



March 2024

What's happening in Brussels

Revision of the PTD: Parliament on break, Council on the move

ECTAA finalised its position on the revision of the package travel Directive proposal and provided its feedback to the Commission, which is available [here](#). A lot of other stakeholders have submitted their views as well, many of whom oppose the limitation of pre-payments. It has now been confirmed that the European Parliament will not actively work on this file until the new Parliament is in place (end of 2024 at the earliest). As for the Council, the Belgian Presidency will try to take the discussions forward as much as possible, but no general approach will be adopted by the end of the mandate. The European Economic and Social Committee is drafting a report to be adopted in April 2024.

ECTAA Position on proposals for new multimodal passenger rights and revision of unimodal passenger rights

The final ECTAA position on the Commission proposals for new multimodal passenger rights and a revision of unimodal passenger rights has been published. The Commission presented their proposals as part of the "Passenger Mobility Package" on 29 November 2023. ECTAA submitted its position on the "have your say" website of the Commission and shared it with the responsible unit within the Commission as well as the Council. The position will guide our advocacy efforts with the Commission, Council and Parliament. Both position

papers can be found [here](#).

Two ECJ cases published related to PTD and COVID-19

The European Court of Justice handed down a decision in the Case C-299/22 | Tez Tour, which is important for tour operators – see full decision [here](#). In short, the Court made the following conclusions:

- There is no need for a negative travel advice to cancel a package due to unavoidable extraordinary circumstances (no cancellation fee).
- The concept of 'extraordinary and unavoidable circumstances' includes circumstances that would expose the affected travellers to risks to their health and safety, taking into account, where appropriate, personal factors relating to the individual circumstances (e.g. pregnant women in Zika areas).
- The same exceptional circumstances already known to the traveller or foreseeable at the time of booking cannot be invoked to terminate a package contract without paying cancellation fees. The situation is different if, after the contract has been concluded, the situation has changed significantly so that it is different from the situation known at the time the contract was concluded. In this case, these new elements could give rise to the possibility of terminating the contract without paying cancellation fees.
- Circumstances relating to the place of departure or return or to stopovers and connections during the journey which are likely to affect the performance of the package should be taken into account in the event of cancellation by the consumer.

Another important decision handed down by the European Court of Justice concerns the Case C-584/22 | Kiwi Tours – see full decision [here](#). In this judgement, the Court recognised that, when cancelling a package for unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances, account must be taken only of the situation prevailing on the date on which that traveller terminated his or her travel contract.

European Parliament extends alternative dispute resolution to air passenger rights

In its [position](#) adopted last week on the revision of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive (ADR), the European Parliament proposes to extend the scope to cover all aspects of European consumer law and a wider range of disputes: misleading advertising, manipulative interfaces, geo-blocking problems and roaming charges. One of the most important changes introduced by the Parliament is the inclusion of air carriers in the Regulation as the only sector to be required to implement a mandatory alternative dispute resolution system, which will give European consumers more tools to enforce their right to compensation or reimbursement in the event of flight cancellations.

End of generic environmental claims

With the adoption of the [Directive 2024/825](#) as regards empowering consumers for the green transition through better protection against unfair practices and through better information, 'greenwashing' and premature product obsolescence are now considered unfair commercial practices. General and misleading generic product claims - such as 'environmentally friendly', 'natural' or 'climate neutral' - are banned without proof of recognised environmental performance. Moreover, claims of climate neutrality based on offsetting greenhouse gas emissions would also be prohibited. In other words, retailers will not be able to claim that a product has a neutral, reduced or improved environmental impact on the basis of unverified offset schemes. In addition, only sustainability labels based on certification or established by the public authorities will be authorised. Member States will have 2 years to transpose the Directive into national law.

European Parliament proposes good amendments to Green Claims initiative

The [Green Claims Directive proposal](#) sets out the information to be provided by traders to the public before publishing an explicit environmental claim to avoid 'greenwashing' which is prohibited (see above). In its [position](#) in first reading adopted last week, the European Parliament proposes a faster verification system (up to 30 days) and allows traders to benefit from a simplified procedure, that may include a presumption of conformity, for certain environmental claims. Moreover, small and medium-sized enterprises would have an extra year to comply with the new rules, while micro enterprises would be exempt. The rules would also ban green claims based entirely on the use of carbon offsetting schemes, but would allow for companies to mention offsetting and carbon removal schemes in their advertisements if they have reduced emissions as much as possible and use the schemes only for residual emissions, and use only certified and high integrity carbon credits.

Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive proposal goes ahead but with reduced scope

Member States' ambassadors to the European Union (COREPER) finally approved the [provisional agreement](#) reached with the European Parliament on the directive that will provide a framework for European corporate due diligence, but not without making a number of important changes. Among other, the thresholds for the companies concerned have been raised (from

originally companies with more than 500 employees and a turnover in excess of €150 million to companies with 1,000 employees and sales of more than €300 million) and the directive is to be applied gradually over 3 years. While SMEs are not in scope, they may be impacted if they are in the supply chain of large companies. The Council proposes a number of measures to help and protect these SMEs, though e.g. capacity-building, training, etc. The text endorsed by the Member States still has to be voted on in the European Parliament before final adoption.

IATA Corner

IATA BSP figures for 2023

The European Billing and Settlement Plans (BSP) showed on average an increase in sales volumes of 23,6% in 2023 vs 2022, with strong differences between the BSPs of the different markets. The BSP volumes in Azerbaijan increased by 87,2% and also the BSPs of Croatia and Greece grew by more than 50%. The BSPs in Iceland (-11,7%), Russia (-9,4%), Israel (-7,1%) and Ukraine (-1%) decreased, while all other BSPs saw increases between 14,3% and 41,4%. European BSPs are on average still 26,3% below 2019 volumes. The BSP statistics can be requested from the Secretariat.

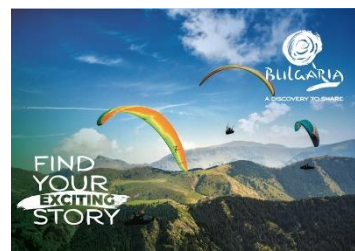
Open Surveys

A [survey](#) has been launched on **workplace equality, diversity and inclusion** (EDI). Your responses will feed into the development of tools for EDI training in the tourism and hospitality industries, such as a handbook, educational materials and communication pieces. This survey was developed by [PANTOUR](#), a European Union research consortium, that aims to develop educational tools to address current and future skills needs in tourism and hospitality.

The [Roundtable on Human Rights in Tourism](#) is conducting a [survey](#) regarding **human rights in tourism, companies' efforts and the work of the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism**. The responses will be used to develop approaches to better support the tourism industry in responding to and mitigating human rights issues in tourism.

Feel free to provide your feedback to these short surveys!

Preferred Destination 2024



In the era of Digital here is the ChatGPT answer why you should choose Bulgaria for your vacation [discover the 15 reasons](#)

Events

EP event 'Celebrating 5 Transformative Years of EU Tourism Policy'

ECTAA is organising an event in the European Parliament in Brussels on 3 April, co-hosted by MEP Josianne Cutajar, HOTREC and ECTAA. Please see the save the date [here](#). This is to mark the end of mandate of the EP Tourism Taskforce. The idea is to thank the MEPs of this Taskforce for their dedication to tourism and to start promoting the setting-up of a new Taskforce in the newly elected EP (this is not reconducted automatically). Registrations open until 27 March [here](#).

Retrospective – ECTAA Travel Payment Summit 2024

ECTAA organised the first Travel Payment Summit on 21 February 2024 in Brussels. Nearly 90 participants –policymakers of the different institutions (Commission, Council, Parliament) as well as payment and travel experts listened to interesting panels and actively engaged in discussions. The event started with a casual icebreaker reception the evening before at the Grand Place. There were also many networking options during the summit which allowed the participants to continue their discussions outside the official

sessions. The event discussed many different aspects around the complex but extremely important matter of travel payment. The event was a great success. This was confirmed by the feedback of the participants with nearly 75% rating the event with 5 out of 5.

Save the Date

3 April: Event in the European Parliament co-sponsored by MEP Cutajar, ECTAA and HOTREC
22-23 May: Airline & Travel Payments Summit 2024, London
29-31 May: ASTA Travel Convention 2024, Dallas/USA
11-12 June: IATA PAPER and PAPER, Geneva
13-14 June: 128th ECTAA semi-annual meeting, Braşov/Romania
16-17 September: IATA PAPER, Geneva
8-10 October: World Aviation Festival, Amsterdam
24-25 October (TBC): 129th ECTAA semi-annual meeting, Sofia/Bulgaria

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