

..in five minutes..

6 June 2011

The ECTAA-biannual meeting in Stockholm was set in a celebrative mood – welcoming a new Affiliated Member, the Croatian National Tourism Board, and blowing the candles on ECTAA's 50 years of existence. Marking this event we had a number of distinguished guests.

'Doing nothing' in terms of passenger protection against airline bankruptcy is not a real option, the Commission representative assured participants. While the study on airline failure carried out earlier this year favors the option of a reserve fund, the Commission has not yet decided what form of passenger protection it will propose. We also heard from the Commission that the proposal for a revision of the package travel Directive has been pushed back to summer 2012. The Commission is intent on including 'click-through' customers in the scope of a revised legislation. There is still time for input to the Commission. An interesting presentation was also given on Travelife, a very useful tool for tour operators to integrate sustainability principles into their operations. EU funding is available for a number of national tour operators' associations to introduce sustainability among their tour operators for minimal start-up costs. Members have shown a great deal of interest in cooperating with Travelife.

Michel de Blust

Transport: Commission may deal with the problem of sequential use of coupons

As part of the review of the Regulation 261/2004 scheduled in 2012, the Commission intends to look at the airlines' practice of 'no-show' policy which requires passengers to use all coupons in sequence, otherwise they are denied boarding for the next leg or return flight.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 6 May

Transport: Tell your authorities that fuel surcharges in the tax box is unfair and misleading

Presenting as taxes costs, which are contributing to the airline's income, constitutes an unfair practice. It is also misleading, as the customer can legitimately expect that the fuel surcharge is not subject to the non-refundable condition applicable to certain fares. Members are encouraged to raise this with the national authority in charge of enforcement of the unfair commercial practice Directive.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 3 May including model letter

Transport: Emergency contact details can be collected via a form at the airport

Some airlines are instructing agents to ask customers for the contact details of a person to contact in case of an airline accident. For reminder, agents have no legal obligation to collect the data in the PNR. Airlines should be recommended to ask passengers to complete a form, which they can drop in a box at the airport.

For more details, see e-mail and model letter sent on 18 May

Transport: ASTWG's work on ADMs in relation to guaranteed fares and IATA baggage rules

Little progress was made concerning ADMs on guaranteed fares and divergences between airline instructions and GDS information. The problems relate to the process of fare filings in GDSs. An IATA group will reflect on how to progress on this. Concerning new IATA baggage rules, during the period where GDSs are not ready, if agents receive related ADMs, they may refer them to the IATA Agency Administrator. Continental/United announced that they will not implement the system for the new IATA baggage rules.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 2 May

Transport: Agents' priorities in review of IATA Passenger Agency Conference

ECTAA/GEFTA are in the process of identifying the priority issues that agents would like to see addressed in a value proposal to improve the IATA Passenger Agency Programme, such as better agents' representation and consultation process, proportionality of obligations, enforcement of airlines' obligations, limiting ADMs and improving quality of filings in GDSs, solutions for multinational agents, etc.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 2 May

Transport: Feasibility of a European multi-modal journey planner

ECTAA responded to the Commission consultation on the feasibility of a European multi-modal journey planner, which would allow travellers to plan –and possibly book– a multi-modal journey from point A to B in one go. ECTAA expressed some doubts and risks of such a project and insisted that this must be a commercial venture without public subsidies in order to avoid distortions of competition.

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

Unfair terms: Travel agents can advertise prices 'as from' says Court

The EU Court of Justice has recently ruled that a commercial communication advertising travel services at entry-level prices and indicating part of their main characteristics, with a reference to the trader's website, may comply with the Directive on unfair commercial practices.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 19 May or consult the [decision](#) of the European Court of Justice

VAT: No changes to reduced VAT rates or VAT exemption for tourism services, says ECTAA

Responding to the Commission consultation on the review of the EU VAT system, ECTAA called for the maintenance of the reduced/zero VAT rating and VAT exemptions for certain tourism services and their extension to intermediaries selling those services. More importantly, the Commission should address the stalemate on the revision of the special margin taxation scheme.

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

Tourism: Attracting visitors from Argentina, Brazil and Chile to Europe

On 1st of June, in the presence of Commission Vice President Mr. Tajani, ECTAA's President signed the Memorandum of Understanding on 50.000 tourists experience, to strengthen tourism flows between South America and Europe. The objective is to attract visitors to Europe while combating seasonality.

For more details, see [press release](#) of the Commission

Tourism: What the EP has to say on the Tourism Communication

262 amendment proposals have been tabled for the EP own-initiative report on the Tourism Communication. ECTAA sent a letter to the Rapporteur highlighting good amendments while recommending against some relating to the package travel Directive. The vote on the report is expected end of June.

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

Standards: Standardisation work has come to a stalemate

The ISO TC 228 plenary meeting, which reviews all ongoing and new standardization work on tourism services, proved that there is little support for standardization work. Existing working groups are finding it difficult to make progress and three new work item proposals on standardisation in accommodation, strongly opposed by the industry, have finally been withdrawn.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 24 May

Other News in Brief

- Eurobarometer survey on the attitudes of European towards tourism
For more details, see [survey](#) or [summary](#) of survey
- Call for proposals “Promotion of trans-national thematic tourism products in the European Union as means of sustainable tourism development” (deadline: 01-07-2011)
For more details, see [call for proposal](#)
- Call for tender on a feasibility study for a "Virtual Tourism Observatory"
For more details, see [call for tender](#)

