

Corruption: UNWTO Secretary General Election for Sale?

ICTP calls for Georgia to stop making deals for votes

HALEIWA, HI, USA, May 1, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The United Nations World Tourism Organization is electing a new Secretary-General on March 12 in Madrid. In the final stage before the election Hawaii based chairman Juergen Steinmetz of the [International Coalition of Tourism Partners \(ICTP\)](#), and publisher of [eTurboNews \(eTN\)](#) issued an open Letter addressing all [UNWTO](#) Executive Members



The eTN letter reads:

Please bear with me while I outline a rather complex, breaking story. It is not a story with any happy ending in sight unless we are together vigilant.

I hope it keeps tourism leaders and voting United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) members awake tonight, preventing sleep.

Together we need to fight abuse and potential corruption of our United Nations World Tourism Organization, that has worked very hard and very well under the watchful stewardship of the outgoing Secretary General, the honorable Dr. Taleb Rifai.

Let's start at the beginning, always a good place to start.

It is widely agreed the upcoming election of a new Secretary-General of the UNWTO is more important than ever before in an era of global turbulence and uncertainty. On May 12 in Madrid, during the 105th session of the UNWTO Executive Council, members will vote to present a new Secretary General for the UNWTO upcoming General Assembly in China, September 2017.

Six candidates have been nominated by their governments for this very important post.

Brazil:
Mr. Márcio Favilla

Colombia:
Mr. Jaime Alberto Cabal Sanclemente

Georgia:

Ambassador Zurab Pololikashvili

Republic of Korea:
Ambassador Young-Shim Dho and Carlos Vogeler

Seychelles:
Mr. Alain St. Ange

Zimbabwe:
Dr. Walter Mzembi

The process of electing a new Secretary General is long and complex, with candidates campaigning and lobbying in various regions of the world and at leading industry events. As it should be, this is a very important election for the future of global tourism, and may the very best, qualified candidate win.

Each executive council member has the responsibility to not only vote for its national interest, but has a responsibility for their region, and also critically, for the general greater good of world tourism to select the most qualified candidate for the highest post in world tourism.

Here is where the election road starts to get slippery. According to multiple, unimpeachable sources, one candidate, Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, with the direct influence of Georgia's Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili, appears to have made bilateral agreements, unrelated to tourism with other countries in exchange for votes. One agreement was apparently made before the UNWTO election in exchange for a vote by Georgia for a position another country strategically wanted, not related to this election.

With such maneuvering and quid pro quo deals, tourism becomes irrelevant. The responsibility to vote for the most qualified candidate to lead world tourism becomes irrelevant. If elected, the credibility and authenticity of the UNWTO with a new Secretary General from a country that made agreements and deals for votes will be a very dark day for world tourism.

The newest information provided to eTN details 11 votes "secured" with the goal of a united Europe voting for Georgia. Georgia's Prime minister recently has been vocal claiming Georgia to be part of Europe and Europe needs to stick together.

These machinations are not only unethical but hugely egregious for the largest industry in the world to have an individual who may not have authentic tourism qualifications to lead the global tourism industry.

My global travel and tourism news organization, eTN, reached out to Mr. Pololikashvili and the Georgian Embassy in Madrid multiple times to ask for comment on these grave allegations, we did not receive a response. Mr. Pololikashvili has not appeared at a single UNWTO or trade event created for candidates to present their vision for the top job in world tourism. No interaction, engagement or communications have been publicly made by the Georgian candidate since his initial candidacy was announced December 2016.

Which all on its own is troubling, does this candidate arrogantly see no need to present to our industry and voting members his plan, goals, and objectives for the UNWTO? Is there no need for the voting members to learn more about how he will steer and lead the UNWTO in uncertain times? Does this candidate believe the election outcome is a foregone conclusion?

As publisher of a leading global tourism news network, I have a responsibility to publish what could easily be the most explosive scandal to rock the tourism world in modern history. eTN cannot remain

silent, it is our duty to report on this breaking story. eTN is appealing to the leaders of our industry and to voting countries to play fair and square with this critical upcoming election. Our industry is too important, times are too dangerous. Our challenges are too great to elect the new UNWTO Secretary-General based on a candidate or country's ability to broker backroom deals unrelated to tourism and hijack the most important post in world tourism.

eTN is formally requesting via individual letters to the UNWTO Executive Council Members and also their embassies in Washington for official comment on this developing situation. We will follow up later this week and publish comments received on this breaking, very unfortunate story.

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This press release can be viewed online at: <http://www.einpresswire.com>

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