

PRESS RELEASE**Airlines finally commit to respecting EU consumer rights**

Brussels, 1 October 2021 – eu travel tech, the industry association for technology travel services and ECTAA, the European travel agents' and tour operators' association, welcome the announcement of the European Commission and the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network regarding commitments made by 16 major European airlines on their cancellation and reimbursement practices. This outcome is a result of a collective action launched by CPC authorities in February 2021.

The commitments made by airlines relate to increased transparency for consumers, reimbursement for unused vouchers and a clearing of the vast reimbursement backlog. Airlines have thus committed to finally address their complete disregard for the refund obligation provided under EU passenger rights legislation. For many consumers, it will be a relief to finally receive their money back for a flight that was cancelled due to COVID-19 many months ago.

eu travel tech and ECTAA urge the European Commission and CPC authorities to monitor closely the implementation of these commitments and of airlines' general respect for passengers' rights. Should airlines fail to live up to their promises, appropriate enforcement measures should be taken immediately. It is crucial that consumer trust be rebuilt with a more stringently enforced EU consumer protection framework in air travel.

Said ECTAA President, Pawel Niewiadomski: *"This is certainly good news for both consumers and travel agents who are struggling to obtain refunds for their customers. However, it is a pity that this commitment is not extended to flights that are part of a package, which is just pushing down the problem to the tour operators. In addition, this voluntary commitment does not exempt the national enforcement bodies and the European Commission to ensure that all airlines do effectively respect EU passenger rights."*

Emmanuel Mounier, Secretary-General of eu travel tech said: *"We have long advocated for stronger enforcement of consumer rights, in light of airlines' cancellation and refund practices during the COVID-19 crisis, which have harmed both consumers and travel technology businesses. The new commitments by airlines are a step in the right direction, but authorities must ensure airlines are held to their word. In this context, we are disappointed to see that certain airlines still refuse to comply with the law and refund their customers for unilaterally imposed vouchers."*

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About eu travel tech

eu travel tech represents the interests of travel technology companies. eu travel tech uses its position at the centre of the travel and tourism sector to promote a consumer-driven, innovative and competitive industry that is transparent and sustainable. Our membership spans Global Distribution Systems (GDSs), Online Travel Agencies (OTA), Travel Management Companies in business travel (TMCs) and metasearch sites. For more information on eu travel tech and policy priorities, please visit www.eutravelttech.eu

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. More about our activities, please visit www.ectaa.eu

For more information, please contact:

Mr Emmanuel Mounier, Secretary General, eu travel tech
Av Marnix 17, 1000 Brussels
M. : +32 499 80 13 74 / e-mail : emounier@eutraveltech.eu

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