



Alþýðusamband Íslands

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Proposals for ASÍ's policies – demands of wage-earners

Tourism in Iceland is at a turning point. Its growth had already begun to slow down before the pandemic hit, but with the current restrictions on gatherings and transportation, the sector is in a near freeze. This situation does, however, give us room to evaluate the experiences gained during the intense growth period that we saw in tourism up until the pandemic hit. It is ASÍ's opinion that the period before the sector is „restarted“ should be used well, and to that end, ASÍ has formed a policy in six parts.

Involvement in the policy-making process

- The Government policy for tourism never mentions the workers in the sector, despite the high demands that are made on the workers.
- ASÍ demands that the rights and interests of wage-earners be made one of the cornerstones in the resurrection of the tourism sector.
- The labour movement must be involved as public policy is formed for the future and resurrection of the tourism sector.

Rejection of a low-wage tourism sector

- ASÍ rejects the notion that tourism should be a low-wage sector, and that creating a low-wage sector is acceptable in a society that calls itself a welfare society.
- In the light of the sector's importance for the Icelandic economy, a consensus should be created around fair wages in the sector, especially seeing that public policy emphasises professionalism and a high-quality experience for tourists.
- Improved working conditions and wages for workers should be at the center of all government proposals for increased profitability in the sector. Profitability will not be achieved by moving profits from the tourism sector, profits that are created by the workers and unique nature, into the pockets of a few company-owners.
- The labour movement demands that jobs in tourism are compensated fairly, with living wages and that the collective agreements are respected in every way.
- Rules should ensure that only guides with education from Iceland are allowed to take groups around the key natural attractions in Iceland. Rules on certifications and professional titles in the sectors should also be reviewed.

Fighting labour market crime

- ASÍ demands that criminal activity in the tourism sector is eradicated immediately.

- A legal bill on employment terms (starfskjaralög) should be submitted to Alþingi right away and the authorities should ensure that offenders are made to pay for their violations.
- The labour movement demands that the current regulatory framework around foreign companies that organise group travel to Iceland be strengthened to prevent violations.
- Social dumping in the tourism sector must be eradicated. A common example of social dumping is when young people, often foreign, are made to work as volunteers or „trainees“, and when foreign companies organise trips to Iceland and employ foreign workers who do not receive wages or employment terms according to collective agreements.
- A bill on a business ban (atvinnurekstrarbann), to prevent phoenix activity, must be passed by the parliament right away.
- Surveillance with employer-provided housing for workers must be greatly strengthened, to ensure that laws and regulations are followed.

Employers must be knowledgeable about rights and obligations

- The labour movement calls for some minimum level of knowledge to be required from people who want to found/operate a company (e.g. in the form of a seminar). A person who operates a business and employs other people should be required to complete a course on staff administration, rights and obligations. The labour movement operates courses for union representatives and for pension fund board members, and SA should be able to do hold out courses for employers.

Infrastructure and jobs

- The labour movement demands that this time is used to build infrastructure, which will create jobs and employment during an economic recession, and prepare for rebuilding the tourism sector.

Fee collection to pay for infrastructures should under no circumstances be levied on the general public.