

Professions in Tourism: Regulation vs. Deregulation

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With the aim to ensure free movement of labour and to increase the competitiveness of the European economy, the question of (de)regulation of professions has been for years an ongoing issue in the EU. Regulation of a profession means setting conditions for the pursuit of that profession. Typically, these conditions refer to education and work experience, frequently stipulating mandatory courses and knowledge tests as a condition to obtain a permission (licence) to pursue that profession. The regulation of professions is justified by the public interest theory of regulation with the arguments of safety of users or quality of products/services. However, the regulation of professions has its costs: it may affect the competitiveness of the European economy and the free movement of workers. This is the main reason, why the trend in the EU has been very much towards the state-enforced deregulation of professions, meaning liberalising or eliminating the conditions for the pursuit of an individual profession. The aim of deregulation of professions is to open the labour market and on the other hand to have free access to a desired profession.

Slovenia is known for a relatively high regulation of professions. In this paper, we focus on tourism and on its regulated professions: tourist guide, regional tourist guide, tour leader, mountain guide, caving guide and canyoning guide. We analyse the reasons for such regulation and its effects. Given that the government in Slovenia is planning to deregulate professions in tourism, we also analyse the possible effect of such deregulation. We conclude that the deregulation of profession of mountain guide, cave guide and canyoning guide is not recommendable, as it would effect safety of tourists. However, administrative simplification of the procedure for obtaining the corresponding licenses should be considered. On the other hand, the profession of group leader and tourist guide could be deregulated, but the positive effects of such deregulation are questionable as long as those two professions remain regulated in other EU member states.

Keywords: regulated professions, professions in tourism, deregulation of professions.