

Ref: CONPAX-O-Letter to Dr Panagiotis Efstathiou

Dr Panagiotis Efstathiou
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Brussels, 19 October 2026

Subject: Gastroenteritis outbreak on Rhodes – request for information and transparency

Dear Mr Efstathiou,

On behalf of ECTAA, the European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations, I am writing about the gastroenteritis outbreak affecting the island of Rhodes. Our members across Europe, and first of all in the Nordic countries, have asked us to share their concerns with you.

Rhodes is a very important destination for European travellers and for the tour operators and travel agents who sell it. Greece is a long-standing and valued partner of our sector, and we recognise the efforts of local authorities, health professionals and the tourism industry. We are also aware that the number of cases is small compared with the number of visitors to the island.

However, the situation has received strong media attention in several European markets, particularly in the Nordic countries. Our members report that they have had very little official information, and that cases have been reported in several hotels. This leaves them unable to give reliable answers to their customers. Elderly travellers and families with young children are especially concerned, and many ask whether they should travel as planned. The coming weeks are important for the sector, as families have booked holidays to popular Greek islands during the school holidays.

Public reporting indicates that the Rhodes General Hospital recorded more than 1,380 gastroenteritis visits between 13 August and 21 September. It also indicates that your organisation is investigating, that norovirus has been detected in some samples, and that the source remains unconfirmed. We have found no official public explanation of why the outbreak affects Rhodes in particular.

In this context, we would be grateful if you could provide, as soon as possible and on a regular basis:

- An update on the epidemiological situation and its recent trend
- The findings of the investigation, including test results and the likely source of infection
- Clear public guidance for visitors, especially elderly travellers, young children and people with underlying health conditions
- A named contact point for the tourism sector, and the date of the next update, ideally in English.

Obviously, we do not seek to assess health risks, which remains a matter for the competent authorities. However, this information will help tour operators give their customers the necessary information. It would also provide the transparency and peace of mind that are the prerequisite for a successful journey.

ECTAA and its members stand ready to relay official information to tour operators, travel agents and customers across Europe. We would also welcome a meeting or call at your convenience.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Eric Drésin', written over a horizontal line.

Eric Drésin
Secretary General

Copy: HATTA