

Quality Jobs Roadmap

HOTREC Response to the European Commission Consultation

Context

HOTREC, the European association of hotels, restaurants, bars and cafés, represents 2 million businesses supporting over 10 million jobs across Europe. Importantly, 99% of our hospitality establishments are SMEs and 90% are microenterprises, playing an essential role in sustaining local communities. Hospitality and tourism are vital drivers of the economy, contributing around 10% of the EU's GDP.

In recent years, the sector has been showing resilience, according to Eurostat¹. However, inflation levels remain high (more than 2% on average²), while food and energy costs continue to increase. At the same time, the uncertain and turbulent geopolitical situation deters growth and competitiveness, especially in countries bordering Ukraine. Last point of context, since the pandemic, the sector continues to face not only skills shortages, but also labour shortages.

HOTREC believes that a **competitive working environment** will create the conditions to **protect employees, make businesses flourish**, and deliver quality service to clients.

Questions

Question 1 - Are we going in the right direction for addressing the challenges and taking on the opportunities arising from the changes in the world of work?

The European Commission highlights in its background document several initiatives that aim at promoting fairness, fair working conditions and inclusion. This shows that a lot is already being done at both EU and national level. HOTREC defends that **enforcing the implementation of current regulation** should be a priority.

Guidelines on how to implement EU legislation at national level are also very welcome. Often, companies have doubts on how to implement the legislation.

¹ Eurostat [link](#)

² Eurostat [link](#)

Question 2 – What is necessary for quality jobs to be future-oriented and future-proof?

It was clear from the hearing held on 5 May 2025 that the European Commission does not consider **that definitions should be part of the Roadmap**. HOTREC fully agrees with this approach. Definitions of quality jobs might differ from country to country, region to region. People will also have different perceptions of what a quality job is, depending on experience.

Collective bargaining is a powerful tool to discuss quality jobs for those countries who have it. However, **collective bargaining should be voluntary** and based on the autonomy of social partners.

HOTREC considers that the following components are relevant, when considering quality jobs:

- **Skills**
 - **Up-skilling and reskilling** the workforce is key. **Training programmes** are essential for the good performance of tasks in the sector. Currently we are facing a lack of interpersonal skills, languages, cooking skills, sustainability skills (how to manage food waste or waste management, how to be energy efficient), digital skills (e.g. digital upskilling programs, including AI driven booking systems; online customer services; cybersecurity awareness for hospitality businesses; optimising social media).
 - **Apprenticeship schemes:** Vocational and Educational Programmes should be encouraged by the EU. VET should be seen as a first career option.

HOTREC welcomes the [Union of Skills](#) and is ready to work with the Commission on the initiative.

- **Promoting different forms of work**

HOTREC calls on the EU Institutions to promote different forms of work. These are vital for the sector in order to be able to **provide a service** when there is demand. It is also a matter of principle and a question of freedom of contract.

Examples of different forms of contract can include:

- **Short term:** Despite trying to attract travellers all year long, some businesses need to close down during the low season. Otherwise, companies would be bankrupted for the lack of clients. Therefore, temporary work is needed (e.g. high season).
- **Part-time:** In some jobs the work needs to be done during certain hours of the day, housekeeping for example, when there is little time to cleanrooms. This means there are not enough hours for a full-time position.

On the other hand, hospitality is a sector that works around the clock, 365 days a year. Shifts are needed and not everyone wants to work during the same schedules (family or personal reasons). This might mean work-life balance to some (e.g. possibility for students to work and pay for their studies).

- **Zero-hour contracts:** These are crucial for hospitality, due to sector specificities. For instance, the organisation of a wedding or birthday party. These are events that take place on a single occasion. Employers will recruit more employees for these specific events.

In some countries zero-hour contracts also provide flexibility to the employees with regard to their working hours. For instance, many young people prefer this type of contract to part-time, in certain countries, as legislation allows them to turn down the calls for work by the employers. Flexibility is highly valuable to many people (e.g. students).

Zero-hour contracts are also necessary to replace other employees for short absence periods (e.g. sick leave, leave for sick children, unauthorized absence). Otherwise, the work environment of the rest of the staff will be affected.

Zero-hour contracts can of course be seen as problematic due to possible misuse, but subsidiarity should prevail. No additional EU legislation is necessary. Possible safeguards can be implemented at national level. This is very important as the use-cases of zero-hour contracts vary from country to country.

- **Promoting the sector's image:** We call on EU institutions to support the sector in developing **training opportunities, career opportunities**, and supporting **capacity-building at national level**.

Moreover, it is very relevant that the EU institutions and public authorities support the **sector in working around the clock 24 hours a day, every day of the year**. Hospitality provides a service to the client. Working evenings and weekends is an important part of how society is structured. This service does not mean that working conditions are negative – the rhetoric must change. We count on public authorities to support citizens who commit to work under these schedules, by, for instance, developing childcare/elderly care infrastructures, affordable, with quality and flexible schedules.

- **Housing:** Everyone should be entitled to affordable housing. Due to the exponential development in certain areas and destinations of short-term rentals (STRs), renting an apartment has become problematic to many employees in the sector due to high costs and unaffordability. The hospitality sector cannot accommodate all their employees in their premises, due to lack of capacity. Currently, only some hotel chains are able to offer accommodation to their employees. We call on the EU to develop recommendations for Member States to tackle this emerging challenge.

- **Equal opportunities for all:** The hospitality sector is incredibly diverse, with more than 50% of employees being women and more than 40% being young people. We also employ people with disabilities as well as refugees and migrants.
- **Social protection:** All employees have the right to social protection. Subsidiarity prevails. The Commission could eventually propose recommendations on how to simplify the procedures at national level.
- **Health & safety at the workplace:** All companies need to comply with OSHA legislation. Health and safety at the workplace are key to keep employees safe, attract talent, and support employers with their managerial tasks.
- **Social dialogue:** Social partners are well positioned to consider the Quality Jobs Roadmap at national level. **Collective bargaining is to be encouraged, in case both employers and employees are willing to develop activities on the matter**, and in full respect of the autonomy of social partners.³
- **EU funding:** For all activities, funding is needed. We hope the revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) has our priorities into account.

Question 3 – Do you agree with the proposed key areas linked to job quality identified?

HOTREC is of the opinion that the European Commission could leave the structure of the Roadmap a little more open. Fair working conditions, digitalisation, fair transitions, and enablers are important; but so are skills or developing competitive business, for instance.

Question 4 – In your view which areas should be prioritised at EU level and why? What specific measures and tools should be used? Please distinguish between legislative, non-legislative and funding.

Please see our reply to Question 2 with regard to the priority areas.

³ It is to note that after the pandemic several collective bargaining agreements in different countries were renegotiated, which meant better working conditions and better salaries.

HOTREC considers that the priority is to **enforce existing EU legislation**. **Guidelines** can also be developed by the Commission to support companies in the implementation of the legislation. In our opinion **no further EU legislation is needed**, also taking into account the goals of the EU to remain competitive by simplifying and reducing the administrative burden.

Nevertheless, HOTREC considers there is room for simplification of procedures on the following pieces of legislation:

- **Pay Transparency Directive**
 - Member States may exempt employers with fewer than 50 workers from the obligation related to pay progression. As this exemption is optional, the Directive risks imposing disproportionate administrative burdens on SMEs and micro-enterprises.
 - All SMEs with less than 250 workers should be exempted from reporting obligations.
- **Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions**
 - Remove the obligation to give a reasoned written response related to the transition to another form of employment.
 - Simplify the obligation and the timeline to provide information to the employee.

Question 5 – Which initiative can you commit to deliver as social partners at the EU level?

HOTREC commits to:

- Organise with EFFAT a webinar on skills in November 2025.
- Encourage members to share VET related experiences during SSD meetings.
- Disseminate and collect practices at national level related to the multi-sectoral guidelines to prevent and tackle third party violence and harassment related to work [\(link\)](#).

Question 6 – What is better done at EU and national level?

The principle of subsidiarity must always be considered. There is already enough legislation on social affairs at EU level.

Topics such as working conditions, salaries, and social protection should not be legislated at EU level.

Question 7 – What specific measures can be implemented to increase collective bargaining coverage and to implement the Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the Member States?

HOTREC considers that it is relevant to promote the exchange of practices at national level. HOTREC promotes this type of exchange during its internal working groups, which take place twice a year. Collective bargaining is a powerful tool for compromises to be reached between employers and employees; but it needs to be done on a voluntary basis.

In order for collective bargaining to be strong, trade unions should have members, so that the majority of the employees are represented.

Challenges in Member States's labour markets should not be solved by legislation at EU level. The EU should support the establishment and development of strong, independent systems for cooperation between the social partners at national level where necessary.