

IMPACT OF DEREGULATION ON TOUR GUIDING MARKET IN POLAND

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Abstract

Purpose – Since January 1, 2014 licenses needed to execute a tour guide profession in Poland (with exception of mountain tour guiding) have been abandoned. This study attempts to examine whether paucity of regulation affected prices and quality of service at the tour guiding market.

Methodology – A majority of findings refers to the results of questionnaires conducted among tour guides during annual meeting of tour guides' association (Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society – PTSS) in February 2015 which was supported with structured interviews with managers of PTSS and Free Guiding Organization. The questionnaires were divided into three parts which are related to information asymmetry, price changes and variation of quantity of service on the market after deregulation.

Findings – Most of interrogated tour guides believe that tour operators may correctly assess a quality of their services and their former licenses still act as a quality certificates. A majority did neither experience a price fall of their services nor they observed new tour guides on the market. However a half of interviewed tour guides observed that tour guides widen their services into fields which were previously restricted. Hence, deregulation benefited mostly existing group of tour guides.

Contribution – Findings of this study may serve as an case study for tourism policy makers in other areas where regulation of tour guide profession is going to be modified. Some insights might be implemented also to the process of deregulation of other occupations. Scientific implications are elaborated.

Keywords tourism policy, regulation, deregulation, occupational licensing, tour guide

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