections.

3<sup>th</sup> Paragraph *“The Charter Partner Agreement must cover the entire business operation on the Charter Area. It is not endorsing any particular product or service. Both bodies sign the Charter Partner Agreement.”*

The Seminar is concerned by the case of agro-businesses. The Protected Area cannot certify agri-food products, for example, and in connection with this is suggested to specify in the Charter Partnership Agreement the specific activities included in the award. In the afore mentioned case of Agro-businesses the Charter can only certify visitor's services and not products.

This is a valid comment. The Charter Part II is focusing on partnerships concerning the development of sustainable tourism in Charter Area. The text in this 3<sup>th</sup> paragraph could have new formulation like this: *“The Charter Partner Agreement must cover the entire **tourism** business operation on the Charter*

Area. It is not endorsing any particular **tourism** product or service...". What is the mutual plan for Actions on the Charter certification period, that is defined more detailed in the Charter Partner Agreement.

OK.

OK, we go with this.