

leisure and tourism

by Nashaat Sanadiki Member of the Damascus Chamber of Tourism

In 2002 Law 65 established 6 Chambers of Tourism:

- Damascus & Countryside of Damascus,
(later Damascus Countryside became a separate chamber)
- Southern Region
(Deraa, Swiedah, Kunitrah)
- Middle Region
(Homs, Hama, Palmyra)
- Coastal Region
(Lattakia, Tartous, Banias)
- Northern Region
(Aleppo, Edleb)
- Eastern Region
(Dier Ezzor, Rakkah, Kamishly, Hasakeh)

Each of these chambers has a board of eighteen members, representing Restaurants; Hotels; Travel Agents; Tourist Transportation; Tourist Guides and Handicrafts.

Twelve members are elected and six are appointed by the Minister of Tourism. The practice has been to rectify any imbalance in any of these categories by an appointment from the private sector. Since the chambers were founded there have only been two representatives from the Ministry of Tourism on each board.

The Board of the Federation of the Chambers is elected from delegates of all the chambers.

Objectives of the Chambers & Federation

- Serve the tourism sector & protect its common interests. Defend and represent it against a third party.
- Contribute to and promote the development of tourism, prepare and implement tourism plans in coordination with the ministry.
- Promote investment in the tourism sector.
- Partake in upgrading the service quality of tourism facilities and present it in competitive prices
- Express views on tourism legislation and regulations and propose new legislation through the Federation
- Upgrade the tourism industry's practice
- Disseminate tourism awareness
- Promote and market tourism in collaboration and coordination with the ministry and the Federation
- Share in the studies, research and statistics required for development of tourism and provide the relevant data and information to the ministry.
- Hold conferences and seminars, set up training courses, issue tourism promotional and informative brochures, convene and

receive Arab and foreign tourism delegations, set up or participate in fairs and festivals in side Syria and abroad in coordination with the ministry and the authorities concerned .

- Arrange to qualify nascent companies or individuals through providing emplacements therefore and to train and qualify new elements entering the tourism business market.
- Participate in resolving disputes that may arise between the chamber members , or with third parties; lay down criteria that ensure that no conflict of interest arises, coordinate tourism activities and organize the tourism industry's practices.
- Provide social and health care to its members
- The Chambers and the Federation may set up specialized committees to achieve the above objectives.

Finally the Chairman of the Board of the Federation of chambers is nominated as a member of the Tourism Supreme Board, formed of representatives of all ministries concerned and headed by the Prime Minister.

The Chambers and the Federation were formed officially in January 2005 and have been in practice since then.