

EU TOURISM SECTOR EMPLOYS 70% FEWER BRITISH PEOPLE AFTER BREXIT



In 2017, 11,970 British citizens worked in the tourism sector in European Union countries. Since then, and with Brexit on the horizon, that number has dropped by 69% to just 3,700, according to the latest count for the Unlocking Travel's Potential report presented by ABTA and Seasonal Businesses in Travel (SBiT).

The ability of companies to have UK staff working in the EU is now much more limited following the UK's exit from the EU.

The UK travel industry faces a significant challenge as 61% of travel companies report difficulties hiring seasonal staff. This shortage of workers could potentially hinder their growth over the next five years. It is crucial for the industry that individuals can work abroad. This not only fosters important language and soft skills but also sets them on the path to a successful career, with many eventually becoming leaders in the industry.

Hiring Is More Expensive

In addition to the impact on growth, travel companies also see an increase in the time and cost of employing British staff overseas as they need to follow EU rules and regulations. For example, it is calculated that hiring each seasonal worker from the UK to work in France is estimated to cost an additional €1029.

The report "Unlocking Travel's Potential" highlights that many EU countries lack entry routes for UK staff, which could limit the industry's ability to recruit new talent. This, along with restrictions on worker mobility, poses a significant threat to the tourism sector.

The report also reveals that 38% of UK tourism company employees have worked in the tourism industry abroad, with 49% being senior managers. Unfortunately, young people are likely the most affected by the current situation. 94% of companies agree that barriers to worker mobility reduce opportunities for them to develop a career in travel. As a result, the proportion of young workers in overseas roles is predicted to drop from 62% in 2017 to 42% in 2023.

Mobility Agreements

The UK's outbound travel industry significantly contributes to the economy, generating €57.283 billion annually and driving growth. Failing to establish suitable mobility arrangements with the EU could prove costly, but practical and reasonable ways exist to overcome obstacles.

Here are three proposals to improve opportunities for young people, tourism workers, and professionals in the UK and EU:

1. **Expand the Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) to EU countries, allowing young people to work in both regions for up to two years.** However, the long-term residence is granted sometimes. Similar agreements exist between the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.
2. Establish an enhanced seasonal mobility agreement for tourism workers that surpasses the current

UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The current agreement applies to specific roles and restricts stays to 90 or 180 days.

3. Create a mutual recognition agreement for professional qualifications. This will make it easier for tourism workers, including guiding professionals such as tour and ski guides, to work in the EU and the UK.

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