



**November  
2023**

## Webinar

### **Free webinar on PCI DSS**

As of September 2023, a false or inaccurate PCI DSS statement (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard) will result in a risk event for IATA accredited agents with far reaching and very costly consequences! Many accredited agents seem still unaware of the importance of PCI DSS and a correct PCI DSS declaration. The Travel Agent Commissioners (TACs) have recently raised this as one of the main issues that have been brought to them from agents who felt the painful consequences. A false or incorrect PCI DSS statement to IATA by an accredited agent will result in a risk event. This means the agent will fail the annual risk history assessment with implications for the assigned risk status of the agent. Depending on the risk status, the agent has to provide financial securities (e.g. bank guarantees) to IATA. Therefore the consequences of a false or inaccurate PCI DSS statement are painful and costly for any IATA accredited agent! ECTAA has partnered with the cyber security company VikingCloud to set up a webinar on PCI DSS highlighting the importance of PCI DSS, consequences of non-compliance and one (of several) option for IATA accredited agents to comply with their PCI DSS obligations. The webinar will be held on Wednesday, 29 November from 10:00 – 11:00h CET. This webinar is open to anyone and free of charge. A recording and further background material will be shared with all registered contacts. Registration is possible [here](#). For more information please see also our LinkedIn post [here](#).

## What's happening in Brussels

**ECTAA discussed PTD in the Tourism Task Force of the European Parliament**

On October 25, the Tourism Task Force of the Transport and Tourism (TRAN) Committee invited stakeholders (ECTAA, TUI, BEUC, European Commission) to discuss the tourism aspects of the review of the Package Travel Directive (PTD) and the Passengers' Rights Framework, which are expected to be published on November 29, 2023, as part of the Mobility Package. The stakeholders emphasised the challenges posed by recent crises, such as the insolvency of Thomas Cook and the COVID-19 pandemic and debated the necessity and effectiveness of limitation on prepayments in the travel industry. The discussions also revolved around striking a balance between passengers' rights and the sustainability of the travel sector, particularly in addressing issues related to refunds and intermediaries.

## **VAT platform rules – Postponement likely!**

The Spanish Council Presidency was very keen to reach at least a provisional agreement on the proposed VAT rules for platforms, which would make platforms responsible for paying VAT on accommodation and/or transport services, when the underlying service providers have not done so (for example because they are VAT exempt or under the SME threshold). Industry stakeholders including those representing platforms, home owners and travel agents (ECTAA) have raised concerns about VAT and channel neutrality, additional VAT compliance cost and complexity, especially for small platform providers. Member States have not been able to reach an agreement on this file and it is likely to be handed over to the Belgian Presidency. It is unclear whether Belgium will give as much importance to platform rules as Spain.

## **Publication of the proposal for a regulation on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**

On 17 October 2023, the European Commission proposed a [legislative package](#) to modernise and simplify rules on alternative dispute resolution to adapt them to digital markets. The package contains two legislative proposals that amend the current Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Directive and repeal the Online Consumer Dispute Resolution (ODR) Regulation. These legislative proposals are complemented by the European Commission's recommendation on quality requirements for dispute resolution offered by online marketplaces and trade associations and the European Commission's report on the application of current legislation. The Secretariat is working on assessing the impact that this package may have on the trade.

## **EU adopts a digital visa for applicants**

On 13 November, the Council adopted [new rules](#) which will allow people planning to travel to the Schengen area to apply for a visa from an online visa application platform for the EU. With a few exceptions, Schengen visa applications will be made via this platform. On the platform, applicants will be able to enter all the relevant data, upload electronic copies of their travel documents and supporting documents, and pay the visa fee, all of which will make it unnecessary for them to appear in person at the consulate. However, first-time applicants, people whose biometric data is no longer valid or those with a new travel document will still have to appear in person. The current visa sticker will be replaced by a barcode. The date of application of the new rules will be decided when technical work on the visa platform and the digital visa has been concluded.

## **EU funding for tourism**

The [Guide on EU Tourism Funding](#) contains the list of EU funding programmes that benefit tourism. The guide is regularly updated with relevant calls for tenders and proposals under the section 'Open Tourism Calls'. Current funding opportunities include for example: [Systematic circular solutions for sustainable tourism](#) (HORIZON Innovation Actions) Call for proposals, deadline 22 February 2024. Proposals are expected to implement and demonstrate circular systemic solutions at the level of cities and regions, and include several sectors providing services for visitors and residents such as hospitality, transportation, culture, attractions, nature-based activities.

# IATA Corner

## **Retrospective – IATA World Passenger Symposium / World Financial Symposium**

The IATA World Passenger Symposium / World Financial Symposium took place from 25-26 October 2023 in Chicago. Some 1500 participants from the wider aviation ecosystem joined the event. Main focus were the ambitions of the airline industry around "modern airline retailing" as well as financial developments. There were several panels and presentations around NDC and even more around offers and orders. Airlines try to gain more control over their offerings and are working more and more on personalized offers. The technological basis for this are NDC and as the next big step offers and orders.

There were several voices that referred to “mistakes” made with NDC referring to late or non-engagement of all relevant stakeholders. Therefore when it comes to offers and orders an early and meaningful engagement of stakeholders would be needed. It was also acknowledged that offers and orders are an even more complex topic than NDC. “Collaboration is key” was mentioned many times during presentations and panels. It needs to be seen whether and how this will materialize. Everyone agreed that the results must be to the advantage of customers – a no brainer. While airlines and travel intermediaries have “mutual” customers, airlines are pushing strongly for more direct sales and we all know the discussions around e.g. sharing of customer contact information. It will be interesting to watch the next steps of airlines becoming “modern retailers”. Several parallel sessions were held around accessibility for customers with reduced mobility, passenger experiences in general as well as at airports.

## Sustainability Corner

### **VIVA Marketplace – last chance to register!**

Don't miss the B2B workshop '[VIVA Marketplace - sourcing sustainable tourism](#)' taking place on 23rd November 2023. The workshop provides quick-fire introductory meetings between sustainability-minded buyers and European suppliers and destinations. All buyers attending are looking to engage with suppliers offering ethical and more environment-oriented services with special consideration for carbon reduction and climate action, social inclusion and accessibility as well as positive community impact. There is still opportunity for suppliers (hotels/accommodation providers, transport companies, tourist boards / DMOs, local tour operators / DMCs, etc.) to pitch their offers to interested buyers.

## Publications

### **EU publishes tourism data**

The [EU Tourism Dashboard](#) is an online knowledge tool developed by the European Commission, aimed at promoting and monitoring the (1) green and digital transitions and (2) socio-economic resilience factors of the European tourism ecosystem. The dashboard offers visualisations of tourism-relevant data and indicators collected from available, trusted sources concerning the tourism ecosystem, to enable the profiling and monitoring of the progress of EU countries towards the EU policy objectives. The indicators of the EU Tourism

Dashboards are organised under the green, digital, and socio-economic policy pillars. In addition, the dashboard offers a set of basic tourism descriptors to provide further context regarding the characteristics of tourism destinations in terms of demand, supply and tourism offer. The dashboard currently covers all the EU27 Member States, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, and targets decision makers and tourism operators as the primary audience to steer policies and strategies in the tourism ecosystem.

## **Europe's tourism displays a strong rebound, but remains uneven across the regions**

The 3rd quarterly [ETC report](#) on European Tourism Trends and Prospects informs us that international tourist arrivals to Europe are only 3.2% below 2019 level for the period January-September. The rebound is being driven by resilient intra-European travel and the influx of US tourists benefitting from favourable exchange rates. However, recovery remains uneven, with 65% of reporting destinations still below pre-pandemic levels of foreign arrivals. Full tourism recovery is expected in 2024.

## **UK Holiday Habits 2023-24**

ABTA's latest [Holiday Habits research](#) shows holidays are proving resilient in the face of wider economic and operational challenges. Bookings and confidence in travel are strong. Overall, 84% of people went on holiday during the last year and 52% took a trip abroad. This appetite for travel looks set to continue into next year, with 64% of people saying they plan to take a trip overseas. Read more about the travel confidence index and the impact of sustainability on holiday bookings.

# Events

## **Opportunity for European incoming tour operators to participate in ASTA (American Society Of Travel Advisors) Global Convention 2024**

The ASTA trade show and annual ASTA Global Convention is taking place on 29-31 May 2024 in Dallas, Texas. 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](#).

## Save the Date

**21 November:** [Meeting Industry Sustainability Forum](#), Warsaw – ECTAA presentation on solutions to improve sustainability performance  
**23 November:** [VIVA Marketplace](#): Sourcing of Sustainable Products  
**23 November:** joint ECTAA Air Matters Committee & Technology Working Group (online)  
**29 November:** ECTAA / VikingCloud webinar on PCI DSS - [registration](#)  
**29 November:** [IBTM World](#), Barcelona – ECTAA presentation 'Sustainability – leading by example'  
**4 December:** Package Travel Hearing at the European Parliament  
**5 December:** ECTAA Sustainability Committee (online)  
**6 December:** Legal Committee meeting, Brussels  
**8 December:** Executive Board meeting, Brussels

Don't forget to follow us on

**Twitter:** [@ECTAAEurope](#)

**LinkedIn:** [ectaaeurope](#)

### CONTACT US

ECTAA AISBL  
Rue Dautzenberg 36  
1050 Brussels  
Belgium

Transparency Register : 88072891086-36

T: +32 2 644 34 50

E: [secretariat@ectaa.org](mailto:secretariat@ectaa.org)

