

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Bulgaria becomes Preferred Destination of European Travel Agents and Tour Operators' for 2024***

***The European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Association (ECTAA) and the Ministry of Tourism of Bulgaria agree today on a collaborative campaign aimed at promoting Bulgaria as an exceptional travel destination to ECTAA members and beyond.***

**Sofia. 9 January 2024.** With an enticing amalgamation of allure, cultural heritage, historical richness, seamless transportation links and awe-inspiring natural landscapes, Bulgaria is crafting an unparalleled experience for every traveller. As ECTAA Preferred Destination 2024, the Ministry of Tourism will be able to present the extensive offerings of the country to about 80.000 European travel professionals, encouraging them to consider Bulgaria as the premier choice for their clientele.

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. The Ministry of Tourism, ABTTA (Association of Bulgarian Tour Operators and Travel Agents) and ECTAA will work hand in hand to show how the Bulgaria could become one of the most exciting destinations in Europe.

As part of the Preferred Destination programme, informative online roundtables are scheduled, tailored explicitly to meet the promotion objectives of the Ministry of Tourism. These events will spotlight Bulgaria's hidden treasures and distinctive features, equipping travel agents and tour operators with invaluable insights to effectively promote the destination to their clients.

A pivotal milestone in this alliance, will be ECTAA general meeting in Sofia in October 2024. This esteemed gathering will assemble leaders, decision-makers, and industry experts from across Europe, providing an optimal platform to showcase Bulgaria and strategize for mutual growth.

Moreover, additional presence in social media will aim at supporting Bulgaria as an attractive destination, especially for those looking for authentic, unripen nature and that despite the distance, a sustainable journey.

Tourism industry indeed embarks on a new era, setting sustainability prioritizing the protection of nature, respect for local communities, and human-centric considerations. This shift is possibility for Bulgaria to reposition as a leading protagonist in the European ranking of tourist destinations and experiences. This is why ECTAA and the Ministry of Tourism of Bulgaria converge on a shared mission of advocating for sustainable and responsible tourism while championing the exploration of new horizons.

Secretary General of ECTAA, Eric Drésin, said: "We are pleased that ECTAA, together with ABTTA, its Bulgarian member organisation, can help Bulgaria reaching out to the travel agents and tour operators. We strongly believe that Bulgaria could become one of the most competitive countries in European tourism and that holiday makers could enjoy a totally new experience in this country. We are sure that the Preferred Destination programme will result in better and stronger relations between Bulgaria incoming agents and our members."

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**About ECTAA**

ECTAA represents the interests of 80,000 travel agents and tour operators in Europe, which provide consultancy and sell transport, accommodation, leisure and other tourism services as well as combined products to leisure and business customers.

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