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# The Consequences of Guiding Profession Deregulation for the Status and Training of Tourist Guides: a Portuguese Overview

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In the present neoliberal market economy, the so-called free tours and their unlicensed tourist guides found the perfect environment to practice their activity, which is often criticised by licensed guides. The overall difference between the two types of guides is related to the fact that licensed guides have a formal specific education and training to do their job, sometimes complemented with continuous professional development, whereas free tours' guides don't. Therefore, several questions come to mind: Since unqualified guides are actually working without any training, should there be any formal education for tourist guides? How useful is formal and continuous training for tourist guides? Are we training tourist guides properly?

This paper tries to answer these questions using the Portuguese case. Besides the documental research and the reference works used for the theoretical approach, tour operators and higher institutions professors specialised in tourist guide training were questioned to develop the research. Then, a meeting with a focus group constituted of 10 licensed tourist guides was carried out. The results show what is being done at present to develop quality guiding, but they also light the path for future tourist guide education and training both from an initial and continuous perspective.

**Key Words :** tourist guides, tourist guide education and training, tourist guide continuous development

## Introduction

*Despite the pressure on liberalization of the European market, the tourist guide trade is differently defined in different European countries. In fifteen European Union member states, the tourist guide trade is bound to a qualification, while in the other countries it is an unregulated trade (Fodranová, 2019:9).*

This situation concerning tourist guides is quite unfair, morally, socially and economically for both sides: there are licensed and unlicensed tourist guides working side by side in most European towns.

Licensed tourist guides feel they are mistreated and disrespected because they are educated and trained to do their job, whereas free guides didn't have to go through any training or examination, which they consider to be expensive and useless. Therefore, they have no license and no (official)

guarantee of their knowledge and skills to work as tourist guides. Despite the increasing number of untrained guides, it is predictable that poor quality professionals will be

*liquidated by the 'invisible hand of the market' because a subject that offers services of poor quality would not succeed in competition in case it does not have a monopoly (Fodranová, 2019:10).*

Moreover, as Weiler and Black state

*In cases where the performance of trained and untrained guides has been compared, the research demonstrates that trained guides have a greater influence on visitors' knowledge, enjoyment and satisfaction with the tour than untrained guides do (Weiler & Black, 2015:132).*

The free guides issue arose about ten years ago when deregulation decrees were published in several European countries as a consequence of

the neoliberal market economy (see below). The so-called free guides started to invade towns with their umbrellas and flags, offering walking tours without asking for payment, just a tip, meaning that they do not pay taxes on their earnings, neither will the travel agents they work for, and they do not pay any contribution to health care, retirement, and social welfare.

In this scenery, teachers, academics and researchers started to think how useful it was to continue training people to become future tourist guides. And tourist guides asked themselves how they could provide the best service in this competition context, i.e. how valuable was their formal learning and their continuous professional development. According to Black and Weiler (2013), to meet the needs and expectations of twenty-first century tourists and the challenges of the global communication environment, tour guides need to become more highly skilled experience-brokers, including embracing technology, which should be used to choreograph memorable experiences for tourists. In other words, the only way tourist guides have to prove it is worth being licensed (having education and training) is to give better service than unlicensed guides.

The above-mentioned situation inspired the current research paper to try to understand what tourist guides think about it and what are the best practices both in initial education and professional continuous training. To do this they were asked the following questions:

Is it worthwhile offering formal education for tourist guides?

Are we training tourist guides properly?

Are information technologies in competition with guides?

To answer these questions and reach our goal a focus group of ten tourist guides was assembled, on Guides' International Day, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019, at the Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies (ESHTE), Estoril, Portugal.

Before explaining the methodology, and for a better understanding of the context in which these questions arose, it is fundamental to consider the neoliberal market economy that gave rise to the free guide problem and the context we currently live in.

### **Neoliberalism and Tourist Guiding**

Neoliberal theories emerged in the late 1970s for restructuring international capitalism and restoring conditions for capital accumulation (Harvey, 2005). They emphasise the value of free market competition using a philosophy of *laissez-faire* and stimulating the freedom (or liberty) of individuals against the excessive power of government (Wacquant, 2012). These ideas include economic liberalisation policies such as privatisation, austerity, deregulation and free trade.

Neoliberalism is understood as 'an authoritarian reconfiguration of liberalism' (Seymour, 2014:7), which is seen to be incompatible with democracy, but is presented as inevitable and necessary: there is no alternative, was the Thatcherian slogan. As a consequence of neoliberalism, the rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer, with the rise of underpaid, precarious wage labour. This system includes the liberalisation of formerly public regulated services in favour of private interests (Swyngedouw, Moulaert & Rodriguez, 2002). Sager (2011) stresses how preferential treatment given to private investors may bring about a worsening of services (such as guiding) for people who cannot afford market prices.

Therefore, neoliberal policies have consequences in tourism and tourist guiding. In Portugal, deregulation of the tourist guide profession started with the publication of a Decree on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2011 (Decreto-Lei n° 92, 2011). Along with other professions liberalisation of tourist guiding occurred. From then on everyone could (can) be a guide. This situation led to the co-existence of licensed and unlicensed tourist guides, but the latter don't go through any training at all. They just go out to the streets and talk about the city, forgetting (or not even realising) that a guide has

many roles and duties, besides giving information. Hence, we observed the rise of precarious guides black market (Kleiner, 2006) with unethical charlatans (Shapiro, 2014) who are conveniently underpaid and live on tips, which is quite suitable in the neoliberal economy. After all, too much freedom or no state intervention gives rise to no ethics, quality, security or other guarantees for the consumer. The decisions are only in the hands of those who have the power of money, whereas workers see their rights denied.

It is well acknowledged that unlicensed guides provide a lot of storytelling and entertainment, maybe even more than most licensed tourist guides. There are plenty of weaknesses of licensed tourist guides. They are less creative and innovative (Shani, 2017) and they are not efficient entrepreneurs (Slivinski, 2015),<sup>[1]</sup> probably because they don't feel the need to be more active and they believe that what they know is enough. In reality, however, they are not prepared for all specialised themed tours (Shani, 2017).

Guides also tend to be corporativist, just like many other professionals, such as doctors, lawyers and teachers, exactly because they feel threatened either by their clients or by fake guides and they don't want to lose their job. The fact is that most guides and guide associations don't set minimum quality standards (Weiler & Black, 2015) and therefore they cannot pretend to be better than the others or to give more quality, just because they have to go through expensive education and training. The truth is that nowadays the typologies of tourists are wider and more complex (Joaquim, 2019), so many tourists are not seeking quality but just entertainment and they don't want to spend their money on expensive guides (Shani, 2017).

Other arguments in favour of free guides include freedom of occupation and freedom of speech. The first may be reasonable, if one is actually prepared to perform the job, however the latter only makes sense if one is not paid to speak and if s/he doesn't damage the destination image. If a guide is paid for what s/he says, s/he should

guarantee minimum quality standards in the information and interpretation s/he conveys, and clients should require that quality. Licensed guides claim that regulation ensures ethics, quality and service standards in general for the tourists (Shani, 2017) and guarantees the good reputation of the tourism destination (Zhang & Chow, 2004). Moreover, the education of guides

*is the greatest resource to achieve sustainability goals ... The voice of tourist guides [as informal educators] is an innovative tool for transferring sustainable principles to inspire tourists and potentially influence changes in behaviours and attitudes (Pereira & Mykletun, 2017:359).*

### **Guide Training in the EU and in Portugal**

A "professional" is a person who is a specialist, a trained, qualified and licensed expert' (Weiler & Black, 2015:138). Therefore, training guides has several purposes:

*to eliminate unethical guiding practices, improve visitor experiences and enhance the reputation of tourism operators and visitor destinations (Weiler & Black, 2015:133).*

Yet, not unlike in other countries, obtaining a tourist guide license in Portugal may be expensive and time consuming. The applicant must complete either a three year higher education degree or a one-year course, if s/he already has a university degree. In either case s/he has to pay tuition fees that are quite challenging (over €2500 in 2019), not to mention other expenses such as materials, food and transport. After that, if s/he wants to be recognised as a professional by colleagues and employers, s/he has to go through a certification exam (approximately €200 in 2019), performed for one of the two Portuguese guiding associations. This exam requires a minimum standard to be met by all tourist guides and provides an element of consumer protection (Henderson, 2002; Huang & Weiler, 2010), but it is not a guarantee of excellence and may be inappropriate for specialist guides (Weiler & Black, 2015).

1. On this subject see Professor I's comments in the Results and Findings section.

The Austrian Professional Association of Sports and Leisure Enterprises (2014) issued a document where it claims that there are many advantages in using trained guides to guide tourists:

- 1) They serve as a marketing tool for domestic advertising;
- 2) They substantially contribute to the understanding of a country, a region, and its self-perception;
- 3) Their technical expertise, special knowledge of local conditions, their attitude of consumer protection and heritage caretaker contribute to cultural understanding in Europe and to the impressions that non-European guests get of Europe;
- 4) A tourist guide's field of activities is so very full of responsibilities that extensive training constitutes a concern in the overall (educational) interest of the state, especially when it comes to accompanying and informing school children.
- 5) Tourist guides know immediately what measures to take in case of health or security problems.
- 6) Tourism is a means of peaceful international communication and qualified local tourist guides foster mutual understanding and iron out prejudices. In doing so, tourist guides make contributions to fostering peaceful cooperation as well as to improving intercultural understanding.

The E.U. has also published two important documents on guide training: *EN 15565* (2008) and *Innoguide* (2010). *EN 15565* establishes the basis for guide training, proposing common subjects (or modules) as well as area-specific subjects that should be included in the syllabus of a training course (40% minimum) and practical training (about 60%). The time framing for each subject is also suggested, with a total time of 600 hours (units) along with the language skills – level C1 of language for specific purposes and level B2 as general language level to guide visitors, in accordance with the European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Innoguide is an E.U. Leonardo innovation development project, that is part of a lifelong learning programme. The aim is the development of an e-learning platform for tourist guides and training centres, focusing on three modules: sustainability, intercultural communication and experiential guiding. The project is designed for level 5 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Pereira, Hoffman, Horvati and Mykletun (2010) present the results of the Innoguide project in eight countries involved in the project. In spite of the curricula recommendations that were made in these countries, conclusions are that the EN 15565 was not acknowledged in the Innoguide participating institutions and these organisations did not include enough competence development in the three main areas of the project they joined: sustainable, intercultural and experiential guiding. It is important to mention that the existence of these documents proves that the E.U. is concerned about guide training and heritage interpretation quality. Otherwise, there wouldn't be so much financial and time investment in this area.

In Portugal, three institutions offer training for tourist guiding: Estoril Higher Institution for Tourism and Hotel Studies (ESHTE), located in Estoril, near Lisbon; Instituto Politécnico de Gestão e Tecnologia (ISLA), located in Gaia, near Oporto; and Lusófona/INP University, in Lisbon. The first two institutions offer a three year degree (level 6 in the EQF) for students who have finished high school. The third institution offers a 300 hour programme (level 7 in the EQF) for students who already have a university degree. All three programmes make sense in the present tourism setting, giving people who want to become guides two different kinds of training: young people (18 years old) who wish to receive a degree in guiding; and older people who decided later in their lives that they want to become guides.

At the end of the course, younger students will have general knowledge on many different common subjects and specific technical and practical training in tour guiding. The older students, who already have a specific degree in

some other subject (for instance geography, history of art, economics, etc.), acquire specific competences to convey more detailed information focusing in the subjects they studied, but less competences in tourism and tourist guiding techniques and practice. Hence, two types of student and two types of education produce two types of outcomes for different kinds of tourists.

In common they will (presumably) have the knowledge, skills and competences to act properly and effectively as tourist guides.

### Methodology

The main method used for the present research is the focus group. However, for the earlier exploratory part of the work, four brief semi-direct interviews took place. According to Ochieng, Wilson, Derrick and Mukherjee (2018), interviews involve a one-to-one, qualitative discussion where the researcher adopts the role of an 'investigator'. This implies the researcher asks questions, controls the dynamics of the discussion, or engages in dialogue with a specific individual at a time. In contrast, in a focus group discussion, researchers adopt the role of 'facilitator' or 'moderator'. Thus, the researcher facilitates or moderates a group discussion between participants and not between the researcher and the participants. Unlike interviews, the researcher thereby takes a peripheral, rather than a centre-stage role in focus group discussion.

'It has become widely accepted that focus groups are a rich source of qualitative data for social science research' (Oates, 2000:195). Thus the method:

*aims to obtain data from a purposely selected group of individuals rather than from a statistically representative sample of a broader population (Ochieng et al., 2018:20).*

In this research method

*the synergy which can be generated between participants is the key differentiating characteristic between group and individual interview techniques (Berg 1995:69 in Oates 2000:186).*

As participants answer questions the responses spark new ideas or connections from other participants, so they compare experiences and perceptions. According to Goss & Leinbach, in a peer group setting

*participants are more likely to describe their experiences in locally relevant terms, rather than to attempt to impress or please the researcher (1996:117).*

Focus group is a flexible method. Researcher and participants constantly adapt to the situation and to the people involved. It also proves to be timely efficient, meaning that in very little time the researcher can get a lot of information. On the other hand, there are also limitations to this method, such as the artificial nature of the research setting and the fact that the researcher or dominant individuals may bias the results.

In the present research the meeting with the focus group was preceded by exploratory interviews that lasted between 15 minutes and half an hour. Two travel agents/tour operators and two professors of ESHTE were interviewed in Lisbon and Estoril.

The meeting with the focus group took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and lasted for one and a half hours. The participants were ten tourist guides (4 men and 6 women), aged from 23 to 60 years, including the president of the Tourist Guides and Tour Managers Association (AGIC), the vice-director of a tour operator company (who is also a guide) and other licensed guides who spoke several languages, and had different working experiences.

The following indicators/objectives were established:

- (To confirm) the need of higher school education;
- (To understand) the usefulness of lifelong learning;
- (To realise) the differences between licensed and unlicensed guides;
- (To identify) the role of new technologies in guiding.

The meeting with the focus group was recorded and transcribed. During the meeting the researcher took notes on the reactions and body language of the participants. Their verbal and non-verbal language were analysed. After data collection, the researcher initially coded the participants opinions into 25 categories. In a second-stage, focused coding of the participants statements was undertaken and the key-ideas or themes were reduced to 6 categories. At this stage, category connections were established, and the investigator created a pattern combining the most important considerations on the above-mentioned objectives. The analysis and interpretation of the patterns, together with the transcription of the text led to the production of the following findings.

## Results and Findings

### *Exploratory Interviews*

It was mentioned above that four exploratory interviews took place before the meeting with the focus group participants: two travel agents and two higher institute professors were interviewed for 15-30 minutes. The aim of these interviews was to collect some opinions and perspectives in order to reflect on the questions that should be asked in the focus group, and try elicit a general view of what different players think about tourist guides and the present curricula. These are the results:

*Travel agent 1* thinks that tourists need more entertainment. Guides are usually well prepared to do their job and solve the problems they face every day, but they are also very austere. They should invest in humour and experiential activities. After all, guides are the image of the travel agency. Unlicensed guides have worked two or three times for this travel agent, when there were no licensed guides available. There were no complaints about unlicensed guides;

*Travel agent 2* says that guides must learn to be relevant and be prepared to talk about everything because clients are more and more demanding;

*Professor 1* states that tourist guides are not very interested in innovation and entrepreneurship. They would only need these skills if they had no

work, and that is not the case, since there has always been a lot of work for licensed guides in the past few years in Portugal. In the case of guiding, developing hard skills is more important than learning soft skills. Their education can be seen as a sort of anchor, that helps them whenever they lack knowledge or have to solve problems. Their training is important to open their minds and prepare them to be flexible, so that they can adapt to all kinds of situations and tourists. They learn to understand social changes and how to work with emotions, how to interact with different people, to observe and, to give tourists a sense of place.<sup>[2]</sup> The human factor is crucial in their work, but they also have to use new technologies;

*Professor 2* states that tourism today is becoming a larger and more complex reality, where tourists collect experiences and stories and search for new products, often using technologies. Unlike what some people think, guides are not disappearing, but thematic guides are becoming more relevant and creating their own space. Besides, all guides should have their own business. Entertainment and drama should be part of the guides' training.

A few ideas come out from the four interviews. One of them was the need for more entertainment, maybe in the sense that guides should use more interpretation techniques including humour, storytelling and emotions. The use of technologies by both tourists and guides was also pointed out as something important. Finally, experiential tourism was seen as a trend. These statements will be compared with the ones of the guides to understand if the opinions of the different professionals converge.

### *Focus Group Findings*

All 10 tourist guides (TG) participating in the focus group had the opportunity to answer the questions. If one of them didn't react, the researcher would ask him/her directly what she/he thought about the issue.

The first theme of the discussion related to *the need for higher education*. All of the 10 guides agreed that specific education and training in

2. To make them feel at home, relaxed, flowing.

guiding should be compulsory, because

*it's an anchor for the guides (TGs 3, 5, 6), although training is insufficient on its own, since the everyday guiding experience is very important in practical terms:*

*We are never totally prepared ... but we feel we have a net that keeps us from falling (TG 3)*

According to the guides, specific training is also a 'must have' for several tour operators/travel agencies, because it strongly contributes to the stability of a tour. The course curricula for guide training must include history (TGs 2, 5,7), heritage interpretation (TGs 7, 8, 9, 10) and communication techniques (TGs 8, 9, 10), but also the development of many other different skills that will be fundamental for the success of the guide;

The second topic discussed ***the need for lifelong learning***. Curriculum development is useful since it adds new knowledge related to recent investigation and improves the guides' performance (TGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 8):

*A lot of investigation was made, especially Master and PhD theses about the age of discoveries ... and everything that was published since 1995 has brought new interpretations of History and History of Art (TG 2);*

*We have to improve constantly (TG 8).*

Lifelong learning is undertaken in three different ways: Some guides prefer to search for new information on their own – they are autodidactic (TGs 1, 8, 10); some attend the updating sessions organised by the associations of professionals or by other institutions (TGs 2, 3, 9) and; others join refreshment classes organised by the tour operators (TG 7). They also consider that lifelong learning helps guides to adapt to new situations, contemporary challenges and new types of clients

*We have to keep on training ourselves so that we may adapt to the new clients, who are increasingly demanding (TGs 1, 2, 4, 9).*

One of the guides, who is also the vice-director of a tour operator claims

*I have to find professionals who are prepared to manage the trips that we*

*organise. Our clients ... in the past few years, have become more demanding'.*

Lifelong learning helps to solve problems, but this should be part of the training (TG 1).

For the third theme which ***compared licensed vs. unlicensed guides***, comments were interesting. All guides agree it should be compulsory to have a license, but not to have a certification (TGs 4, 5). Every guide should study tourism and be acquainted with national heritage. Certification, which is currently given by the tourist guides associations, substituted licensing and became an important issue since the deregulation of tourist guiding back in 2011. To be a certified guide means one receives the trust and confidence of tour operators (TGs 2, 6, 8). Employers prefer to hire professional guides because they improve the image, quality and prestige of the trade. One guide (who is the president of a guides' association) states:

*Curiously enough, after deregulation we have more contacts from both Portuguese and foreign travel agencies and even private enterprises, which ask us for certified guides.*

For the guides, to be certified is a brand, a quality trademark (TGs 4, 8, 9), which means that the guide will be accepted by colleagues (TG 4). However, licensed guides recognise that unlicensed guides may be better on specific subjects or for certain thematic tours (TG 5). One of the participants claims that guides

*deal with generalities, which is our speciality (TG 1).*

The tourist guide profession should be more inclusive

*Our job is not to exclude, but to include (TG 5).*

The President of AGIC association (TG 2) noted that nowadays,

*people who have a degree in the field of social sciences, which is quite large ... can be members, if they have complementary training, a post-graduation masters degree or PhD in tourism, that must include Portuguese heritage.*

Finally, all agreed that unlicensed guides should be acquainted with guiding techniques.

For the fourth topic, *the role of new technologies* in guiding, comments were as follows: New technologies are a tool (TGs 2, 8) that helps the tourists to get information about the destination and in addition

*the guides can use this new tool to promote themselves.*

[We have] *to teach guides how to have their own personal application, because sites [for guides] turn out to be useless (TG 2).*

On the other hand, guides feel that

*the human factor is essential and complements the robotic factor (TG 2).*

On this matter, another guide claims,

*Our job is increasingly to keep people company, not to teach them [adding] I must be one of them, to have fun with them (TG 8).*

Guides are mediators,

*after all we are the bridge, the connection between the client ... the country and the local culture (TG 9).*

They interpret heritage according to the needs of the tourists

*our life is to tell stories (TG 8)*

They convey emotions, produce stories and tailor made discourses

*I gather the dates, the kings and bishops and whoever is involved in the building and I create a story, something enjoyable for the clients, because that's what they will keep in mind (TG 9).*

New technologies don't do that. Besides, sometimes machines induce mistakes that guides have to correct (TG 1).

The statements of the guides who participated in the focus group confirm the need for higher education, to be in possession of basic knowledge and to attend to tourist guiding minimum standards. But training is not enough. Guides have to study throughout their lives, because they must keep up with new investigation trends and tourists, giving the right responses to the needs of the people and the industry. They claim it should be compulsory to have a license, which represents an evidence of quality for the guide, the tourists, colleagues and the tour operators.

As far as unlicensed tourist guides are concerned, the licensed guides expressed a positive attitude, and state that they should easily obtain their certification, since a number of them are probably better prepared for thematic tours. Finally, new technologies are seen as a tool to acquire up-to-date information and increase self-promotion, but not as a competitor, since the human factor is fundamental for guiding.

Besides the analysis and interpretation of the guides' statements, the author also decided to analyse the key-ideas expressed by the focus group. In a first stage, the author coded the statements of the guides who were part of the focus group in order to find out the most relevant ideas – 25 themes were recorded in the initial coding (Table 1 – left column). The analysis of these ideas permitted the author to move on to a second stage, in which a more focused coding was produced with six significant themes (Table 1 – right column).

The table was produced in accordance with the focus group methodology that was described in the previous section. The two columns correspond to the two coding phases. Thus, the 6 final categories highlight the key categories of knowledge acquisition and competences required for the life of a guide<sup>[3]</sup>. The table allows us to propose that the best (but not the only) path to achieve quality guiding is to receive initial specific guiding training, followed by certification. Lifelong learning will keep guides up to date with the information that they convey. When/if guides know how to use information technologies, (to study and promote themselves but according to the results not to perform their guiding), they will create trust and confidence both in their employers and in their clients. It should be mentioned that with the passing of time, the guides' name eventually becomes a personal

3. There are two Portuguese tourist guides' associations. One of them (AGIC) organises a national congress of tourist information (CNIT) every year. They both (AGIC and SNATTI) organise thematic courses and visits for their members during the winter. The themes deal with realities as multifaceted as the profession of tourist guide.

**Table 1: Key Issues Related to Status and Training of Tourist Guides**

<b>Initial Coding</b>	<b>Focused Coding</b>	
Initial training should / should not be compulsory (no consensus)	<b>Initial Training</b>	
Initial training promotes accuracy of information		
Initial training is a base, a support and a net		
There must be always some training in tourism		
Specific training is the most suitable		
Most important subjects: 1) professional practice, heritage interpretation and communication techniques; 2) history, Latin and foreign languages; 3) entertainment		
The market looks for well-trained guides		
Be inclusive to all guides (trained or not)		
Certification should / should not be compulsory (no consensus)		<b>Certification</b>
Certification creates confidence in the client and in the employer		
Lifelong learning keeps guides up to date	<b>Lifelong Learning</b>	
Many guides are autodidacts		
New technologies are a study tool	<b>New Technologies</b>	
New technologies are an updating tool		
New technologies are a self-promotion tool		
Human factor is essential in tourism		
Clients are more demanding	<b>Quality Guiding</b>	
A good guide adapts his / her speech to the tourist		
The guide is a mediator		
Storytelling is important		
Non-verbal language is critical		
Guides must keep clients company, support and interact with them		
The guides' discourse must be relevant		
Adapting is an important quality for guiding		
The guide's name becomes a brand	<b>Brand</b>	
Source: author		

brand that guarantees good reputation and respect among the actors of the tourism scene, especially colleagues, and travel agents.

## Conclusions

This research paper presents and discusses several issues related to education, training, lifelong learning and new technologies for licensed tourist guides, using the focus group method to gather data. From the opinion of 10 tourist guides who

participated in the group meeting we can draw the following conclusions.

Tourist guide education in Portugal, as well as in many other countries in Europe, according to the *Innoguide* project, doesn't follow the E.U. recommendations, stated in *EN 15565* or the *Innoguide* project. Tourist guiding courses don't follow the structure, the subjects, nor the time frame established by the E.U. standard and they don't stress the relevance of sustainability,

intercultural communication and experiential guiding in their curricula, as suggested by the Innoguide project.

Guides feel that education in tour guiding should be compulsory because it becomes an anchor for their future work. They also argue that all guides should develop knowledge concerning national heritage and competences for its communication and interpretation, keeping in mind the ever changing and more demanding clientele they work with. During their training, guides should learn more about entertainment and problem solving, whereas lifelong learning should be dedicated to new research in the area of tourism and it should give clues on how to adapt to new situations and new types of tourists. One specific case for improvement is how to use new technologies, which are considered an important tool, but not a competitor, because unlike machines, guides produce tailor-made discourses and convey emotions, proving that the human factor is essential in tourism.

Guides are part of the image of DMCs. Therefore, hiring a licensed guide means quality and improves the image of the trade, that can also hire unlicensed guides, when the official ones are not available. Guides say the profession must be inclusive but acknowledge that 'free guides' should also have some specific training. Either longer or shorter guiding training should be compulsory – shorter for those who already have a degree; longer for those who have just completed high school. Overall, it seems that licensed guides are better in general touring, whereas unlicensed guides are / may be better in thematic tours, if the theme is part of their further education.

The human factor or the psychosocial roles of the guide currently prevail. These roles are mediation and caretaking; heritage interpretation and intercultural communication; sustainability and heritage protection.

From the results of this investigation it can be stated that after a certain period of time, which can be longer or shorter, if the guide keeps on conveying good quality interpretation, his / her name becomes well-known and eventually a

brand, which will mean respect and prestige among his / her colleagues and employers. In consequence, the guide will have more work all the year round and will earn more money.

This paper discussed the points of view of licensed guides about the above-mentioned issues, related to education and training for tourist guiding. It would make sense to now listen and understand the positions of the other side of the same issue, the so-called free guides, and compare the opinions they have.

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