

DRAFT
Minutes of HOTREC ExCom of 28 April 2025
Oslo, Norway

ExCom attendees

- Alexandros Vassilikos, President
- Morten Thorvaldsen, Vice-President
- Alexandre Archier, Member
- Alessandro Cavaliere, Member
- Ludo Geurden, Member
- Elisabeth Haglund, Member
- Hans Kant, Member
- Markus Luthe, Member
- Fedja Pobegajlo, Member
- Maria Schreiner, Member
- Joan Gaspart

Guest

- Sami Nisametdin, SSD Chair

Apologies

- Adrian Cummins, Treasurer

HOTREC

- Marie Audren, HOTREC Director General

Key decisions

- ExCom approves the 2024 accounts and recommends the General Assembly to approve the closure of 2024 accounts
- ExCom takes note of the status of 2025 Finances and the status of legal actions to recover membership fees.
- HOTREC to progress with the Taxation study to present it at the next General Assembly
- ExCom took note of the status of the preparation of the damage case claim and confirmed the next steps.
- ExCom took note of the SSD updates
- The next HOTREC General Assembly will take place in Paphos, Cyprus on 15 – 17 October. The following one in Ireland will take place in Cork on 20 – 22 April 2026. More information will be communicated to members shortly.
- The next meeting of ExCom will take place in Slovenia on 1st July. A dinner will be organised on 30 June.

All background documents and slides are available on the meeting page.

The President welcomed members of ExCom in Oslo, where the 90th General Assembly of HOTREC is taking place on 28-30 April. He thanked Mr Morten Thorvaldsen and colleagues from NHO as well as their team for taking on the task of organisation from early 2025. He noted that the number of Delegates present is impressive and shows the support for HOTREC.

He also informed that, unfortunately, Adrian Cummins will not take part in the General Assembly in person, but will be presenting the Finances online. All HOTREC ExCom expressed their best wishes to Adrian.

The President referred to the antitrust statement circulated to members. Members of ExCom approved the draft agenda.

1. Approval of the minutes of ExCom meeting of 25 April 2025

The minutes of the ExCom meeting of 25 February 2025 were approved.

2. Finances & membership

Closure of 2024 Accounts

In the absence of the Treasurer, the DG presented to ExCom the accounts of 2024 which will be put forward to the General Assembly for approval. The audit report was circulated on 25 March and the financial committee met on 10 March to review the account. Both confirmed the good execution of the 2024 budget.

HOTREC is in a good position with over 99% of the fees paid in 2024; an operating profit of 78000€ and accumulated profits of 1.4M€.

ExCom endorsed the final 2024 accounts and recommended that the General Assembly approve them at the meeting of 29 April 2025 in Oslo.

Status of 2025 Finances

The DG presented to ExCom the status of the 2025 accounts for HOTREC. The deadline for payment of membership fees is 30 April and to date approx. 77% of the fees were paid. HOTREC has been discussing with several members the payment of the due fees in instalments. The status of the finances will be presented at the General Assembly .

On that note, the DG confirmed that, further to the meeting of ExCom in February, the project to commission a HOTREC study on the impact of taxation has been progressing well. Together with the President, the Treasurer and Mr Hans Kant , the HOTREC team met with two potential contractors based on their initial offers. One has been chosen – Synthesia – and the objective will be to present the study at the next GA. The President will share the information with members at the General Assembly. Mr Archier mentioned a similar study recently done in France and he will see whether this can be shared with HOTREC. The DG confirmed that input from members on similar researches/data available at national level will be of great support.

Membership

- Georgia: HOTREC is liaising with the association of Georgia to find a solution for the payment of the 2024 and 2025 fees. Their representative is present in Oslo, and it is suggested to exchange with them before deciding on the next steps. It will be discussed at the next ExCom.
- Serbia: there is still some money due by Serbia to HOTREC. Regular reminders are sent, and the association seems willing to pay the full amount – whenever possible. By way of reminder, the Belgian court issued a favorable judgment to HOTREC in 2023.
- Bulgaria: Since the last ExCom, the DG confirmed that the money due by BHRA has been recovered further to the enforcement case HOTREC pursued in Bulgaria. All the details of the amount recovered, and the legal costs were shared with ExCom members. Of note that there are still legal costs from the BHRA decision to appeal the first instance judgment in Belgium.

The President thanked the DG for the report on all the financial matters and status of membership fees. On the later, he confirmed that it is always preferable to find an amicable solution with national associations, unless they are no other option for HOTREC to resort to legal action.

3. Private damages actions by European hotels in the aftermath of ECJ judgment on Booking.com

Mr Markus Luthe updated ExCom on the status of the case since the last ExCom where it was decided that HOTREC will support the case. It will be confirmed to the members of the General Assembly tomorrow. Dr Volker Soyvez is present in Oslo to provide the necessary clarifications and answers to questions.

In terms of timing, the communication to HOTREC members will be the following:

- National associations will all receive a draft contract to support the case in the next few weeks
- By 23 May they should confirm their support and agreement to put their logo on the action website. This might also include a signature of the compensation agreement (not an obligation).
- A HOTREC press release will be out on 28 May. Before this, the text will be sent under embargo to all HOTREC members. Coordination will be critical for all to push the button on the same day.

Mr Luthe mentioned that HOTREC observer members have also been informed, and for example, a legal analysis was sent to TUROB in Turkey. Legal action would be possible, but in a separate case. Mr Luthe also confirmed that when it comes to some countries like Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, the legal systems are so different that it is not possible to pursue.

When it comes to the management of the case, it will be done via a Foundation, legally established in the Netherlands. It will be composed of 3 entities: the Administrative Board, the Supervisory Board and the Advisory Board. The latter will be composed of representatives of the Hotel industry. Mr Alexandros Vassilikos, Mr Otto Linder (Chair of IHA) and Mr Markus Luthe will be the members of this Advisory Board. It will play a key role in the communication between the litigation funders and the hotel sector.

The President thanked Markus for his work on the case. He also mentioned the recent unfortunate development in France and in Spain, where two law firms announced publicly the launch of a damage claim case against Booking.com. There was broad press coverage, not only in France and in Spain. In the case of France, Alexandre Archier confirmed that this was an uncoordinated initiative and not supported by the association (GNC). In the same vein, HOTREC had exchanged with Spanish representatives who confirmed that they don't support this initiative.

4. Update on SSD

Mr Sami Nisametdin, Chair of SSD, thanked the President and ExCom for their invitation to report on the SSD developments. Working with a new EU institutional set up, he noted the following initiatives to be monitored closely:

- EU initiative on the Union of Skills which can bring positive developments in terms of upskilling and reskilling
- The Talent pool initiative that is supported by HOTREC to ease the identification and recruitment of third country nationals
- EU Initiative on a Quality Jobs Roadmap. This is more of a concern for HOTREC and the employers' community. The Commission will launch soon a consultation of social partners on the Roadmap and it is expected that the Trade Unions will come up with a long list of new proposals for regulation: on just transition, on sub-contracting, on telework ... Together with HOTREC team, the SSD is monitoring very carefully what is happening and will suggest action to HOTREC members when necessary.
- HOTREC continues to play a key role as a member of the European Employer Institute. The DG confirmed that the EEI has launched a series of studies on AI@work; productivity gap; sub-contracting.

Mr Sami Nisametdin finally informed ExCom that the signature of the Guidelines on Third Party Violence at the workplace and their publication will take place on 6 May. HOTREC will be present together with EFFAT as both were part of the negotiations.

The President thanked the SSD Chair for his report and his work on all those important files.

5. A.O.B

The DG confirmed that the next General Assembly will take place in Paphos, Cyprus on 15 – 17 October 2025. She also communicated to ExCom that the Spring 2026 GA will take place in Cork, Ireland on 20 – 22 April 2026. The dates will be shared with HOTREC members.

The next meeting of ExCom will take place in Bled, Slovenia on 1st July. All the details will be circulated soon and Mr Fedja Pobegajlo looks forward to welcoming ExCom in Slovenia.

MA 06/05/2025