



FEG EUROLETTER - July 2020

Message from FEG ExCo President

Dear colleagues,

What a year!

Words are not enough to express how we all feel during this Coronavirus crisis era across the globe, bringing a recession to all economies and most of all to the tourism industry.

Last winter in our Faro FEG AGM 2019 and in my previous FEG Euroletter message we were all so optimistic that the statistics were showing a growth in visitor arrivals to Europe for 2020, and were all preparing ourselves for a really busy season. How things can suddenly be overturned is now obvious to everybody and we have all realised that health comes first. Health and safety for ourselves and for our own people. We are internationally in “uncharted waters” or in a “dark room” as everybody says, at least for 2020.

Now we all need to use this spare time during 2020 to prepare ourselves and to digitally promote our future tours and our own destinations as much as possible, by media, social media, attending webinars and life-long training, to learn about new safety rules on guided tours, to implement transportation or accommodation measures and to adapt to them the best way we can.



FEG ExCo and trainers have been working on these issues which will hopefully be of assistance to all colleagues in Europe and to your visitors – when our guests may come again to our destinations – for the moment apparently from some European countries only. You are about to read more news in detail further down in this new issue of the Euroletter. FEG ExCo has already met online five times this year and we keep working on our common issues, much more now from home than ever, before during the lockdowns and times of unemployment.

FEG has also frequently represented the tourist guides of Europe in various media and social media with interviews, web conferences, articles and blogs, trying to be visible as a sector of tourism and culture and showcasing the financial problems and the difficulties with the new health measures we’ve all been facing as professionals this season.

It is a strange feeling this time to share with you some of our FEG news for the first semester of 2020...but still, dear colleagues, enjoy reading our news in the present FEG Euroletter.

Best wishes for a better “half-season” for us than it currently looks like, and for our tourism in general. Please, take care of yourselves and stay safe!

Efi Kalampoukidou, FEG ExCo President

22nd FEG European Tourist Guides Meeting & AGM, Valencia, Spain for 2021 **POSTPONED BUT NOT CANCELLED**

In the previous FEG Euroletter we had announced that the popular annual FEG event was going to take place this year in November in the picturesque city of Valencia, Spain, organised by our CEFAPIT colleagues as our hosts for the 22nd FEG European TG Meeting & AGM.

However, as the lockdowns have been from March till recently everywhere in the world with nobody travelling, and it being obvious that tourist guides have no work booked for 2020, it would be very hard - if not impossible - for us all to travel, to spend

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money and to meet together in Spain. Therefore, the FEG ExCo and our Spanish member CEFAPIT's ExCo mutually agreed very early on to **postpone the FEG full Valencia event till November 2021.**

In the meanwhile, FEG ExCo will be closely monitoring the European travel rules, flights and possible future lockdowns and will inform you later this year whether the FEG delegates' constitutional AGM and FEG ExCo elections will be conducted online for 2020 on a web platform, or whether we can plan to meet just for the weekend in a European city easy to reach for the ExCo and delegates only. For the moment, **FEG delegates may note down the dates** of the next FEG AGM: either way this will be done – physically or virtually - **14th and 15th November 2020.**

As you realise, it is still too early to say how.

FEG Online Surveys in April and May 2020

The FEG member-associations were twice asked to forward to their own members the FEG online surveys about the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on TGs, and their governments' financial support for tourist guides, starting with February to April and then there was a second survey from May to June 2020.



The survey results were sent per country to the FEG associations, along with the general European-wide

FEG statistics, extracted with the valuable help of our FEG ExCo Officer, **Themis Halvantzis-Stringer.** Summaries of these results were publicised to the media with FEG blogs, while press releases have been sent. They showed an almost total loss of work for us, which still continued in June.

Many European state governments supported their workers and companies, such as tourist guides - whether self-employed or employed - until May but not many of them have announced further support after that. Tourism, hotels, flights and borders are now gradually opening to European travellers and to locals, but this certainly doesn't mean that tourist guides will have work and tour bookings. If you follow FEG on its social media pages, you may also see that several FEG tourist guide associations have or will organise public protests and demonstrations on the issue of our support and some have created videos promoting our profession worldwide. These colleagues' videos which are in English (or with English subtitles) are also uploaded on the FEG YouTube Channel for you to watch.

FEG lobbying with the EU on support

After the results of the two FEG surveys above were published and with the support and encouragement of our partner CEPLIS on this issue, FEG sent two letters to:

- the EU Commission President, **Ursula von der Leyen,**
- the EU Parliament President, **David Sassoli**

Both letters have been answered back to FEG with reassurances that the EU will keep supporting unemployed tourism workers through common programmes and funds. It remains to be seen how each individual EU member-state government will make use of this support for its own citizens from now on. We are also expecting the results of the upcoming EU Council Summit on the 17th & 18th July for further news and announcements on the Member-States' financial support.

In the meanwhile, the **European Tourism Manifesto Alliance,** the **European Travel**

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Commission -both having FEG as one of its members - as well as the **UNWTO** have been updating us with the news we then forward to our Member-Associations about the measures and the promotion campaigns for this year and for the post-COVID era, which you'll notice are now more targeted to domestic and European visitors for 2020.

FEG Membership

We are delighted to announce that the FEG ExCo received and approved the **Helsinki Guides' Association, Finland** as a FEG associate member and the **Turkish Tourist Guide Federation (TUREB)** as a full member once again, rejoining FEG after some years.

These two new memberships remain to be ratified by this year's FEG delegates AGM.

A warm welcome to the FEG Family!

On the other hand, the FEG ExCo has recently decided to remove from FEG membership the associate members of **Albania, Iceland and Ukraine**, according to our AGM decision, for not having paid their FEG subscriptions on time and after being given several payment deadlines. We really hope they'll soon arrange their financial issues and return to FEG at some point.

The FEG membership for 2020 currently includes 26 associations or federations - 17 full members and 9 associate members.

FEG Public Relations & Events attended

Within the last months with travelling being limited for us all the FEG ExCo members have attended several online meetings and conferences.

They are, as always, important and relevant to our profession and to tourism, in order to raise FEG's profile.

Here is where we've been present:

- **Efi Kalampoukidou**, ExCo President was an invited speaker on behalf of FEG on the **29th May** at the Digi.Travel online conference about "**Travel**

Issues & Trends – Travel in the post-COVID era" where she spoke on the guided tours and qualified tourist guides' issues and the challenges we are all facing this year. The recorded video session of 20 min. has been distributed among the FEG membership.

She also represented FEG on the **15th May** as an invited speaker at the FEG partner **World Food Travel Association's** live TV Talk to speak about "**COVID-19 and changes in food tours**" and how



Photo: Efi Kalampoukidou with travel journalist Vicky Karantzavelou talking about tourist guides in Europe at the web conference by Digi.Travel

we must all adapt to the new rules and social distancing imposed to guides, travel agencies, local producers, restaurants, markets, shops and to our guests. This recorded video discussion with other invited speakers has also been distributed among the FEG membership.

- **Themis Halvantzi-Stringer**, ExCo Officer, had participated in the **European Tour Operators Association (ETOA)** annual European Tourism Summit in October 2019. While at the summit, arrangements were made for a face-to-face meeting in London with **Sofie Jensen, Head of Operations and Destination Engagement for ETOA**. The meeting took place in **25 November 2019** and the

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discussion was on possible co-operation of ETOA and FEG on common tourism issues.

Following up on this initial approach, a web meeting was arranged on the **11th June** with Themis and Efi for FEG and **Tim Fairhurst** and **Sofie Jensen** for ETOA.

The online discussion was on **destination marketing and consultancy based on sustainable guided tours and good practices for Europe**. Both FEG and ETOA acknowledged issues caused by existing overtourism practices and other tourism related issues. We also discussed possible common actions in the form of approaches to national and local Destination Management Companies (DMC) so mistakes of the past are not repeated when tourism recovers in our areas.

FEG has reported at length to delegates and associations on the discussion. We are now waiting from the Member-Associations their ideas and possible contacts with their local destinations to see if we can move forward with this.

FEG promotion campaign and TGs Visibility

- As always, please do not forget to ask your members to “like” and follow our FEG Facebook page news under the name **FEG Tourist Guides**, as well as the LinkedIn and Twitter FEG pages or website news. There is interesting news posted every day on tourism, culture, European issues or your own association and membership news. We remind you that FEG continues, for 2020, to employ part-time the marketing expert company, **Moxee Marketing** for a few hours per month to post and programme news on our social media and to consult us on marketing campaigns and topics.

- During this “stay home” period we updated some of the pages on the FEG website. Next to the new **Blog** page for any important FEG and Member-Association blogs published and the FEG YouTube Channel for videos done by the FEG tourist guide associations, we also revamped the **Training** FEG webpage, which is now divided into “**Online Training**” and “**Face-to-face Training**”. Another

new page is created with the Members’ most important info texts named “**Associations**” by answering 10 questions about their association and the tourist guides in their own countries.

Our associations’ social media promotion was just started in July by our marketing expert and one by one she will post the info with the photos or videos of our associations which you sent to her, as now is the right timing to do this campaign for tourist guides’ promotion.

We remind you all that your news, and photos or videos **always have to be written or recorded in English** (or at least with English subtitles) and should be sent via your associations to fegtouristguides@gmail.com for our marketing team to upload, schedule and promote.



**New Turismo de Portugal & SNATTI “Clean & Safe”
webinar and certification for qualified tourist guides**

Also, please share the FEG and Member-Association news and video social media and website posts on your own social media pages to disseminate the professionalism and qualifications on tourist guiding in general. Social media have great power these days. We should learn to take advantage of them as most of their marketing tools are free.

The hashtags used under the texts, photos and videos are: **#FEG_QualifiedTouristGuides** and for our training issues **#FEG_CPDTraining** – to be followed by your own national hashtags. This way, we create an easy-to-search archive of past posts and events for FEG and our member-associations.

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FEG Training News

The **FEG Training Consultancy Group (TCG)** has been very busy as ever from home. It has met already twice online this year and continues to do work on all FEG training fronts.

FEG accredited trainer **Richard Skinner** has been replacing **Iris Barry** in the last few months, as the **FEG TCG Acting Convenor** until the TCG elections are conducted among the FEG accredited trainers themselves. We express our huge thanks to both colleagues above, who have enormously and voluntarily assisted FEG so far in all training issues and consultations with the ExCo in the last few years.

Here is the FEG training news in brief:

- **Adrien Bordrez, Jessie McDonald and Maria Joao Moreira** are three new FEG Trainers accredited this year, following their portfolio and interview assessments which were conducted by FEG independent trainers. They had all attended the sponsored **FEG Faro “Trainer Training”** course delivered in 2018.

- Likewise, five **Wales Official Tourist Guide Association Blue Badge** members, who had completed the **FEG “Trainer Training”** course delivered in 2018 in **Swansea**, have been assessed and recently accredited as FEG Trainers: **Stephen Griffin, Heather Williams, Carole Startin, Amanda Whitehead, and Marion Davies**. Congratulations to all new FEG trainers above!

We are delighted that “new blood” for the **FEG training team** has stepped in, able to fluently train tourist guides in English, French, Italian, Greek, and Portuguese. Most of them also have valuable additional degrees and skills from their previous studies and jobs. Looking forward to more of the FEG Trainers-In-Accreditation being assessed next.



Photo: Wales Official Tourist Guide Association Blue Badge Guides trained by FEG as trainers

- In our previous FEG Euroletter we announced that the FEG Faro delegates AGM voted on its new **Byelaw to set the basic rules and procedures for the future FEG Training Consultancy Group (TCG)** and for all FEG accredited trainers to follow. From March till June 2020 the FEG ExCo President **Efi Kalampoukidou** - acting as a liaison with the ExCo and TCG - put together all previous decisions taken by ExCo, TCG and Delegates’ AGMs and all documents issued on our training issues before into one new single 20-page FEG document with various Annexes (55 pages in total) named the **“FEG Trainer Policy & Procedures Handbook”**. This Handbook has already been sent to the FEG Trainers and Member-Associations for them to consult each time a training issue is discussed. It is also uploaded into the “Members Only” FEG website section under “Training Documents”. We hope that the new TCG members will soon be elected from among the FEG accredited trainers who will be asked to submit an application as candidates.

- The FEG trainer **Radoslaw Szafranowicz - Malosiec** designed and delivered for us in **April 2020** a series of 5 online interactive webinars (5 hrs in total) on behalf of FEG for its members. This is especially focussed on how to promote ourselves as certified tourist guides on social media and how to create our own websites and be visible in online searches. It is named **“Internet Marketing for**

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Tourist Guides” and it has been attended with great success by 31 colleagues from across Europe. A FEG certificate of attendance has been given to all trainees.

You may find more info on the details, price and topics covered on the FEG “Training” webpage here: <https://www.feg-touristguides.com/internet-marketing-for-tourist-guides.php>

in case more members are interested in offering it and attending it, it just takes a minimum of 10 trainees for FEG and the **Kadry Turistiky** training platform to repeat it for you.

- The awaited FEG & Athina Training Centre online course named **“Western Silk Road Experience”** was officially launched by FEG in April, after one year’s hard work by our three expert colleagues **Themis Halvantzi-Stringer**, **Maria Joao Moreira** and **Wika Trel**, who created the 3 training modules and quizzes, in co-ordination with the FEG ExCo President **Efi Kalampoukidou** and the training platform manager **Dimitris Filippidis** of **Athina Training Centre-Skills Academy**.



Silk scarves presented at the Soufli, Greece Bouroulitis exhibition and silk industry

This life-long training course for already certified tourist guides who are FEG members includes almost all European countries and it is a FEG project on creating and promoting new sustainable programmes and guided tours on the Western Silk Road, with destinations starting from the Black Sea and going all the way to the Atlantic and the North

Seas, in non-touristy areas of our countries connected to silk.

This online training is not delivered live, thus it is not a webinar like the previous one, but the trainee can register, pay and do the course modules at their own pace from home. At the end there is a certification of competence for the successful candidates with **25 learning hours**.

Furthermore, FEG has discussed on the Western Silk Road project with the UNWTO that showed interest in our online course and has recently been accepted as a member into the **UNWTO Silk Road Task Force**. For more info on this, you may refer to relevant the FEG website blog uploaded.

On the **17th June** a free-of-charge live webinar was organised and broadcasted by FEG on the **“Western Silk Road Experience”** online course, with all persons involved in the project as speakers. The webinar has been recorded and was sent to all FEG Member-Associations for their own members who didn’t have the chance to watch it live.

You may find the FEG link to register and do the course here:

<https://www.feg-touristguides.com/western-silk-road-experience-online-course.php>

Furthermore, the good news is that the FEG ExCo and Athina Training Centre have agreed to **extend the special discount price period for the FEG members till the 31st August 2020** to give more certified tourist guides the chance to attend the online course while at home.

- Our colleague, **Sebastian Frankenberger** organised on the **9th of June** on his training platform **Tourismus Training** a free-of-charge live webinar for all FEG members named **“Tourist Guide Audio-Apps and Systems”**. Seven different app companies presented their new apps and features on wireless guiding for our tours. The webinar lasted for two hours and there were many questions answered by the companies’ invited speakers for colleagues.

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The recorded session has been sent to all FEG Member-Associations for their members who missed it to watch.

- Last but not least, FEG ExCo would like to thank the **SNATTI colleagues of Portugal** who offered their online training platform on Demio, for their moderation and technical support and also thanks to the various experts for delivering many life-long training webinars organised for the FEG delegates, trainers or qualified tourist guides in general, as free-of-charge sessions for our life-long training. These sessions were delivered by FEG accredited trainers or by FEG Trainers-In-Accreditation to whom we are grateful.

Live Private Guides Booking App & Webinar

FEG continues its cooperation with **Live Private Guides** booking app for setting a profile as a certified tourist guide of a FEG association, and being able to receive bookings for your private guided tours. Therefore, a free-of-charge live webinar was organized on the **15th of May** for all FEG members to learn how to register and create their own page on the Live Private Guides app.

Our invited speakers from Live Private Guide were **Nicolai Holthe**, Product Owner & **Joachim Tandberg**, Head of Sales.

The webinar has been recorded and was sent to all FEG Member-Associations for their own members who didn't have the chance to watch it live.

FEG & World Food Travel Association online course on "Culinary-Certified Tourist Guides"

FEG still has a valid agreement signed in 2019 with the **World Food Travel Association (WFTA)** to offer a new online "**Culinary Tourist Guide Certification**" training programme for all FEG association members.

As Food Tourism is extremely popular and will continue to rise, certified tourist guides of the FEG members can still take advantage of the course discount code offered to FEG members and attend this specialised FEG course, in order to receive a certification of competence as a "**Culinary-**

Certified Tourist Guide" after you pass the test at the end.

The training programme includes studying, knowledge, comprehension exams and an open question assessment. English subtitles help those whose native language is not English. **Discount applies to our members, and a FEG discount code for that purpose is provided by your own associations only.** This FEG code has to be submitted online when you register yourselves for the course and you can attend it at your own pace.

For more information ask your association and go to: <https://www.feg-touristguides.com/culinary-courses.php>

Thanks to our valuable FEG ExCo assistants

The FEG ExCo would like to express its gratitude to our loyal Legal Advisor and colleague from Scotland, **Norma Clarkson**, who had accepted to stay onboard, and keeps walking hand in hand with the FEG ExCo. Norma's help cannot easily be replaced, as we carry on consulting her in all legal issues regarding FEG and our partners, for all this time, as an insider and having herself been previously an elected FEG ExCo Officer till last year. She always knows very well what tourist guides, Law, contracts and agreements are about.



Photo: Jane Pursell Briggs (left) and Norma Clarkson (right)

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As always, our competent FEG secretary, **Jane Pursell Briggs** has never stopped sending to the FEG Member-Associations all the important news and updates FEG has been receiving every day from the various European organisations and partners, so huge thanks go to her.

Dear FEG members,

We'll meet again stronger and have a great event for all tourist guides of our European family next year.

Till then, please take care, stay safe and confident!

***Euroletter** is produced by FEG*

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