

PRESS RELEASE

ECTAA Welcomes European Commission's Ambitious Plans for Simplification and Competitiveness

Brussels, 31 January 2025 – The European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations (ECTAA) welcomes the European Commission's latest Communication on a Competitiveness Compass for the EU, which outlines an ambitious strategy to enhance the EU's global competitiveness, reduce regulatory burdens, and promote sustainable investment. These measures are seen as critical to ensuring a robust and sustainable future for Europe's travel and tourism sector.

The focus on sustainable investments as a cornerstone of EU competitiveness is particularly significant. Achieving carbon neutrality in the travel and tourism industry by 2050 will require substantial financial resources to scale up Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs) and implement advanced decarbonization technologies. More investments are also needed to improve EU cross-border rail connectivity and expansion of the high-speed rail network. Additionally, there is an urgent need to bolster the capacity of businesses—especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)—to adopt sustainable practices and comply with the EU Green Deal regulations. Such investments are indispensable for mitigating climate change impacts while fostering long-term growth in the sector.

The Commission's commitment to reducing reporting obligations by 25% across all businesses—and by 35% for SMEs—is another promising development. The introduction of mechanisms like the "one in, one out" principle and a "cost brake" aims to alleviate regulatory burdens, creating a more business-friendly environment. For the travel and tourism industry, these measures can help to streamline administrative processes, lower compliance costs, and enhance operational efficiency. ECTAA will actively engage in dialogues and consultation fora that are being established to ensure that travel agencies and tour operators benefit from this simplification agenda.

Frank Oostdam, President of ECTAA, welcomed these initiatives, stating: "We applaud the European Commission's strong dedication to simplification and competitiveness. Reducing administrative burdens while improving access to sustainable investment is vital for our industry. Travel agents and tour operators are integral to Europe's economy, and these measures will help us remain competitive and resilient amidst evolving challenges."

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About ECTAA

ECTAA represents the interests of 80,000 travel agents and tour operators across Europe, providing expertise and advocacy on key policy issues affecting the industry. ECTAA works to ensure a regulatory environment that fosters growth, innovation, and sustainability in the travel and tourism sector.

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