

..in five minutes..

21 June – 2 August 2013

ECTAA has long been calling for a less cumbersome and costly visa issuance policy to attract more visitors to Europe. The potential impact of a smarter visa policy on economic growth, in particular tourism, has long been recognized by major states. The EU has only started on this reflection with the Commission Communication published end of 2012 on the “Implementation and development of the common visa policy to spur growth in the EU”. DG Enterprise of the European Commission has taken up this matter and will shortly publish a study on the economic impact of short stay visa facilitation on the tourism industry and on the overall economies of EU Schengen countries. The study will also make recommendations of visa facilitation actions that can be taken within the frame of the existing visa code as well as modification of the code. The results of the study to a large extent echoe the remarks and issues brought up by industry and tourism associations, such as ECTAA, in recent years.

Christina Russe

Consumer protection: Adoption of the package travel Directive proposal

After more than 4 years of debating forth and back, the Commission has finally adopted its legislative proposal revising the package travel Directive. The Secretariat has done a first preliminary review of the proposal, which will serve as a basis for the thorough analysis to be carried out after the summer break by the Legal and Tour Operators Committees as well as the Members.

For more details, see e-mails sent on 16 July and 24 June 2013 or consult [Directive proposal](#)

Professional qualifications: 2 years professional experience will still be required for tourist guides

Agreement has been reached on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications Directive proposal. The major innovation of this Directive for the travel industry is the introduction of a European professional card. Unfortunately, the provision proposed by the Commission, that the requirement of 2 years professional experience should not apply when a service provider – such as a tourist guide - accompanies the service beneficiaries into a country other than the one where he is established, has not been retained.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 28 June 2013

Transport: EU blacklist of unsafe carriers has been updated

A new updated blacklist of unsafe carriers has been adopted and came into effect on 12 July 2013. Philippine Airlines is now allowed back into European skies. For all other carriers registered in the Philippines the ban remains. Moreover, the Venezuelan airline Conviasa, which was banned in 2012, has also been removed from the black list.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 10 July or consult the [EU blacklist](#)

Transport: Experts required for a rail distribution initiative

ECTAA and GEBTA Members are invited to enquire if travel agents / TMCs are interested in participating to the 18 months joint industry initiative of improving rail distribution through the development of an open IT framework. This is a major initiative bringing together major European railway undertakings and ticket vendors, which include travel agents and the GDSs.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 29 July 2013

Transport: Effectiveness of Directive 2003/59/EC regarding drivers of road vehicles

The Commission has launched a public consultation on the effectiveness of the Directive 2003/59/EC on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers. This consultation might be of interested for coach operators who encounter difficulties in the recognition of their bus drivers' qualifications when travelling abroad. Members' comments are welcome until 20 September 2013.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 25 July 2013 or view the [public consultation](#)

Internal Market: European Single Market – Submit your ideas

From 23 September the EU will start online debates for one month on the improvement on the living and working provisions in the European Single Market. The first week of the campaign (Jobs- 23-25 September) is devoted to working and doing business in Europe, including the recognition of professional qualifications, such as Tour Guides. Members can propose ideas and projects to be discussed during the event.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 23 July or consult the EU [website](#) for more information

Taxation: Tour operators relieved from accounting for VAT on coach transport through Germany

As of 1 October 2013, Germany will no longer apply the extended reverse charge to land-related B2B passenger transport carried out in Germany. Thus, tour operators, who buy in land-related transport services (e.g. coach travel) carried out in/through Germany will no longer have to register and account for VAT on those services in Germany, but instead the transport undertaking will be responsible for accounting for the VAT. This reduces substantially the fiscal burdens of tour operators organizing trips which include bought-in land-related passenger transport in/through Germany.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 10 July 2013

Tourism: EU Mission to Vietnam, Myanmar and Thailand

The Commission is organising a mission for growth to Vietnam (12-13 November), Myanmar (14-15 November) and Thailand (16 November). The objectives of these visits are to promote innovation and sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU and the visited countries; They will also aim to promote European industry in targeted sectors, including tourism, by organizing matchmaking events with local entrepreneurs.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 12 July 2013 or visit the EU [website](#)

Tourism: Surveys on accessible tourism

The European Commission has launched two surveys, one survey to gather information about the accessibility of tourism services and facilities from tourism businesses and another survey for disabled tourists or tourists with access requirements. The results of these surveys will feed in a report to identify options for improving the range of accessible tourism services. Interested Members can respond to the surveys.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 9 July 2013 or consult EU [website](#)

ECTAA: New Preferred Destination

As agreed by the General Assembly of ECTAA, the Secretariat has signed the Preferred Destination Agreement with the Regional Secretary of State of the Azores in June 2013, so that the Azores will become ECTAA's Preferred Destination in 2014. ECTAA will thus hold its bi-annual meeting in Ponta Delgada, Saint Miguel Island in the archipelago of the Azores in spring 2014.

Other News in Brief

- Facilitating transnational low season tourism exchanges in Europe encouraging Senior Citizens to travel, [call for proposals](#)

Calendar of ECTAA meetings

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|---------------------|---|
| 12 September 2013 | Joint Legal and Tour Operators Committee, Brussels |
| 25 September 2013 | Air Matters Committee, Brussels |
| 11 October 2013 | Destination and Sustainability Committee, Brussels (<i>to be confirmed</i>) |
| 14-15 October 2013 | Fiscal Committee, Athens |
| 28-29 November 2013 | ECTAA bi-annual meeting, Dublin |

EU consultations / ECTAA surveys

- [Public consultation on the effectiveness of Directive 2003/59/EC on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers](#), open until 25 October 2013
- ECTAA questionnaire on Members' communication policy, sent on 22 July and open until 27 August 2013