

23.12.2014

## Dear Associate Member of SMAL / AFTA

Another busy year is coming to an end. We can all probably agree that this year has been an exceptionally difficult in many ways, and the travel industry at all levels has been affected by many of these challenges.

Despite the challenges there have been glimpses of better times and at least in Finland the need for increased cooperation between all industry partners has become obvious. Next chance for the cooperation will be in mid-January at Matka 2015 travel fair in Helsinki where we wish to see many of you.

Here is a brief summary of the year 2014 at SMAL / AFTA

### REVISION OF THE PACKAGE TRAVEL DIRECTIVE

The proposal for revision of the package travel directive was first brought to the attention of AFTA members at the annual autumn meeting in 2013. The proposal, which was published by the European Commission in July 2013 and which seems to increase tour operators' responsibilities, has employed the SMAL / AFTA office on a regular basis. We have been active in our work regarding the proposal at the national but also at the European level through the European travel agents' and tour operators' association ECTAA. We have tried to have influence on the content of the proposal via representatives of European Parliament and the Council in Finland, and continue to do so in 2015.

Latest news regarding the proposal states that the revision process will proceed to the trilogue negotiations between the European Commission, the Council and the Parliament in the beginning of the year, and will possibly be taken to the Plenary vote in the European Parliament in June 2015.

### CHANGES IN THE INDUSTRY FORCE TO LOOK FOR NEW WAYS TO COOPERATE

Many different changes in the travel industry and also in the customer behavior have been sources of numerous conversations at SMAL / AFTA meetings throughout the year. Future of the industry requires changes to some extent, but what kind of changes? The conversation began at the AFTA spring meeting in Moscow and will continue next year in the form of seminars and working groups dedicated to the issue.

### MATKA - NORDIC TRAVEL FAIR IN JANUARY

MATKA 2015, the largest travel industry event in Northern Europe commissioned by SMAL / AFTA, fits the whole world into the Helsinki Exhibition & Convention Centre again from 15 to 18 January 2015. First day of the exhibition, 15th January, is open only for travel trade professionals. Matka Nordic Travel Fair presents a vivid paradise of travel options to the general public. More than 1000 exhibitors from 80 different countries ensure an impressive start for the travel year. Also the popularity of domestic tourism is obvious as all of Finland is present in miniature size on a yearly basis.

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MATKA will also present a lot of interesting seminars organized by SMAL / AFTA. More information and registration can be found through this link: <http://www.matkatieto.fi/fi/Seminaarit>. SMAL / AFTA office has also sent to all members invitations to the travel fair. If you haven't received your invitation yet, please contact our office [smal@smal.fi](mailto:smal@smal.fi).

## STATISTICS ON PACKAGE HOLIDAYS

As you probably know SMAL / AFTA compiles statistics on the development of the package holiday market in Finland three times a year. Winter and summer season statistics are based on the supply of and the annual statistics on the actual numbers of air based package holidays from Finland. You can find the latest statistic based on the supply attached to this email. The numbers for the air based package holidays in 2014 will be published in the Matka 2015 press conference in the beginning of January. We will send you later all our press releases that are published during the Matka 2015 fair.

***The SMAL / AFTA office wishes you all a very happy and relaxing holiday and all the best for the year 2015!***

With best regards,  
Association of Finnish Travel Agents – SMAL / AFTA

Heli Mäki-Fränti  
Managing Director