



## FEG EUROLETTER - December 2020

### Message from FEG ExCo President

Dear colleagues across Europe,

Since the pandemic began all of us have been affected in our personal and working lives. Tourism is one of the main sectors hurt during 2020 and is expected to be so at least in the first semester of the coming year. Yet tourism, and the income it brings is, no doubt, important. International travel is largely shut down, and all countries have seen huge changes with the rise in working remotely, while people seek to escape exposure to the virus.

But there is always a positive side to any unpleasant obstacle:

The crisis makes people, businesses and governments to re-think, re-plan and hopefully improve. Overtourism and the reckless use of energy-intensive means of travelling, transportation and waste management which have been threatening our ecosystems, cultural heritage, local communities and destinations must be challenged. The pandemic has exposed many bad practices that are damaging our local destinations' image and has got everybody across the globe talking about "restarting", "rebooting", "re-skilling", and "up-skilling", for a Green and Digital transformation in tourism and across our world in general.

Professional tourist guides can and must be part of the solution. There is a need for us to follow the new health and safety rules, to care for our guests and keep them as safe as possible. In addition, we need to re-shape our guided tour services and products, to make them more attractive and sustainable, so helping to ensure the protection of cultural and natural heritage, destinations and environment. Small size organised groups and shore excursions, private tailor-made tours, niche

markets, walking guided tours outdoors, excursions to the countryside, off-the-beaten track theme tours in sites away from the crowds or out of packed tour vehicles now seem to be the new "normal" way of work for us. So, adjustment, re-skilling, rethinking and planning ahead for the future is a must for our profession. As proven this year, no matter how good one is, guiding remotely at by offering online virtual tours and lectures on the web is not easy or viable. These can just serve as web "teasers" for our future guests to dream, plan and look forward to the day when they will be able to visit our places and meet us to guide them. People will always dream of travelling, will always make plans and be looking for the new experiences we can offer to them. We are the ones who have to work towards this end, to make every effort to promote ourselves and our destinations to accommodate the new market needs and trends.

As for now, hold on colleagues, and take care of yourselves and your beloved ones. I know that we, as the ambassadors of our countries, will do our very best to adjust and to come back stronger into a more sustainable tourism and culture model than we had before.

**Best wishes for good health and job recovery to you and your families for a better 2021 season to come.**

**We should all reflect on the past in order to embrace the future ahead.**

The FEG motto for 2021 shown in the banner below of this Euroletter is:

**"Ready to guide, when the time is right"!**

**Efi Kalampoukidou, FEG ExCo President**

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## FEG EUROLETTER - December 2020

### FEG 2020 Virtual Delegates' AGM

The first FEG on-line AGM held via Zoom on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of November for the FEG delegates only was a very different experience from the face-to-face meetings in glorious locations that we have enjoyed in the past - and will no doubt enjoy in the future - but the new technology worked well, attendance was good, and members took full advantage of the opportunity to share their news and views and learn about FEG's activities during the past year.



Photo: 2020 FEG delegates' Virtual AGM held on the 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> November. Photo credit: Enes Toska

Two applications to join FEG from **Helsinki Tourist Guides Association**, who applied for Associate membership and from **TUREB, Turkey** who applied for Full membership were ratified by the FEG delegates at the meeting –so we welcome our two new members. More good news is that the FEG Associate Member of **Romania "ProGuide"** decided to become a Full Member from next year.

FEG ExCo members have been very active on your behalf during the year, working from home and focusing on meetings online and networking with other stakeholders on the route to recovery for tourism and tourist guiding post-Covid19 times. One important development is that FEG as a member of the **European Tourism Manifesto Group** alliance, including 65 pan-European stakeholders from across the tourism spectrum, has been working on proposals to put to the EU Commissioners and

Members of the European Parliament on the economic importance of tourism, including also Green Tourism and Digitalisation.

A second important issue that particularly concerns the FEG EU countries member-associations relates to the **Sharing (Collaborative) Economy**. More specifically, the unfair competition our members face from unqualified persons guiding or promoting and selling guided tours on the web, social media or in the streets, who pay no tax or insurance, and offer different kinds of guided tours, including among others the so-called 'free tours'. FEG is lobbying on behalf of its members and has employed a legal expert to assist in the drafting of formal letters to the Commission and EU MEPs. Eleven parliamentary written questions were posed to Commissioner Breton over the spring and summer of 2020 – his response was that it is up to Member States to control the management and regulation of the Sharing Economy on a national basis and that the EU Law must be implemented on all cases. Our first goal was achieved by having the Commission's written views, which helped us to move forward with the FEG next steps. In other words, the exercise of the reserved activity of tourist guide versus the non-qualified persons offering guided tours is a great challenge we are trying to fight with legal arguments. Alliances are being sought by FEG with other tourism sectors who share our concerns about the impact of Sharing Economy and contact has been made. The FEG member-associations are constantly being informed on any news we have on this issue.

Recovering differently but better was also the theme of many FEG members' 2020 country reports. In addition to universally devastating news about the impact of Covid19 and the restrictions it has imposed on travel and on tourist guiding, many of our members have been very proactive in creating programmes of virtual **e-learning** both as life-long training for their members, and as method of delivering elements of the theoretical training



## FEG EUROLETTER - December 2020

modules in their national courses for new guides. Technology has also proved invaluable in keeping in touch with association members, particularly as the significant loss of income in 2020 could compel some guides to consider leaving the profession. Many guides focus mainly on the foreign visitor market, but with more people taking 'staycations' this year, some guides have been proactive in creating tours for the domestic market - the local visitors – as their potentially valuable new guests.

Finally, the FEG membership currently includes 26 associations or federations - 17 full members and 9 associate members in 2020.

### FEG elections

#### The FEG ExCo Members are now:

**Paulo Cosme**, who was re-elected to the ExCo, **Wika Trel** who was newly elected to ExCo, and **Diana James** was initially elected as a Deputy but immediately appointed to join ExCo for one year to replace Armelle Villepelet following her resignation.

Following an election by the new ExCo, **Efi Kalampoukidou** will continue to serve as President of FEG for 2021.

#### Auditors

**Dianne McGuinness** and **Juan Ignacio Vazquez Lacunza** were both re-elected as our auditors.



Photo: FEG 2020-2021 ExCo

Photo credit: Enes Toska

### FEG Subscription discount for 2021

Due to the devastating impact Covid19 has had on the tourist guiding profession across all member countries FEG ExCo have decided that the annual membership subscription fees for 2021 will be much lower than the usual fees of the previous years.

### FEG Online Survey on 2020 for tourist guides

The initial online survey poll of members' tourist guides, designed to give FEG, its members and our national governments an understanding of the impacts of Covid19 on tourist guides' work, was carried out in May and June and was followed up by a second FEG survey in July.

Unfortunately participation rates by the colleagues in the second poll were low. Despite this, the majority of FEG association delegates recently voted during our AGM for another online FEG survey to include the whole year of 2020 this time. The **new FEG survey** will be circulated to associations for all their members to be undertaken early in the New Year, expecting to have more guides answering it this time.

### FEG promotion – Marketing campaign for TGs

FEG AGM voted to continue for 2021 to employ part-time the marketing expert company, **Moxee Marketing** run by **Ursula Petula Barzey**, for a few hours per month to programme and post our news, photos and videos on the social media FEG pages and to consult us on our marketing campaigns and issues.

Our associations' social media promotion which started in July 2020 still weekly goes on by Ursula and one by one our member-associations answer the "10 Questions" featured on the FEG website about their own country tourist guide association. She also schedules the relevant short info texts with photos or videos of our associations which you send to her for the tourist guides' and our destinations' promotion.

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## FEG EUROLETTER - December 2020

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](mailto:fegtouristguides@gmail.com) for our marketing expert to schedule and promote.

**Diana James** is now in charge for the FEG ExCo in liaison with Ursula to check and correct the English language texts sent to us.



Please share the FEG and Member-Association posts done in English on your own social media pages to disseminate the professionalism and qualifications on tourist guiding in general and to increase the viewers and followers for us all. Social media have great power these days. We should learn to take advantage of them as most of their marketing tools are free.

For more info on the FEG video training for associations, please see under the Training News paragraph below.

The FEG general #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. Depending on the topic of campaign, we may also use different hashtags, to be found under our posts each time. This way, we create more publicity and an easy-to-search archive of past posts and events for FEG and our member-associations.

## FEG Training News

- The **FEG Training Consultative Group (TCG)** has been elected for the first time with an online voting poll by all FEG active trainers. Their term is for two years and they are:

**Iris Barry** – TCG Convenor

**Jessie McDonald** – TCG Member

**Maria Joao Moreira** – TCG Member

**Radoslaw Szafranowicz-Maloziec** – TCG member

**Wika Trel** – TCG & ExCo member

- There are currently 15 FEG accredited trainers following this year's portfolio assessments conducted with several new trainers-graduates from the previously delivered in 2018 with FEG **"Trainer Training"** courses in Faro and Wales. They can fluently train guides in 8 different languages. We congratulate them all!

They are now listed with their photos under the new FEG webpage here:

<https://www.feg-touristguides.com/meet-our-feg-accredited-active-trainers.php>

- **"Dark Tourism"** webinars will be offered free of charge to tourist guides by accredited FEG trainers during the first 3 months of 2021. This life-long training opportunity includes the eight **RePAST project** countries, which have already been informed about it.

The number of participants and the countries are currently limited as per our project contract, funded by the **EU Horizon2020 programme**. These will be the pilot webinars leading to FEG's developing this new training niche topic on the popular theme of "Dark Tourism" guided tours which will be offered to more countries' tourist guides later on.

- FEG decided to offer a free of charge online workshop to be delivered by **Ruby Roy**, a colleague from Montreal, Canada and an expert in media, former ExBo President of the WFTGA. This workshop will be offered only to the social media responsible persons appointed by each FEG

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## FEG EUROLETTER - December 2020

member-association and is focused on the “**Association video promotion on social media**”. This offer is part of the FEG strategy to boost our members’ knowledge and skills on how to easily create marketing video content for their own associations’ publicity online.

social media and how to create our own websites and be visible in online searches. Radek’s “**Internet Marketing for Tourist Guides**” webinars were attended by 31 colleagues from across Europe. FEG issued a certificate of attendance for the webinar participants.



Photo: Ruby Roy to be delivering the FEG “Association video promotion on social media” workshop to FEG appointed reps.

- Our online FEG training courses continue with the certification for **Culinary expert guides** in collaboration with the **World Food Travel Association**, as well the **Western Silk Road Experience** online course, in collaboration with the **Athina Training Skills Academy**. Both can be taken at home at your own pace. They are followed by tests, with the successful tourist guides receiving an e-certificate of competence.

We hope we’ll be able to offer face-to-face training again next year.

For more info, please see our website here:

<https://www.feg-touristguides.com/online-training.php>

- In **April 2020** the FEG trainer **Radoslaw Szafranowicz–Maloziec** designed and delivered for us on his company’s Kadry Turisticky training platform a series of 5 online interactive webinars (5 hrs in total) on behalf of FEG, open to tourist guides of our associations. These were focused on how to promote ourselves as certified tourist guides on



Photo credit: Radoslaw Szafranowicz–Maloziec with some of his webinar participants

### Live Private Guides Booking App & Webinar

FEG continues its cooperation with **Live Private Guides** booking app for creating a profile as a certified tourist guide of a FEG association, and being able to take bookings for your private guided tours. Therefore, a free-of-charge live webinar was organized in May 2020 for all FEG tourist guides of our members to learn how to register and create their own page on the Live Private Guides app.

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## FEG EUROLETTER - December 2020

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, but if you missed it, you may also find it here under this link:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1slvy6slCRgx9Qbkb4c8zYDMDhbp\\_tl6K/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1slvy6slCRgx9Qbkb4c8zYDMDhbp_tl6K/view)

We remind you all that Live app is the only company worldwide which has signed an agreement with FEG to accept certified tourist guides ONLY listed on their app and website, as the professionals who offer private tours. Having in mind that the pandemic will increase the demand for private tours in the future, this is a useful tool for all of us to promote our visibility to future guests of our area.

The message to the FEG tourist guides from our Live app partners is: *"Live want to develop a strong partnership with FEG. Our goal is that FEG guides shall regard Live Private Guide app as their marketplace to market their guided experiences. We will never be Expedia or Airbnb. We will focus on certified guides and help them sell their tours and experiences in a modern and digital way".*

### International Tourist Guide Day 2021

As always, we must all try to make this day special for our profession's promotion and visibility on social media.

We invite FEG members to send us their plans, videos and news about the ITGD celebrations on

the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021 ahead for Ursula to post on the FEG social media, as well as after the celebrations to send her your photos and short texts about them.

Please, do not forget our FEG relevant hashtags:

#FEG\_QualifiedTouristGuides  
#FEG\_ITGD  
#ReadyToGuide2021

### FEG 2021 slogan:

**"Ready to guide, when the time is right!"**

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