

INSETE: 1 in 5 hotel positions was not filled at the peak of the 2021 summer season

The experience of year 2021 showed that hotels – and the broader tourism sector, both in Greece and worldwide – faced exceptionally serious problems in finding staff.

For Greece as a country, it is estimated that, at the peak of the 2021 summer season, 53,249 positions out of the 244,124 that are provided for according to the organization charts for hotels were not filled. In other words, the shortage of available staff came to 22%, which meant that more than 1 in 5 positions were not filled. The percentage was similar for all hotel departments and ranged from 21% to 24%.

These figures are cited in a study conducted by the Institute of the Greek Tourism Confederation (INSETE) under the title ‘[Employment and labour shortages in Greek hotels at the peak of the 2021 summer season](#)’, which was carried out on the basis of data derived from a primary research conducted by the Research Institute for Tourism (RIT) of the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (HCH) on HCH members.

The shortage of staff during the peak season had been seen in previous years – especially on many islands and in remote areas – but the problem was severely aggravated by the pandemic. Addressing the shortage issue and publicizing the employment opportunities available in the sector are top priorities for Greek tourism, in order for the high level of service and hospitality – perhaps its strongest competitive advantage – to be maintained.

Employment and shortages per job

Half of the job vacancies that were not filled – almost 26,500 positions – were for the following roles: Chambermaid, Receptionist, Waiter, Assistant Waiter, Dishwasher, Barista, and Technical Support / Maintenance.

More specifically, the biggest shortages were recorded in the following jobs: Chambermaid (7,303 vacancies / 14% of total shortages and 19% of total jobs provided for in organization charts for the specific position), Waiter (5,027 / 9% of shortages and 23% of the corresponding provision), Assistant Waiter (3,883 / 7% of shortages and 24% of the corresponding provision), and Receptionist (3,638 / 7% of shortages and 17% of the corresponding provision). Next came the positions of Barista / Barman-Barwoman (2,389 / 4% and 23%, respectively), Dishwasher (2,244 / 4% and 21%, respectively), and Technical Support / Maintenance (1,988 / 4% and 21%, respectively).

The biggest percentage shortage in relation to the positions provided for was for Sommeliers (47% / 284 people), followed by Assistant Receptionists (39% / 1,861

people), Marketing Executives (36% / 1,192 people), and Guest Relations Officers (35% / 1.037 people).

In terms of departments, F&B (13,647 / 26% of total shortages and 24% of the corresponding jobs provided for), Housekeeping (12,982 / 24% and 21%, respectively), Front Office (8,809 / 17% and 22%, respectively), and Kitchen (8,748 / 16% and 22%, respectively) experienced the biggest shortages. Half of the total staff shortages were recorded in the F&B and Housekeeping departments.

Out of a total of 10,050 hotels that operate in Greece, 38% (3,780 hotels) are short of at least one Chambermaid, 30% (3,027 hotels) of at least one Receptionist, 27% (2,751 hotels) of at least one Waiter, and 18% of at least one Assistant Waiter (1,811 hotels) and one Barista (1,800 hotels).

Job vacancies per hotel category and size

The 4-star and 5-star categories make up 56% of all positions on the basis of organization charts – 68,175 and 67,147, respectively. Most staff shortages are seen in 4-star (14,641 / 27% of total shortages) and 3-star hotels (13,687 / 26% of total shortages). The 5-star hotels showed the smallest percentage shortages (17%) in relation to their needs, while 2-star and 3-star hotels had the biggest percentage shortages (25% and 26%, respectively).

In absolute numbers, the biggest shortages (17,107 vacancies / 32% of total shortages) were seen in Small hotels (21-50 rooms), closely followed by Large hotels (>101 rooms) with 16,456 vacancies / 31% of total shortages. However, in relation to the job positions in their organization charts, Small hotels showed the highest percentage of shortages (26%), while Large hotels showed the lowest (18%).

The situation in year-round and seasonal hotels

Staff shortages in seasonal hotels (40,872 positions / 77% of total shortages) are approximately 3.5 times higher than those in year-round hotels (12,376 positions / 23% of total shortages). However, there is no substantial difference in terms of the needs / organization chart ratio (22% for seasonal and 21% for year-round hotels), due to the fact that seasonal hotels employ – during the peak season – approximately 3.5 times more employees (183,919 / 75% of the total are employed by seasonal hotels and 60,205 / 25% by year-round hotels). On the other hand, the seasonal hotels with staff shortages are proportionately more, probably due to the fact that they employ a minimum number of permanent staff and therefore have to (re)hire employees at the beginning of each season.

Shortages per geographical region

In Central Greece approximately 1 in 3 positions was not filled, while in the Ionian Islands, the North Aegean, Epirus, and Thessaly the ratio was about 1 in 4; in the South

Aegean, Crete, the Peloponnese, Macedonia and Thrace about 1 in 5 positions was not filled, and in Attica the ratio was about 1 in 7 positions.

More specifically, 25% of total shortages (13,373 job vacancies) were recorded in the South Aegean, 19% (10,183 positions) in Crete, 16% (8,295 positions) in Macedonia and Thrace, and 13% (7,106 positions) in the Ionian Islands.