

Framework agreement

EBU, ETF and IG River Cruise committed to conclude a binding framework agreement to improve the working conditions on board of river cruise vessels, as well as to ensure a level playing field for the sector.

Introductory paragraphs

1. EBU/IG Rivercruise and ETF recognize and appreciate the compliance of the members of EBU and IGRC with the national and international legal requirements. The Framework Agreement shall provide the basis to amicably balance interests in favour of the crew members working aboard the cruise ships.
2. EBU/IGRC and ETF shall establish permanent and close contacts to each other and shall aim to have at least two meetings a year regarding the issues of the Framework Agreement as well as all other issues which may come up during the years to come and which are subject to Parties' constituencies.

Fundamental rights

3. Every worker in the European River Cruise Sector is free to join a trade union of his choice.
4. EBU/IGRC and ETF fully support the fundamental principle to ban child labour – [ILO Convention 182](#) will be fully respected.

No one below the age of 18 will be employed in the sector, unless it concerns apprentices which are enlisted in formal training programmes that include on board practical experience.

Principal matters

Social security

5. The members of EBU/IGRC ensure that all crew members with residence in the EU and [EFTA](#) shall mandatorily be socially insured according to the international and national legislation.
6. Social insurance for crew members residing in other countries shall be provided as well, if legally possible and if the crew member can generate benefits out of the social insurance.

Should however the employer at the time that the contract is signed have knowledge the employee will not be able to generate benefits, and if it is legally possible, then a private insurance shall be concluded. The employer will inform the employee accordingly and will refer the employee to ETF via his national union to take appropriate action.

Every crew member will be insured for any sickness or occupational accident for the duration of their contract of employment.

7. The employer shall ensure that all crew members receive proper and timely documentation about their social insurance.

As a principle the stipulations should be included in the contract of employment.

Salaries

8. The members of EBU/IGRC shall arrange punctual monthly payment of salaries according to the employment contract and monthly handout of digital or hard copy pay slips accordingly.
9. The employer will clearly state the practice around tips and gratuities.

Health and safety requirements

10. The members of EBU/IGRC shall observe all national and international rules and obligations regarding safety and security and shall operate only sea(river)worthy ships.

All crew members will receive a basic safety training on board.

11. River Cruise vessels are a harassment free zone. On board of every vessel a procedure will be in place to deal with all kinds of harassment; applicable as well to social occasions where attendance of crew is linked to their employment.

Every company designates a “trusted person” that will be available for all crew members. The name of the “trusted person” on board will be made publicly available.

Crewing agents' fees

12. The members of EBU/IGRC shall appeal to their crewing agents that the crew members shall not have to pay commissions or rewards to the agency for the job placement, since the practice of crew members paying a fee to secure a job is forbidden.

(The aim is to implement MLC like placement procedures in the river cruise industry with regards to crewing agent's fees.)

Contract & Travel documents

13. Each crew member shall be in possession of his/her valid contract of employment before the start of the first voyage.

The English version will always be made available.

14. Crew members shall not be obliged to deposit their travel documents with the employer or his representatives.
15. The travel documents of the crew members are in principle kept centrally at the reception for immediate availability in case of (police) controls. However, the travel documents are always available for the crew members and must be handed over to the staff on demand.



Access to vessels

16. Representatives of ETF/ITF-affiliated trade unions or their members shall be allowed to visit cruise ships of the members of EBU/IGRC.

Ship visits will be notified in advance as much as possible to both the on board Captain/Hotel Manager and the company's CEO.

Only for justified reasons the ships' access may be withheld by the Captain/Hotel Manager or the CEO. This has to be confirmed in writing following the access' request.

17. The contact data of ETF and/or the responsible national trade union organization shall be made available to all crew members aboard the cruise ships of the members of EBU/IGRC to enable the individual crew member to contact a trusted person with the Union.

Complaints procedure

18. Each member of EBU/IGRC shall introduce an internal complaints handling procedure to ensure that all crew complaints are first handled internally, or at least that the crew members have the chance to complain issues internally. Each employer shall make the complaints handling procedure known to all crew members and shall nominate one person of the crewing department leading such complaints procedure.

19. If crew complaints have first not been solved within the company, but have gone to the union's trusted person, the trusted person shall contact the lead of the complaints procedure of the respective company and both shall seek amicable solutions.

The present agreement entered into force on March 1, 2024.

The agreement will be re-negotiated at the start of the 3rd quarter of every 2nd year. Until signature of the new agreement, the present one remains in force.

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