

..in five minutes..

3 November 2011

EGYPT, GREECE, THAILAND... Three most popular tourist destinations, focusing the Industry's attention.

Last week, the Chairman of our Destination & Sustainability Committee and the undersigned met with the Egyptian Minister of Tourism and the Chairman of the Egyptian Tourist Authority, to discuss the latest developments in the country. Egypt is indeed a very attractive destination for many Europeans as it combines a great variety of attractive travel experiences, accessible all year long within a travelling time not exceeding 4.5 hours. Our Egyptian counterparts detailed the current political transition process, which will start with the elections of the two Houses of the Parliament between November 2011 and March 2012, the drafting of a new Constitution, its approval through referendum and eventually the Presidential elections end of 2012. They expressed full confidence in a smooth transition process which will bring stability to the Country.

The meeting was also the opportunity to discuss closer ties between Egypt and ECTAA, and the possibility for Egypt to become the next ECTAA preferred destination for 2012-2013. For the first time in its half century lifetime, ECTAA could hold a bi-annual meeting outside of Europe end of 2012.

End of last week, EU political circles thought that a comprehensive solution had been reached on the Greek debt crisis. The intention of the Greek Prime Minister to get the EU plan approved through referendum may unfortunately create further instability in the coming weeks, and we all know that instability is never helping or favouring the Tourism Industry. Let's hope the stability will come back soon, and that the 2012 tourist season in Greece will be at least as successful as last summer.

In an article published by the Bangkok Post a couple of years ago a professor in hydrology and territory planning at Thammasat University predicted that Bangkok could be potentially another New Orleans. Sadly for the millions of Thai people affected by the flooding since more than a month, the prediction has come at least partly true with major areas of the Thai Capital city under water, including the domestic airport and the Grand Palace. And unless the authorities adopt major infrastructure plans to regulate monsoon waters, as they should have done after the 1995 flooding, the problem is likely to come back again.

Michel de Blust

IATA affairs: IATA road map for next wave of projects in passenger transport

IATA has presented a road map of 5 new objectives, among which 4 may raise sensitive issues for travel agents: concerning the role of travel agents, the facilitation of interoperability between reservation systems and between travel services, data sharing on passenger information and responsibility for the collection of passenger information. Members' comments are welcome!

For more details, see e-mail sent on 17 October

IATA affairs: IATA proposes the introduction of global financial criteria

IATA is looking into global criteria that would strengthen financial ratios, information requirements and financial security requirements. The proposal will be discussed in the usual consultative bodies with agents' representatives and will be submitted to the next PAConf (2012) for adoption. Members are invited to carry out an impact assessment, possibly by a financial specialist, to provide solid economic and possibly legal arguments in regard of the (dis)proportion between the impact on agents and agent default to BSP. ECTAA will raise this matter with DG Competition of the Commission.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 17 October

IATA affairs: ECTAA meets the IATA Senior Vice President IDFS

IATA considers cooperating with agents to determine how to make the Programme more relevant, but it is still pushing to address in this framework issues which are not agents' priority. IATA has agreed to start the advertisement and selection process to appoint a new Travel Agency Commissioner for Area 2 in cooperation with ECTAA. IATA has besides removed from the Travel Agent's Handbook the staff standards, which it had unilaterally added in 2010.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 22 September

Aviation: Impact assessment of possible revision of Regulations 261/2004 and 889/2002

ECTAA has been contacted to contribute to the impact assessment of a possible revision of Regulation 261/2004 and complementary measures for Regulation 889/2002 on luggage handling. Members have been invited to provide their input.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 28 September and 26 October

Aviation: ECoJ sheds light on the interpretation of Regulation 261/2004

The European Court of Justice has handed down a decision in the case C-83/10 concerning the interpretation of the meaning of 'cancellation' and 'further compensation' contained in Regulation 261/2004. A number of new cases have been referred to the ECoJ for interpretation, many of them relating either to the interaction of Reg 261 with the Montreal Convention or building on the principles underpinning the Sturgeon ruling.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 26 October

Aviation: Inclusion of international aviation in the ETS does not breach the law

Following claims brought by a number of airline associations, the Advocate General of the European Court of Justice concluded that the inclusion of international aviation in the European Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) is in line with EU law and is compatible with international agreements applicable in this area. The final decision of the European Court is expected later this year.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 7 October

Aviation: EP own-initiative report on White Paper on Transport

The EP will present an own initiative report in response to the White Paper for Transport. ECTAA contacted some MEPs to express the views of ECTAA Members, but the amendment proposals were not retained.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 13 September

PNR: Most of ECTAA/GEBTA amendments have been tabled!

The two Spanish and Swedish Shadow Rapporteurs of the EP TRAN parliamentary committee have tabled most of the amendment proposals suggested by ECTAA/GEBTA. However, considering the vast number of amendments tabled, the Rapporteur is considering compromise amendments. Members have been invited to contact a number of MEPs to seek their support for certain amendments.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 6 October and 18 October

Sustainability and health & safety: ECTAA sets up two working committees

The Destination and Sustainability Committee of ECTAA decided to create two working groups dealing with sustainability and health & safety issues whenever needed. They will work independently and report to the D&S Committee. Members can nominate a delegate for the two working groups until 4 November.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 17 October

Standards: Regulation proposal on European standardisation

ECTAA is in the process of elaborating a position on the Commission proposal updating and consolidating existing legislation on standardisation. Please let us know your views on the inclusion of services into the scope of the legislation and whether issues relating to safety of services are better dealt with by standards or legislation.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 17 and 31 October

Professional qualifications: Implementation of the Professional Qualifications Directive

The EP is drafting a report on the implementation of the Professional Qualifications Directive. Members have been invited to write to their MEPs to support or reject a number of amendments tabled that are relevant to ensure the free mobility of tourist guides.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 7 October

Professional qualifications: Case study on a professional card for tourist guides unsuccessful

No consensus could be reached in the frame of the case study on a professional card for tourist guides. The European Commission is however pursuing its general analysis of the feasibility of a European professional card.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 22 September

Insurance Mediation: Towards least requirements for intermediaries in travel insurance

In the frame of the current review of the Insurance Mediation Directive, the Secretariat has been in contact with a major insurance undertaking recommended by DRV and that operates in many European markets, in order to develop amendment proposals, which would secure that intermediaries in travel insurance contracts –currently excluded from the scope of the Directive- are subject to as few requirements as possible. Members have been invited to provide their views to the proposed amendments.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 7 October

UNWTO: International Convention on the protection of tourists/consumers

At its second meeting on 28 September, the UNWTO Working Group on the protection of tourists/consumers decided to go ahead with the creation of an international convention with a set of obligations for signatories and optional recommendations, covering various issues such as assistance in travel disruptions, consular protection and travel advises, airline and tour operator insolvency, etc. The UNWTO Secretariat will prepare a first draft document on a possible International Convention for mid-November.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 5 October

Internal Market: Performance check in the tourism field

In the framework of a performance check of the Single Market for services, the European Commission has launched a case study on tourism, the objective of which is to determine how different pieces of EU legislation applying to tourism services interact (Services Directive, the Directive on recognition of professional qualifications and the Package Travel Directive) and whether it is satisfactory. Members have been invited to provide their comments on the case study.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 7 September

Misleading advertisement: Implementation of Directive 2006/114 on misleading and comparative advertising

The European Commission has launched an on-line consultation on Directive 2006/114 on misleading and comparative advertising. The latter protects traders against misleading advertisements by other traders and lays down the conditions under which traders can compare their products with their competitors' products in their advertisement. Members have been invited to provide their input until 25 November.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 26 October

Rail transport: How well does rail distribution work today and how can it be improved ?

In the frame of the TAP TSI project, ECTAA/GEBTA and ETTSA (CRSs and their online travel agents) are responsible for a workstream to define a 'full service model', the objective of which is to identify the technical requirements for end-to-end rail distribution and retailing process and solutions for implementing such a process. To this end, a questionnaire has been circulated to ECTAA/GEBTA Members to assess how rail is distributed today, the major bottlenecks and possible solutions.

For more details, see e-mails sent on 14 and 27 September

Tourism: Implementation of the 21 actions of the European tourism policy

The Tourism Unit of the Commission has presented an "implementation rolling plan" on the 21 actions of the Communication on Tourism, which details all the initiatives that have been or will be carried out in the field of tourism.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 4 October

Tourism: Edging towards a European Tourism Quality Label, ETQ

After several discussions with stakeholders, the European Commission has prepared a consultation paper on the ETQ Label, which contains several possible organisational options and open questions. Members have been invited to express their view.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 3 October

Other News in Brief

- ECTAA co-organised the 7th European Bus and Coach Forum "Greening travel and tourism: Policy and transport sector contributions to green travel and tourism"- Kortrijk, 20 October 2011
[Highlights of the event & speeches](#)
- [EUROSTAT publication: Winter Season Tourism Trends 2010-2011](#)
- [EUROSTAT publication: Domestic Tourism: Europeans spend 77% of their holiday trips in their own country](#)