

WFTGA online Engagement: World Standards Day 2024 – Ethics in Tourist Guiding



The WFTGA family of tourist guides is *'dedicated to the promotion of high standards of training and ethics within the profession'*.

For previous World Standards Day we talked about training. Let's discuss **ethics** this time.

What does this mean today? How does our Code of Guiding Practice serve us in a world of climate crisis, wars and fake news?

Tell us about your challenges and solutions in your role as peace ambassadors and guardians of the environment.

WFTGA is the global forum
for professional tourist guides.

Join us for an online discussion on 14 Oct 2024 World Standards Day.

Twenty-two participants had registered. On the day, there were 12 participants. WFTGA ExBo and Training Committee Members were joined by colleagues from Cyprus, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Ukraine, USA – all are WFTGA Trainers.

Issues discussed in the breakout rooms and plenary included:

- Guests are using unqualified / illegal guides or AI and don't respect local cultures, e.g. dress code
- Ethics start 'at home', i.e. we must be role models and always behave professionally.
- Guests seem to have a desire to discuss politics (e.g. elections) and want to hear guides' personal opinions. We can't avoid it. Points 1 and 2 of the Code of Guiding Practice (see page 2) give guidance.
- Following ethics can be a competitive advantage (versus unqualified guides); so can be highlighting human aspects (versus AI).
- Always listen to and respect those involved, e.g. in conflict situations.
- How can WFTGA support colleagues and friends [in conflict zones]? ... through fundraising
- Present historical facts and the full story
- Influence wider aspects through Tourist Guide Associations

Mariia R talked about challenges and solutions of guiding in Ukraine at this time of war and reminded us that access to tourism is a fundamental right for all. Domestic tourism is continuing with major adaptations:

- a) logistical adaptations, e.g. in Kyiv always stay within a 5-min walk from the next shelter
- b) mental adaptations, e.g. be sensitive to the suffering of guests and the host community.

Ukraine will continue to be a destination for dark tourism for some time to come and guides are receiving training through the WFTGA family.

Maria A expressed disappointment at the absence of colleagues from Russia and the fact that the audience was made up entirely of WFTGA Trainers.

WFTGA online engagement sessions are open to all and widely advertised in social media and direct e-mail.

Poll

1. How well does the WFTGA Code of Guiding Practice serve us in today's world?

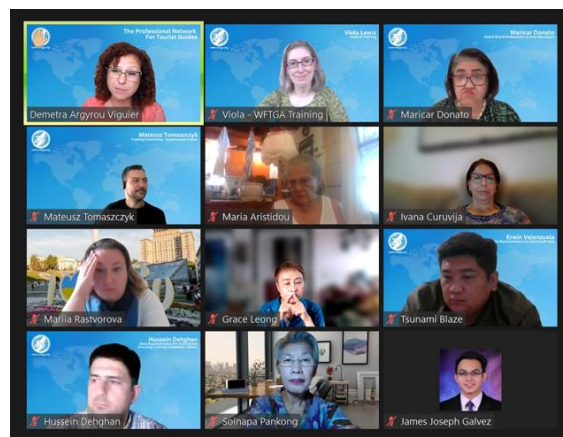
- a. Very well, no need to change – 43%
- b. Fairly well, it should be strengthened and up-dated – 57%
- c. No use, we should develop a new Code of Guiding Practice
- d. I was not aware of the Code of Guiding Practice

2. To what extent do you support WFTGA's Sicily statement (see page 2)

- a. I wholeheartedly support the statement – 71%
- b. I support the statement, but feel it needs some work – 29%
- c. I don't fully understand the statement.
- d. I don't support the statement.

3. Would you be available to help WFTGA develop similar statement and codes of ethics and help implement them?

Yes – 100%



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WFTGA Constitution

Article 2: Definition

The World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations shall be a non-profit-making professional organisation dedicated to the promotion of high standards of training and ethics within the profession.
... The Federation shall not engage in political, religious or racial activities.

The WFTGA Code of Guiding Practice

[WFTGA | Aims](#)

Adherence to the *WFTGA Code of Guiding Practice* provides an assurance of a high level of professionalism and a value-added service offered by the individual guides to their clients.

Tourist Guide Associations which are Members of the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations accept on behalf of their members the WFTGA's principles and aims.

1. To provide a **professional service** to visitors, professional in **care** and **commitment**, and professional in providing an **objective** understanding of the place visited, **free from prejudice or propaganda**.
2. To ensure that as far as possible **what is presented as fact is true**, and that a **clear distinction is made between this truth and stories**, legends, traditions, or opinions.
3. To **act fairly and reasonable** in all dealings with all those who engage the services of guides and with colleagues working in all aspects of tourism.
4. To **protect the reputation of tourism** in our country by making every endeavour to ensure that guided groups treat with respect the environment, wildlife, sites and monuments, and also local customs and sensitivities.
5. As representatives of the host country to **welcome visitors** and act in such a way as to **bring credit to the country** visited and promote it as a tourist destination.

WFTGA official statement at Sicily Convention, January 2024

"WFTGA serves as the global forum for professional tourist guides and operates as a non-political organisation. Our worldwide Tourist Guide members play a crucial role as peace ambassadors, fostering unity among cultures and people. Functioning as heritage interpreters, we advocate for a value-based approach to heritage interpretation, standing firm in our commitment to a peaceful and more sustainable future for humanity."

... based on UNESCO's efforts towards value-based heritage interpretation

UN tourism, 1999 /2001

[Global Code of Ethics for Tourism \(unwto.org\)](#)

1. Tourism's contribution to mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies
2. Tourism as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfilment
3. Tourism, a factor of sustainable development
4. Tourism, a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and contributor to its enhancement
5. Tourism, a beneficial activity for host countries and communities
6. Obligations of stakeholders in tourism development
7. Right to tourism
8. Liberty of tourist movements
9. Rights of the workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry
10. Implementation of the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>



[Do you know all 17 SDGs? \(youtube.com\)](#)

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The role of Tourist Guides (excerpt from WFTGA HOT Courses)

WFTGA GUIDE DEFINITION adopted by WFTGA at its Dunblane, Scotland Convention 2003
[EN – European Norm; ISO = International Standards Organisation]

A **Tourist Guide** [Def. – EN13809:2003 and ISO18513] is:-

- a person who guides visitors in the **language** of their choice and
- **interprets the cultural & natural heritage** of an area,
- which person normally possesses an **area-specific qualification** usually issued and/or recognised by the appropriate authority

As Tourist Guides we are **responsible**:-

- Towards the country/region we work in: we must love our country → promote it → enthuse our visitors to return. **Tourist Guides are ambassadors for their tourism destination.**
- Towards our guests: we must respect your guests and their background and relate to their individual intellectual and emotional level. **Tourist Guides have a duty of care!**
- Towards sustainability: we must be a role model to our guests and inspire them to behave responsibly towards the environment, communities they visit and local economy.

As Tourist Guides we are **liable**:-

- To our tour operator/agency: we sign a contract to implement/deliver the sold tour programme/itinerary. **Tourist Guides represent the agency.**
- Towards guests: we must ensure that guests get everything they paid for.

The **multi-faceted profession** of a tourist guide. Tourist Guides are:-

Ambassadors - Heritage Interpreters - Language Interpreters – Entertainers - Customer Service Providers and Carers - Mediators - Organisers and Managers – Leaders - a bridge between visitors and local communities - promoters of sustainability - accelerators of local economy through showcasing

Assets and Attributes of Tourist Guides:-

flexible and adaptable - friendly and approachable - trustworthy - open minded and tolerant - have a sense of humour - knowledgeable - creative and confident - full of integrity and enthusiasm - positive attitude

WFTGA helps tourist guides understand their broader role.