

**ANNUAL** REPORT



2023

**ECIAA**

# Word from the president

## Dear colleagues,

The year 2023 was marked by significant developments at EU level. The most important is the adoption of the Commission's proposal to revise the Package Travel Directive, the principal legislation for travel organisers. For the past two years, ECTAA has been providing important industry insight and data for the drafting of this legislative proposal.

The Commission aims to incorporate the learnings from the Thomas Cook failure and the Covid-19 crisis into the existing legislation. Although well-intended, the proposal, in practice, imposes disproportionate obligations on one part of the tourism value supply chain, without imposing equivalent obligations on other suppliers, such as airlines.

The idea of limiting pre-payments for travel packages to protect customers seems pointless when these products are already protected against the bankruptcy of the organiser, while stand-alone supplies offer no insolvency protection. The year ahead challenges us to engage with Member States and the European Parliament to ensure a balanced and impactful revision of the Package Travel Directive.

Additionally, other legislative proposals are pending in the Council and the European Parliament that will require our attention, such as the passenger rights proposals and the VAT rules for the platform economy. 2024 will also be a year of change in the European institutional framework. European citizens will be invited to vote for their Members of the European Parliament. The latter will nominate the new Commission President who will shape the agenda of the new Commission for the next 5 years, leading to a reshuffling of commissioners and tasks. This will be a crucial time to express our industry's concerns and needs!

I invite you to review our accomplishments in 2023 and explore our industry's upcoming initiatives. I take this opportunity to thank my colleagues all across Europe for their support and contribution to the ECTAA work. A special welcome to our new member from Ukraine, AITO, and our partners LIAA, Visit Cyprus, Visa, and more particularly GNT0, who have collaborated with us throughout 2023.

Looking forward to another exciting year in 2024!



**Frank Oostdam,**  
ECTAA President

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# Achievements





## Package Travel Directive

In 2023, ECTAA played a pivotal role in advocating for the rights and interests of travel agents and tour operators in the preparation of the Package Travel Directive revision.

A testament to ECTAA's impact was demonstrated in the European Parliament, with the organisation of a workshop on prepayments in the European Parliament in March 2023. It led ECTAA, later that year, to be invited to present its position twice in the European Parliament, on 25 October 2023, to the TRAN (Tourism Task force) committee, and on the 6th of December 2023, to the IMCO Committee. These appearances highlighted ECTAA's credibility as a leading voice in the travel industry and its expertise on the Package Travel Directive revision.

The Package Travel Directive revision was published as part of the Passenger Mobility Package on 29 November 2023. ECTAA's lobbying efforts have been fruitful as a significant number of our demands were included in the proposal, in particular regarding the management of large-scale crisis. The Commission proposed measures to address several issues identified by ECTAA as the main reasons leading to the liquidity crisis faced by the travel intermediaries during the pandemic.

That includes:

- Obligation of service providers to refund a package organiser within 7 days where they

cancel or do not provide a service which is part of the package;

- Inclusion of voucher rules, offering the possibility to defer refunds subject to the traveller's approval;
- Possibility to introduce a rapid refund mechanism co-financed by Member States in times of crisis.

Unfortunately, the Commission has retained its intention to limit prepayments. However, ECTAA's provision of fact-based data and papers soften the regulatory blow, going from a complete exclusion of prepayment to a 25% limitation at the time of the booking with multiple exemptions.

Despite this, ECTAA believes that the European Commission still placed an unnecessary burden on package organisers, while comparatively leaving airlines relatively unscathed. The decision to still include limited prepayments was met with disappointment by ECTAA and its members. ECTAA called out the imbalance in the regulatory approaches, questioning the fairness and equity of the Commission's proposals. Package travellers have already their prepayments protected against the organiser's insolvency. Consumer protection would be enhanced if this protection was extended to standalone services, in particular air transport.

# Passenger rights framework

The European Commission, as part of the Passenger Mobility Package, has proposed amendments to passenger rights legislation across all modes of transport. These changes aim to strengthen the enforcement mechanisms and enhance information to passengers. The proposal introduces new refund regulations for passengers who booked their ticket through intermediaries and requires intermediaries to share passenger contact details with airlines, to enable communication of operational disruptions.

ECTAA flagged to the Commission that during the COVID-19 crisis, airlines suspended the automated refund process for intermediaries, which caused significant delays in customer refunds. The proposal remedies some of ECTAA's concerns. First, it acknowledges the right of intermediaries to process refunds on behalf of their customers, which is currently not specifically mentioned in the legislation. Secondly, it requires airlines to refund intermediaries within 7 days, in order to respect a 14 day refund period.

ECTAA also raised the fact that sharing passenger contact details with transport operators is a contentious issue for intermediaries, as the latter often use these contact details to upsell or promote their services directly to customers. In air transport, intermediaries are already requested to share passenger contact details with airlines based on IATA Resolution 830d. The Commission has taken on board our concerns and the proposal limits the carriers' use of passenger contact details to the extent that they are necessary to comply with passenger rights and aviation safety regulations. Moreover, carriers must delete the contact details 72 hours after completion of the transport contract.

ECTAA also collaborated closely with other industry and consumer organisations to advocate for an airline failure protection. Through these strategic partnerships, ECTAA managed to amplify its voice to emphasise the importance of safeguarding consumer interests while improving the level playing field in the travel value chain. An insolvency protection for airlines could be addressed in the air passenger rights regulation or in the air services regulation.







## Multimodal passenger rights

For decades, travel intermediaries have been offering multimodal travel options to their customers. This allows intermediaries to offer to their customers more efficient and flexible travel options by combining various modes of transport to create customised and optimised itineraries based on the specific needs and preferences of travellers.

ECTAA thus supports passenger protection for multimodal journeys and has actively contributed to the legislative proposal on multi-modal passenger rights adopted as part of the Passenger Mobility Package.

ECTAA insisted with the Commission that intermediaries cannot be held liable for passenger rights when offering multi-modal journeys. This is reflected in the proposal, which provides that travel intermediaries have no liability obligations arising from multimodal journeys as long as they provide clear communication to customers regarding the purchase of separate tickets.

ECTAA also insisted that for intermediaries to provide their customers with real-time on-journey information about travel disruptions, such information must be made available to them by the transport operators in an easily accessible way. ECTAA welcomes that intermediaries which are SMEs shall be exempted from the provision on real-time information.

While we welcome the Commission's efforts to address multimodal passenger rights, we regret the lack of political will to present an ambitious regulation on Multimodal Digital Mobility Services. ECTAA has actively engaged in discussions on this proposal for over two and a half years and believes that it is urgently needed to ensure that intermediaries have access to the widest possible range of multimodal travel options on fair, reasonable, and non-discriminatory terms. An ambitious MDMS proposal is crucial to promoting multimodal travel and increasing the uptake of more sustainable travel options.





## SUSTOUR – EU project to help SMEs become more sustainable

2023 saw the completion of our SUSTOUR project. This 3-year project was funded by the European COSME programme and aimed at fostering the capacities and skills of tour operators and travel agents (SMEs) for sustainable tourism.

**We are very pleased with the delivery of the following key outputs of the project:**

- Update and translation of existing **online sustainability trainings** (Travelife basic training for tour operators and sustainability management) as well as development and translation of new online trainings on specific sustainability topics (energy management, food waste prevention, procurement, water management, carbon management, plastic management) and integration in the Travelife learning platform;
- Development of **guidance, tools and best practices** for the Travelife criteria to support the practical implementation of sustainability in the operations of companies;
- Adaption of the **basic Travelife standards** and guidance to the local conditions in the project partner countries;
- Training and qualification of **47 new sustainability coaches / trainers / auditors** from 21 countries;
- Outreach to European travel associations leading to **24 European and national associations** signing an MoU to support the SUSTOUR project, in addition to the 5 project partner associations;
- Outreach to major **cruise lines** leading to 2 new MoUs to support the SUSTOUR project e.g. by promoting the SME call to their partner tour operators;
- Inventory of over 3.500 European tour operators in preparation for the SME call;
- Development and piloting of **30+ activity-specific sustainability Codes of Conduct** for excursion providers and customers;
- Development and piloting of a **Plastic Waste Reduction Toolkit** for tour operators and their suppliers;



- Improvement and re-launch of the **carbon calculator CARMACAL** for the calculation of the carbon footprint of entire travel packages, and implementing it in the operations of tour operators;
- Development and piloting of a **sustainability assessment tool for hotels** and accommodation partners of tour operators;
- Development and piloting of an excursion sustainability management and certification methodology;
- Selecting **627 SMEs from 35 European countries to be supported in 5 support modules** through training, coaching, and auditing for the implementation of the sustainability tools and international standards;
- **Training 800 sustainability coordinators and staff members** of the participating SMEs in the basics and specific themes of sustainability management;
- Conducting **9 differently themed webinars** with a total of over 500 participants;
- Auditing SMEs against the Travelife Partner and Certified sustainability standards, leading to **209 Travelife Partner awards and 57 Travelife Certified awards** for SUSTOUR SMEs;
- Organizing Travelife Award Ceremonies and SME exchange events during international trade fairs in 2023 (MATKA Finland, BTL Portugal, ITB Germany) and at the Final SUSTOUR Event in Portugal.

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The accomplishments of the companies under the COSME-funded project inspire us all. We look to motivate others to join the journey towards sustainability. ECTAA remains committed to promoting sustainability within the industry beyond this project, developing tools and partnerships for a future of sustainable travel.

– Frank Oostdam, ECTAA President

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# VAT rules for travel sector

The European Commission has presented a package of proposals called 'VAT in the Digital Age'. Among others, a deemed supplier regime (DSR) will be introduced for platforms operating in passenger transport and short-term accommodation rental. This means that the platforms will be responsible for collecting and remitting VAT when their underlying suppliers will not charge VAT because they are, for example, individuals acting in their private capacity (i.e. non-entrepreneurs for VAT purposes) or exempted small businesses (e.g. operating under the VAT registration threshold). The definition of platform is so vast, that it will include online travel agents making such supplies and, subject to interpretation, could possibly also impact travel agents making such supplies in their own name.

ECTAA has joined a group of tourism stakeholders impacted by the platform rules to raise numerous concerns with the proposed DSR, such as a lack of channel neutrality and new distortions of competition, as many small platform suppliers

(home owners) who are not VAT registered will not be able to recover input VAT. It will also impact many smaller online travel agents, which do not have the capacity to deal with the additional VAT complexity of the DSR.

There are now a number of alternative proposals under discussion, for example an optional DSR or increased platform reporting obligations replacing or postponing the DSR. What is positive, is that the Commission is willing to clarify that travel agents acting in their own name (operating under the special scheme for travel agents) will not have to apply the DSR rules for said supplies.

Unfortunately, due to the slow progress of this file in Council, the Commission has decided to postpone the 'travel and tourism' package, which would have included the revision of the special scheme for travel agents. ECTAA's priority for 2024 and beyond will be to put this back on the agenda of the new Commission mandate.

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## Driving and rest time rules for coach and bus drivers

Currently, the bus and coach drivers are subject to the same driving and rest time rules as drivers in the goods transport sector. Yet they have completely different driving patterns and customer requirements. Coach tourism drivers tailor their journeys according to the pace of their passengers. The European Commission adopted a proposal in 2023 to adapt the rules to the specificities of the sector. With the help of IRU and ETOA, we managed to obtain a more favourable set of rules, which will benefit drivers, tourists and ultimately the coach tourism sector. Among other:

- Coach tourism drivers now have the option to split their 45-minute break into two breaks of at least 15 minutes each.
- The 12-day derogation, previously applicable only to international transport, is extended to national transport.
- Coach tourism drivers can postpone their daily rest by one hour once during a trip lasting six days (Commission initially proposed this for trips of 8 days).





# Work with Members and Partners





photo by P. Merakos

## Greece, ECTAA's Preferred Destination 2023

In 2023, Greece ascends to the ranks of the world's premier tourist destinations, achieving record-breaking numbers in terms of both arrivals and revenue, having successfully consolidated its momentum the previous year, positioning itself among the world's leading tourist destinations and attracting visitors from every corner of the globe.. The international travel industry is undergoing a broad transformation driven by the imperative for tourism development within the framework of sustainability. Moreover, it is significantly influenced by the increasing desire of a growing segment of travelers for unique and more authentic travel experiences. Modern-day travelers also cultivate heightened awareness of their environmental footprint.

The continuous demand for specialized forms of tourism and the awareness of sustainable tourism represent a significant opportunity for the increasingly substantial development of Greece as a high-quality and sustainable tourist product, guided by principles of moderation and balance, respect for people, local communities, and the natural and cultural environment.

Due to the favored destination agreement, ECTAA played a proactive role in showcasing Greece to over 70,000 travel agents and tour operators throughout Europe. ECTAA members commended

the emphasis on the initiatives taken by the Greek government to enhance the sustainable tourism offerings. They also appreciated the spotlight on the diverse range of travel and tourism products that Greece has to offer. Additionally, the concluding event successfully conveyed the message that Greece is not only a summer destination but also has a winter appeal.

In collaboration with the Greek National Tourism Organisation and FedHATTA, ECTAA hosted the highly successful semi-annual conference in Athens. This event provided an excellent opportunity for ECTAA's national delegates to truly immerse themselves in the best that the Greek Capital has to offer: a compelling blend of attractiveness and sustainability.

The Greek National Tourism Organisation's Office overseeing the Netherlands (including Belgium and Luxembourg), and ECTAA collaborated to organize two highly successful workshops - round tables under the theme "Greening The Greek Experience: A Collaborative Approach to Sustainable Tourism." Throughout these sessions, the sustainability policy development framework in Greece was examined alongside major stakeholders and Tour Operators. Additionally, the adoption of sustainable practices in the endeavors of Greek entrepreneurs and representatives from diverse entities was explored.



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## Other important partnerships

ECTAA and the **Deputy Ministry for Tourism of Cyprus** have forged a collaborative effort following the semi-annual meeting in Nicosia in 2022. The agreement, announced in March entailed ECTAA's commitment to promoting Cyprus as an innovative and sustainable destination. Through online showcases entitled "Cyprus beyond sea and sun", more than 120 travel advisors from six identified source markets (Hungary, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania, Italy and Poland) got an update on the new business opportunities on the island.

In a parallel development, ECTAA and **Latvia's Investment and Development Agency (LIAA)** have celebrated a successful year of cooperation to promote Latvia among European travel agencies and tour operators. The collaboration included a comprehensive promotion campaign organised by ECTAA and LIAA, contributing to increased awareness of Latvia as a destination for both business and leisure travellers. The joint efforts included a pivotal meeting in Latvia, organised in partnership with the Association of Latvian Travel Agents (ALTA), where industry leaders engaged in discussions on geopolitical challenges and uncertainties. Furthermore, LIAA and ECTAA collaborated on insightful online roundtable discussions, reaching over 200 online B2B viewers from German-speaking and English-speaking markets.

Finally **Visa** have signed an agreement to work alongside ECTAA as an allied member through a new partnership. With an estimated 4.4bn air travellers set to take to the skies through 2023, this partnership enables Visa and ECTAA to place an important lens on travel payment, a critical aspect of the traveller journey. By partnering with ECTAA and its members, VISA is highlighting the value of the payment flow and the support from Visa to consumers when paying for travel. This partnership also acknowledges the criticality of a frictionless payment experience when customers book and pay for holidays via travel intermediaries.

### Preferred Destination online roundtables

**2 November:** Greening the Greek experience part 1

**14 December:** Greening the Greek experience part 2

### ECTAA Travel Advisor Insights: Cyprus beyond Sean & Sun

**26 April:** showcase for Hungary

**27 April:** showcase for Bulgaria

**2 May:** showcase for Czech Republic

**3 May:** showcase for Romania

**5 May:** showcase for Italy

**8 May:** showcase for Poland

### ECTAA Travel Advisors Insights: Travelling trends - Latvia

**4 October:** showcase German speaking markets part 1

**18 October:** showcase English speaking markets

**22 November:** showcase German speaking markets part 2

# Meetings and webinars in 2023

- 9 January** Legal Committee, online
- 27 January** Fiscal Committee, online
- 3 February** Fiscal Committee, online
- 13 February** Joint Air Matters Committee & Technology Working Group, online
- 20 February** Joint Air Matters Committee & Technology Working Group, online
- 7 March** SUSTOUR stage event & networking, ITB Berlin
- 9 March** ECTAA Sustainability Committee – Guided ITB tour of sustainability organisations, ITB Berlin
- 10 March** ECTAA Sustainability Committee – Association exchange meeting, Berlin / online
- 13 March** ECTAA Legal Committee, online
- 17 March** ECTAA Tourism Committee, online
- 21 March** Workshop on payment in the tourism value chain – where does the money go?
- 25 May** Fiscal Committee, online
- 9 & 16 May** ECTAA Sustainability Committee, online
- 8-9 June** ECTAA semi-annual meeting, Riga
- 19 June** Joint Air Matters Committee & Technology Working Group, online
- 7 July** ECTAA Sustainability Committee, online
- 31 July** Online meeting on “Wildfires in Greece: Q&A for Tour Operators and Travel Agents
- 12-14 September** Hybrid SUSTOUR peer-to-peer learning event for SMEs, Cascais
- 26 September** Indirect Sales Summit at the World Aviation Festival, Lisbon
- 28-29 September** ECTAA’s technical committees meeting, Anavyssos / Greece
- 3 October** Webinar on Sourcing of Sustainable Products
- 12 October** Workshop on VAT platform rules, Brussels
- 25 October** Discussion on Package Travel Directive in the EP Tourism Task Force, Brussels
- 30-31 October** ECTAA semi-annual meeting, Lamego / Portugal
- 23 November** VIVA Marketplace: Sourcing of Sustainable Products, online
- 23 November** Joint Air Matters Committee & Technology Working Group, online
- 29 November** Webinar on PCI DSS
- 4 December** Package Travel Hearing at the European Parliament, Brussels
- 5 December** ECTAA Sustainability Committee, online
- 6 December** Legal Committee, Brussels
- 8 December** Executive Board, Brussels





# 2024 Priorities



# Our priorities for 2024

In 2024, significant institutional changes are anticipated, with the European Parliament elections scheduled to occur from June 6 to June 9. Following these elections, a new European Commission will be appointed, and the President of the European Commission will set the political agenda for the ensuing 5-year term. If Ursula von der Leyen secures re-election as the President, it is highly probable that the focus on the twin transitions of green and digital will persist. Leading up to the election/appointment of the new European Parliament and Commission, efforts will be made to adopt, wherever possible, all the existing legislative proposals pending in the Council and European Parliament.

## Package Travel Directive

In November 2023, the European Commission adopted a proposal to revise the Package Travel Directive as part of the 'Passenger Mobility Package'. The aim is to ensure more effective consumer protection and integrate the lessons learned from the Covid-19 crisis and the Thomas Cook failure. The proposal contains some improvements as regards the rules on refunds by service suppliers to package organisers. But it also raises a number of concerns, notably in respect of limitation of prepayments, changes to the scope, consideration of the situation at departure in respect of the right to cancel a package, etc. ECTAA's focus will be to prevent unbalanced obligations for organisers.

## Better passenger protection

The 'Passenger Mobility Package' includes a proposal to amend the passenger rights regulations in air, rail, ship and bus/coach passenger transport. The aim is to strengthen the enforcement mechanisms and information to passengers. For air travel, new refund rules are proposed for flights booked through an intermediary. There are also new provisions requiring intermediaries to share passenger contact information with airlines for communication on operational disruptions.

ECTAA will ensure that the proposed new rules are practical and do not sustain commercial harm to intermediaries.

## Multimodal passenger protection

The Commission has put forward a proposal on passenger rights in the context of multimodal journeys. Passengers will enjoy better information rights before and during such travels, including on minimum connecting times between different transport services. If passengers buy a combination of separate tickets for different transport modes in one payment and miss a connection, they can get a refund and in some cases compensation in case of a missed connection from the seller from whom they bought these combined tickets if they weren't told that the tickets were separate. The latter can be very harmful for intermediaries, when they omit to provide this information to passengers.

## Multimodal Digital Mobility Services

The Commission has put on hold plans for a Regulation aiming to better integrate public transport and rail services and achieve seamless multimodal passenger transport. This initiative aimed at clarifying conditions for combining and re-selling mobility products, access to data, including real-time information to passengers, preventing self-preferencing and favouring neutral display. ECTAA will advocate for the inclusion of this legislative initiative into the agenda of the upcoming Commission. ECTAA's goal is to establish a functional and impartial marketplace that ensures transparency and choices across all modes of transportation and non-discrimination of channels.

## VAT platform rules

As part of ‘VAT in the Digital Age’ package, the Commission has proposed new VAT rules for platform operators in the short-term accommodation and transport sectors. Under the proposed rules, platforms will become responsible for collecting and remitting VAT to tax authorities when their users do not. The aim is to level the playing field between online and traditional services in those sectors. This will impact intermediaries selling ‘untaxed’ accommodation and transport services. ECTAA strongly opposes the proposed rules, which raise issues of lack of VAT and channel neutrality, double taxation as well as question of VAT liability in a chain of platform transactions.

## Special VAT scheme for travel agents

The revision of the special scheme for travel agents, which was announced for 2022/23, has been put on hold. This means that ECTAA will have to push hard again for the inclusion of the revision in the agenda of the next Commission mandate. The scheme dates from 1977 and is in dire need of revision. Among other, the rules need to be amended to allow a global margin calculation and more flexibility as regards the mandatory inclusion of B2B supplies in the special scheme, as this includes irrecoverable input VAT.

## Sustainability

Ensuring the long-term viability of the tourism sector is crucial for the enjoyment of future generations. ECTAA is dedicated to promoting awareness about sustainability and collaborating with its members and travel companies to promote the uptake of sustainability practices and tools within their organisations. As a signatory of the Glasgow Declaration, ECTAA is actively engaged in climate action. Additionally, it will closely follow EU legislative efforts, including initiatives like the Green Claims initiative, the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive proposal, and the EU Count Emissions initiative.

## Data

As an integral part of the European data strategy, the European Union is establishing a unified data market to facilitate the unrestricted flow of data within the EU and across various sectors, benefiting businesses, researchers, and public administrations. The Commission has initiated pilot projects to develop a Data Space for Tourism (DSFT), aiming to facilitate the sharing and access of pertinent data among all European tourism stakeholders. ECTAA will actively monitor the progress of this initiative.





## IATA

Due to its centralised structure and regulation through IATA, following IATA topics that affect all markets similarly, has always been a key topic for ECTAA. While certain aspects like central billing systems are welcome, ECTAA and travel agent representatives have issues with the governance of the passenger agency programme where airlines take all decisions and in which agent representatives have no say. ECTAA filed a complaint with the EU competition authority DG COMP against IATA about abuse of its dominant position. There was a decision by the Swedish competition authority against Finnair which questions the status of “agents” as “genuine agents” in a principal-agent-relationship. The implications will be evaluated also in light of the ECTAA complaint.

Other relevant IATA topics that ECTAA is following through their work in the Passenger Agency Global Joint Council (PAPGJC) is a new Eurozone accreditation scheme proposed by IATA as well as the newly established airline risk management framework, which is a first step, but insufficient and blurry. ECTAA is also following what is happening in the local Agency Programme Joint Councils (APJC). IATA and airlines are constantly pushing for stricter Local Financial Criteria (LFC) and shorter remittance cycles to the detriment of many agents.

## Cooperation with stakeholders

ECTAA will continue its efforts for improved cooperation with other stakeholders. The travel and tourism industry is a very fragmented industry with many different stakeholders obliging all travel and tourism stakeholder associations to deepen the collaboration with each other to speak with one voice in order to be heard. Joint efforts will be needed on pending legislative initiatives, such as the package travel Directive, but also to ensure that travel and tourism is given attention in the forthcoming Commission and European Parliament mandate. Among other, it will be necessary to re-establish the Tourism Taskforce in the EP Transport Committee.



**The following is a list of issues to be addressed in 2024 (not exhaustive):**

<b>Sustainability - European Green Deal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy</li> <li>Green Claims initiative</li> <li>European Sustainability Due Diligence Directive proposal</li> <li>EU Count Emission initiative</li> <li>Implementation of the Glasgow Declaration</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short-Term Rental Initiative</li> </ul>
<b>Consumer protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the Package Travel Directive</li> <li>Revision of Passenger Rights Framework</li> <li>Multi-modal Passenger Rights Regulation proposal</li> </ul>
<b>Transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protection against airline insolvency</li> <li>Multimodal Digital Mobility Services</li> <li>Rail ticketing initiative</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of the Tourism Pathway</li> <li>Tourism Agenda 2030</li> <li>Pact for Skills in Tourism</li> </ul>
<b>VAT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the special VAT scheme for travel agents</li> <li>VAT in the Digital Age – platform rules</li> </ul>
<b>Home affairs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the Passenger Name Record (PNR) Directive</li> </ul>
<b>Data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>European Data Space for Tourism</li> </ul>
<b>IATA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECTAA complaint against IATA - Review of the Passenger Agency Programme</li> <li>Monitoring the implementation of an airline risk management network</li> <li>Participation to PAPGJC and PAConf</li> <li>Monitoring the implementation of New Gen ISS and NDC</li> </ul>
<b>Destination matters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Destination issues, such a health and safety, travel restrictions, taxes and fees, etc.</li> </ul>





## Preferred destination 2024 – Bulgaria

Bulgaria has been designated as the Preferred Destination for European Travel Agents and Tour Operators in 2024, following the conclusion of a collaborative agreement between ECTAA and the Ministry of Tourism of Bulgaria on 9 January 2024. This joint effort aims to promote Bulgaria as an outstanding travel destination, showcasing its cultural heritage, breathtaking natural landscapes, historical significance, and efficient transportation links. As the ECTAA Preferred Destination for the year, Bulgaria seeks to capture the attention of the European travel professionals, encouraging them to consider the country as a top choice for their clients.

In the coming months, ECTAA, in collaboration with the Association of Bulgarian Tour Operators and Travel Agents (ABTTA), will actively support the travel and tourism promotion program outside Bulgaria by supporting in many ways market access to European travel agents and tour operators for local destination management companies and other partners.

As part of the Preferred Destination program, three tailored online roundtables will be conducted to meet the Ministry of Tourism's promotion objectives. These events will shed light on Bulgaria's hidden treasures and distinctive features, equipping travel agents and tour operators with valuable insights to effectively market the destination to their clientele. A significant milestone in this partnership is the ECTAA general meeting scheduled to take place in Sofia in October 2024, providing an optimal platform to showcase Bulgaria and strategize for mutual growth. The collaboration also emphasises sustainability and responsible tourism, aligning with the evolving priorities of the tourism industry across Europe. Eventually, both the Ministry of Tourism and ECTAA agreed to adjust the implementation of the agreement depending on unexpected opportunities during the year.

## FULL MEMBERS



## AFFILIATED MEMBERS



## ALLIED MEMBERS

