

## PRESS RELEASE

### ECTAA Semi-Annual Meeting in Sofia to Address Key Challenges in European Tourism

Sofia, 24 October 2024 – The European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Association (ECTAA) is holding its semi-annual meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria, today and tomorrow Friday, 25 October 2024. With the presence of Evtim Miloshev, Minister of tourism, Irena Georgieva, Deputy Minister and Vasil Terziev, Mayor of Sofia, this event will gather more than more than 50 delegates from the European travel industry coming from 31 countries to discuss forward-thinking strategies that will shape the future of tourism.

The meeting during the two coming days will tackle some of the most pressing issues the sector faces today. A large part of the time will be dedicated to strategies to manage risks and crises and enhance resilience of the travel sector from the perspectives of destinations, hospitality providers, and tour operators, with this time a special focus on climate risks and mitigation.

“Unbalanced tourism continues to mobilise groups in many destinations who get a lot of media exposure. Even if the issue may be very local, the impact on residents, visitors, and travel businesses is wide-reaching” said Franck Oostdam, president of ECTAA. “I invite all delegates to seize the opportunity to look together at the diverse approaches to managing tourism sustainably and efficiently. It is crucial for our industry”, he added.

Finally, with the European Accessibility Act set to come into force in mid-2025, ECTAA will explore best practices and strategies to make tourism more inclusive for travelers with disabilities. The session will focus on reducing barriers and implementing effective tools to ensure accessibility becomes a priority across the industry.

At the eve of the meeting, a special workshop for ECTAA's Travel Industry Ambassadors, a flagship initiative that empowers industry professionals to become influential advocates within the travel sector, was held on Wednesday. The workshop focused on the ongoing revision of the Package Travel Directive, a cornerstone of consumer protection in travel.

The meeting will provide an invaluable opportunity for ECTAA members to network, share best practices, and align on strategies that will guide the future of European travel. The meeting is hosted in collaboration with the Association of Bulgarian Tour Operators and Travel Agents (ABTTA), Visit Bulgaria, Visit Sofia, Visit Plovdiv, the Ministry of Tourism of Bulgaria, and the City of Plovdiv.

#InclusiveTourism #SustainableTourism #TravelTrends #AccessibilityMatters #ResilientDestinations  
#package traveldirective

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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.

For media inquiries, please contact Eric Drésin, Secretary General, [edresin@ectaa.eu](mailto:edresin@ectaa.eu) or 0032 478 844 513