

Associations Internationales sans but lucratif

Press release

Protection of commercial sensitive data in passenger transport enhanced by new EU legislation

From 29 March, data on travel agents' sales will be protected at last from disclosure to air and rail carriers.

Until now, the computer reservation systems used to distribute air tickets provided to airlines marketing data including a complete breakdown of each travel agent's sales. This allowed airlines to maintain tight control over individual travel agents and to put pressure on travel agents concerning their bookings.

The new EU Regulation on computerised reservation systems (CRSs) for the distribution of passenger transport will introduce new rules throughout the EU from 29 March 2009. It will prohibit that marketing data provided to carriers identify travel agents, corporate clients or travellers. This will apply to the marketing data made available by CRSs (so called "MIDTs") and by any other party, notably IATA (International Air Transport Association).

By exception, the identification of a travel agent may be possible, if the latter has agreed explicitly on the conditions for the appropriate use of the data. In any case, carriers will not be allowed to use the data to influence a travel agent.

Besides, the EU Regulation renews safeguards against distortions in the use of CRSs by carriers that control or participate in the capital of a CRS.

ECTAA and GEBTA welcome the new EU Regulation, which will introduce long missing restrictions to the exchange of sensitive data, which was harming competition in air transport. ECTAA and GEBTA call for a watchful enforcement of the Regulation.

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For more information, please contact:

Isabelle Leroy, Legal Advisor, ECTAA/GEBTA
Rue Dautzenberg 36, B-1050 Brussels
Tel: +32 2 644 34 50 or fax: +32 2 644 24 21

ECTAA regroups 32 national associations of travel agents and tour operators in European countries, of which 26 are within the European Union.

GEBTA, the Guild of European Business Travel Agents, promotes the interests of more than 300 travel management companies, their clients and their travellers.

ECTAA and GEBTA together represent 80.000 enterprises.

ECTAA - Group of National Travel Agents' and
Tour Operators' Associations within the EU
e-mail: secretariat@ectaa.org
www.ectaa.org

GEBTA – Guild of European Business
Travel Agents
e-mail: gebta@gebta.org