

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy

ECTAA and eu travel tech strongly support the European Commission's intentions to facilitate multimodal travel, to enhance consumer choice for all transport modes and to protect such consumers in case of transport operator bankruptcy.

Brussels, 10 December 2020. ECTAA and eu travel tech believe that their members can contribute actively to the goal set by the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy to promote multimodal transport and help the shift to more sustainable modes of transport. Indirect distribution players – travel agencies, online as well as brick and mortar – already offer multimodal solutions, which is their daily business. They provide neutral and transparent information to consumers on the travel options across different modes and independent from specific suppliers. Indirect distribution will be pivotal in helping consumers compare and make better modal choices. But for this, the EU must create the right framework conditions for ticket vendors to distribute transport services under fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory terms. A level playing field between direct and indirect distribution must be achieved by making sure that data and content is openly shared and accessible for all channels.

ECTAA and eu travel tech also welcome the focus on consumers in this strategy. Providing transparent information for consumer choice is key. The review of the Air Services Regulation and of the Code of Conduct for Computerized Reservations Systems announced in the strategy will be key instruments to ensure that consumers can compare offers and services in one place, in order to ensure fair competition and transparency in the air travel market.

But consumer protection is also key, especially when things go wrong. In this regard, ECTAA and eu travel tech strongly support the intention of the Commission to address the passengers' situation when transport operators go bankrupt. According to the Commission's strategy paper, stranded passengers need to be repatriated and their tickets have to be reimbursed in case of cancellations by carriers. ECTAA and eu travel tech have been advocating for better protection of passengers against airline bankruptcies for more than 2 decades. Numerous studies undertaken by the Commission in the past have shown the detriment for stranded passengers. The most recent one, published in January 2020, estimates that the 87 airline bankruptcies between 2011 and October 2019 affected some 5.6 million passengers, who have lost some 2 billion Euros. With the Covid19 crisis, the threat of airline failures becomes even more acute. Thus, ECTAA and eu travel tech urge the EU legislators to adopt as a matter of priority a legislative initiative to protect consumers against the financial failure of airlines.

About ECTAA

ECTAA represents some 70,000 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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About eu travel tech

eu travel tech represents the interests of travel technology companies. eu travel tech uses its position at the centre of the travel and tourism sector to promote a consumer-driven, innovative and competitive industry that is transparent and sustainable. The membership spans Global Distribution Systems (GDSs), Online Travel Agencies (OTA), Travel Management Companies in business travel (TMCs) and metasearch sites

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