



THE EUROPEAN TRAVEL AGENTS'
AND TOUR OPERATORS' ASSOCIATIONS

PRESS RELEASE

Package travel vouchers still the best option for consumers

While the Commission has started infringement proceedings against 10 Member States on the grounds that their national rules infringe EU law on consumers' and travellers' rights, ECTAA insists on the importance of vouchers for the industry and the benefit for consumers.

Brussels, 10 July 2020. ECTAA, the European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Association, takes note of the infringement procedure launched by the European Commission against ten Member State concerning the application of the Directive on Package and Linked Travel Arrangements.

This action is in line with the Commission's position since the beginning of the crisis: Consumer Rights must be upheld in every circumstance, even if the entire world stops travelling, freedom of movement is suppressed, thousands of flights and package trips are cancelled and hundreds of thousands of jobs are lost or at risk. ECTAA regrets that no concrete action has been taken at EU level to find common solutions to address these global exceptional circumstances, despite numerous proposals from ECTAA and the whole travel and tourism industry. Such inaction has led to Member States taking different emergency initiatives to protect jobs and consumers' refunds.

ECTAA agrees that consumer rights should be upheld. In the current uncertain time, it is essential to recall that package travel vouchers are flexible, protected against the insolvency of the organisers and remain the only instrument guaranteeing consumers' refunds. As pointed out by the European Commission in its Recommendation on vouchers on 13 May 2020 if organisers or carriers become insolvent, there is a risk that many travellers and passengers would not receive any refund at all, as their claims against organisers and carriers are not protected.

Said Pawel Niewiadomski, President of ECTAA "Package travel vouchers have been an extremely important safety net for package organisers to avoid mass bankruptcies and the best alternative to refunds for customers. It is important that we draw the lessons from this crisis. The consultation on the forthcoming New Consumer Agenda should launch a serious debate at European level on a more balanced, competitive, and protective travel environment, not only for package travel, but for the entire value chain."

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Note the editors:

ECTAA regroups the national associations of travel agents and tour operators of 29 European countries and represents some 80.000 enterprises.

For more information, please contact:

Eric Drésin, Secretary General

ECTAA - Group of National Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations within the EU

Rue Dautzenberg 36, B-1050 Brussels

Tel: +32 2 644 34 50

e-mail: secretariat@ectaa.org, www.ectaa.org