

Travel associations meet in Zagreb to discuss the start of the tourism season

As the European Digital Covid-19 Certificate comes into effect today, the travel agents' and tour operators' community of Europe are gathering in Zagreb for two days to debate how a safe resumption of travel in the summer of 2021 can be the beginning of a long-term recovery for the travel and tourism sector.

Zagreb, 01 July 2021. ECTAA is holding its semi-annual meeting on 1 and 2 July in Croatia, the Preferred Destination for 2020-2021 hosted by UHPA (Association of Croatian Travel Agencies) and UPA-HGK (Association of Travel Agencies and Tour Operators within the Croatian Chamber of Economy), with the support of the Croatian National Tourist Board and the Tourism Board Zagreb.

Travel companies and destinations have made immense efforts to ensure travellers can travel safely and enjoy their holidays. The promotion campaign "Stay safe" of the Croatian National Tourist Board is a perfect example of this commitment.

"Organising safe journeys has always been a priority for our industry" said Pawel Niewiadomski, President of ECTAA. "This is even more important today, but travel companies are more than ready. By meeting altogether in Zagreb, the European travel agents' and tour operators' community is sending a message: traveling is safe as the well-known health and safety measures are in place and implemented."

The ECTAA meeting is an opportunity to assess the start of the tourism summer season. Lyublena Dimova from the European Travel Commission gave insight into the recent consumer sentiment survey carried out in May. Travel sentiment in European source markets is skyrocketing as vaccines are rolled out and the Digital Covid-19 Certificate is introduced, giving travellers the necessary boost in travel confidence. According to the consumer survey, 70% of respondents intend to travel in the next 6 months, of which 51% within Europe. Holidays along the coast are on top of Europeans' minds.

Positive signs are also recorded in the air transport sector. While passenger traffic in airports are still far behind 2019 figures, Olivier Jankovec, Director General of Airport Council International EUROPE, reported a steady increase in the number of air routes served by European airports, indicating improved connectivity. Air passenger traffic forecast for 2021 is still -64% compared to 2019, but the traffic is expected to follow an upward trend from -83% recorded in February 2021 to -48% expected by December 2021.

Travel agents and tour operators are also recording higher bookings in the last couple of months. Uncertainty about travel restrictions is still an obstacle to travelling. But consumers are coming back to travel agents and tour operators, as they value the advice and assistance provided in planning their travel. Croatia is among the five top destinations booked through travel agents and tour operators.

Pawel Niewiadomski concluded: "We have good reasons to be moderately positive for this summer, if the situation remains as it is. We strongly call on European Governments to follow the recommendations on the coordination of travel restrictions and effectively implement the Digital Covid-19 Certificate to facilitate travel this summer."

About ECTAA

ECTAA represents some 70,000 travel agents and tour operators in Europe, which provide consultancy and sell transport, accommodation, leisure and other tourism services as well as combined products to leisure and business customers.

For more information, please contact:

Mr Eric Drésin, Secretary General

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

Rue Dautzenberg 36, B-1050 Brussels

Office tel: +32 2 644 34 50 / e-mail: edresin@ectaa.eu