



January 2024

What's happening in Brussels

Package Travel Directive - EU institutions slowly waking up

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At European Parliament level, after initial indications that the PTD revision could be adopted by the end of the mandate, the work has not started yet. That could change with the official designations of the rapporteur and shadow rapporteurs on 22 January. However, with the time left, and considering rumours of a complete overhaul of Committees in the next Parliament, it is increasingly unlikely that a first reading will be achieved before the June elections. An opinion can still be adopted during this mandate, giving directions on the file for the next Parliament. At Council level, the first presentation of the PTD to the attachés will take place during the Consumer Working Party on 29 February 2024. There is no negotiation foreseen at this stage and it seems that this file is not a priority for the current Belgian Council Presidency. The exact future of the PTD revision for 2024 should be clarified by the end of the month, so stay tuned.

Better application of the rights of Persons with Reduced Mobility when travelling by air

The existing [Regulation 1107/2006](#) on the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility (short 'PRMs') when travelling by air aims at prohibiting air carriers from refusing reservation or boarding to passengers because of their reduced mobility or disability and to ensuring assistance to PRMs in airports and aircrafts free of charge. The Commission has launched a consultation on a revised set of guidelines aimed at providing guidance on the interpretation and application of a number of provisions of the Regulation and

update the guidelines. The draft guidelines include provisions for travel agents and tour operators in respect of information to be provided to PRMs at time of booking, training on PRM needs, notification of assistance requirements, etc. The matter will be reviewed in the Air Matters Committee to see whether travel agents and tour operators are able to meet these requirements.

Green Claims initiative – Council proposes to tighten rules around climate-related claims

The [compromise text](#) discussed end of last year in the Council includes stricter rules around climate-related claims. Traders will have to carry out an assessment to substantiate their claims, which would include clear identification whether the claims concern contribution claims or offsetting claims; separation of greenhouse gas emissions, including future performance regarding the emissions, from any voluntary use of carbon credits; specification whether the carbon credits relate to greenhouse gas emission reductions or carbon removals; description how the carbon credits relied upon are of high integrity and accounted for correctly to reflect the claimed impact on climate. Claims on future performance of traders or products need to include verifiable commitments, measurable and time-bound targets for implementation and allocation of resources to this end. The Council clarified that such claims must be verified by an independent third-party expert, who should regularly monitor the progress of the trader. The Parliament has not yet adopted its opinion in first reading.

Sustainability reporting standards for SMEs

On 5 January 2023, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) entered into force, which requires large companies, as well as listed SMEs, to report on sustainability. The aim of this Directive is to ensure that investors and other stakeholders have access to the information they need to assess the impact of companies on people and the environment and for investors to assess financial risks and opportunities arising from climate change and other sustainability issues. The reporting standards for large companies and listed companies are already published and available on the EFRAG [website](#). EFRAG has now also developed a [draft standard for SMEs](#), which is entirely voluntary. The aim of the latter is to offer a simple reporting tool for SMEs to monitor their sustainability performance and to face growing and different ESG data requests from their business counterparts (i.e. banks, investors, or larger companies in the upstream value chain required to report under CSRD). EFRAG is inviting interested stakeholders to participate in the testing of the SME standard. If interested, please send an e-mail by 31 January 2024 to LSME@efrag.org.

Events



ECTAA Travel Payment Summit – indirect distribution participation needed!

The first ECTAA Travel Payment Summit will take place on 21 February with a pre-event drinks reception in the evening of 20 February. The event at the Hilton Grand-Place Hotel in Brussels will bring together travel and payment experts with policymakers and stakeholders from the EU Bubble. The event will shed light on the complexities of travel payment and support the understanding of the different roles in the travel value chain when it comes to money flows and the impact for the risk management. Discussions beyond siloes that often exist should help to have open and meaningful conversations.

ECTAA has been dedicated to monitoring issues around payment in travel for many years, recognizing its pivotal role within businesses and the entire travel industry. Payment, whether in B2C or B2B scenarios, directly impact risk management of companies, fundamentally influencing the entire travel ecosystem. It is also intertwining with other relevant aspects like customer experience. An adept payment strategy not only mitigates risks but also enables higher revenues and heightened customer satisfaction, constituting a linchpin for sustainable growth within the industry. Within the labyrinth of travel and payment complexities, regulatory frameworks, especially the EU legislation (e.g. PTD, passenger rights), loom large, setting the tone and guidelines for the industry's operational landscape. Set against this backdrop, the forthcoming ECTAA Travel Payment Summit will bring together the many different stakeholders. Several speakers and participants have already confirmed their attendance - from large Payment Solution Providers, the European Commission, Consultants, an OTA, a TMC. A strong participation from indirect distribution players ((online) travel agencies, TMCs, consolidators, tour operators etc.) is needed to push our messages and the success of the event. Travel companies that are member of an

ECTAA member association benefit from a reduced price of 49 Euro plus VAT. Payment solution providers / vendors can choose between different sponsor packages starting at 950 Euro plus VAT. More information on the event is available [here](#) and the direct link to register is [here](#).

Opportunity for European incoming tour operators to participate in ASTA Global Convention 2024 - registrations still open

ASTA – the American Society of Travel Advisors – is organising their annual Global Convention together with a trade show on 29-31 May 2024 in Dallas, Texas ([more information here](#)). ASTA has kindly opened their trade show to European incoming tour operators members of ECTAA at a discounted fee. By enrolling in the trade show that will take place on the afternoon of the 29th of May, exhibitors will have access to over 1,000 American qualified travel professionals. In addition, by attending the entire conference, exhibitors will obtain many hours of networking, valuable industry updates, compelling keynotes, and education sessions presented throughout the conference. Companies of ECTAA member associations interested in participating in this event are invited to complete the following the [online registration form](#).

Sustainability Corner

Free sustainability webinar for ECTAA Members

Anne de Jong, a sustainability expert who has carried out a number of training sessions for travel agents and tour operators in the frame of the SUSTOUR project and who runs the sustainability consultancy and training company [The Good Tourism Institute](#), is offering ECTAA Members the possibility to organise an inspirational webinar on sustainability or an interactive workshop on sustainability free of charge for their members. There is also possibility to organise an interactive workshop on sustainability tailored to the needs of the participants. ECTAA Members can complete a short [survey](#) to indicate their interest in such a webinar or other services.

ECTAA Insights

Spotlight on Bulgaria

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that an agreement was reached in January with the Ministry of Tourism to make Bulgaria the ECTAA Preferred Destination for 2024. During the coming months, ECTAA will become a true partner in the travel and tourism promotion programme outside of Bulgaria by facilitating market access to European travel agents and tour operators for the local destination management companies and other partners. As part of the Preferred Destination programme, informative online roundtables are scheduled, tailored explicitly to meet the promotion objectives of the Ministry of Tourism. A pivotal milestone will be of course the ECTAA semi-annual meeting in Sofia in October 2024. For more information, [click here.](#)

Boosting travel between China and Europe

Hiseas International and the Chengdu Tourism Studies Association have become ECTAA's latest Affiliated Members! This cooperation represents an opportunity for ECTAA to support its European activities with an international perspective. By helping creating stronger connections between Chengdu and Europe, the aim is to give an environment for more and better collaboration, enabling cultural exchange and economic growth for both regions. For more information, [click here.](#)

Discover the VISA Destination Insights

Our new Allied Member VISA informed us about the 'VISA Destination Insights', which might be of interest for Members. Based on VisaNet transactions, the VISA Destination Insight offers insight into the performance of destinations, in destination visitor spend data and market segment analysis. The tool is developed primarily for destinations, but can also provide useful data for travel agents and tour operators interested to know about traveller spend, average stay duration, etc. per destination. For more information, click [here.](#)

Save the Date

18 January 2024 Air Matters Committee & Technology Working Group, Brussels

February 20 **(TBA):** Sustainability Committee, online meeting
February: Executive Board

21 February: ECTAA Travel Payment Summit, Brussels - [registration](#)

4-5 March: IATA PAPGJC meeting, Madrid

29-31 May: ASTA Travel Convention 2024, Dallas/USA
13-14 June: 128th ECTAA semi-annual meeting, Braşov/Romania
24-25 October (TBC): 129th ECTAA semi-annual meeting, Sofia/Bulgaria

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CONTACT US

ECTAA AISBL
Rue Dautzenberg 36
1050 Brussels
Belgium

Transparency Register : 88072891086-36
T: +32 2 644 34 50
E: secretariat@ectaa.org



E-mailing services by IDmailing.eu



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Twitter: [@ECTAAEurope](#)
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CONTACT US

ECTAA AISBL
Rue Dautzenberg 36
1050 Brussels
Belgium

Transparency Register : 88072891086-36

T: +32 2 644 34 50

E: secretariat@ectaa.org



E-mailing services by [IDmailing.eu](#)