



THE EUROPEAN TRAVEL AGENTS'
AND TOUR OPERATORS' ASSOCIATIONS

PRESS RELEASE

Commissioner Violeta BULC speaks about EU's vision for transport and importance for tourism

Following the adoption of the EU Aviation Strategy in December 2015, a package of legislative measures will be adopted by the Commission in the coming years in order to boost the competitiveness of the EU airlines. Commissioner for Transport Violeta BULC presented the key initiatives that will also have an impact on tourism at the ECTAA General Assembly held in Ljubljana, Slovenia this 26th May 2016.

The EU Aviation Strategy adopted by the Commission in December 2015 contains a number of initiatives to address major concerns of the aviation industry, namely competitiveness of the EU airlines, EU External Aviation Policy, Regulation 1008/2008 (ownership) or the CRS Code of Conduct Fitness Check. As the adoption of the EU Aviation Strategy is likely to affect all stakeholders involved in the transport value chain, ECTAA welcomed the possibility to discuss major travel industry's concerns with the Commission.

Commissioner Violeta BULC noted that EU transport policy is focusing on two core areas, notably: The internal Common Market, of which the core drive is to improve efficiency. And the other area is the external market where the core focus is on connectivity, not only aviation, but also the other modes of transport.

To achieve this, the focus will be:

- Decarbonisation, with special focus on green solutions for transport companies;
- Digitalisation, bringing digital layers to all modes of transport;
- Innovation, creating new product and services as well as new business models. In this respect Commissioner Bulc invited stakeholders to be ready and join the digital game.
- Finally, focus is on the customer at the heart of any transport policy, thus including such important issues as passenger rights and safety.

The Commissioner provided a brief overview of the planned initiatives of direct interest to travel agents and tour operators, notably the evaluation of the CRS Code of Conduct and the Air Services Regulation, in particular the provisions on price transparency and non-discrimination of consumers and travel agents. These initiatives are part of the Aviation Package and planned for 2018. In addition, Commissioner Bulc informed about the planned liberalization of the bus and coach transport, including cabotage. She also mentioned the imminent publication of interpretative guidelines on air passenger rights, which will bring more clarity to passengers and national enforcement bodies. Finally, in the context of digitalization

she also stressed the importance for an unbiased access to data for suppliers, distributors and consumers.

Said Lars Thykier, President of ECTAA: *“A competitive European Air Transport Industry is key to the development of the European tourism. European travel agents and tour operators need a full and unbiased access to the air transport offer to meet the EU and third country tourists’ demand, fostering growth in the EU tourism industry”*.

ECTAA regroups the national associations of travel agents and tour operators of 31 European countries, of which 27 are within the European Union, and represents 80.000 enterprises.

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