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PRESS RELEASE

ECTAA and HATTA unite to address climate change and promote sustainable tourism

Anavyssos, Greece - 29 September. ECTAA (European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations) and HATTA (Hellenic Association of Travel and Tourist Agencies), in partnership with the Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO), convened a critical meeting on 28 and 29 September 2023, in Anavyssos, Greece, to address the pressing need for sustainable tourism practices in light of the extreme climate events experienced in Greece this summer.

Throughout the summer, Greece witnessed repeated wildfires and torrential rains, underscoring the undeniable urgency of addressing climate change. It has become evident that sustainability is not just an option but a powerful tool to shape the future of the travel industry and our planet.

“Travel is a transformative experience that allows individuals to explore new horizons, connect with diverse cultures, and create cherished memories. However, with this privilege comes a profound responsibility towards the destinations, the people and the environment” reminded Angela Gerekou, president of GNTO. In an era defined by climate change and environmental degradation, the travel industry must embrace sustainability as an imperative.

Frank Oostdam, president of ECTAA stated “The travel industry is a contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Yet, there is a clear path forward through the promotion and dissemination of sustainable practices, including investments in renewable energy, energy-efficient transportation, and carbon offset programs, to reduce emissions and mitigate climate change”.

“Sustainable tourism practices must also integrate disaster preparedness and risk management to make destinations more resilient in the face of crises, whether natural disasters or global health emergencies” added Lysandros Tsilides, president of HATTA.

Travelers are increasingly choosing destinations and businesses that prioritize sustainability. By adopting eco-friendly initiatives, the travel industry can enhance its reputation, attract responsible travelers, and remain competitive in a changing market. Travelers are not just consumers; they are potential advocates for sustainability. When they experience sustainable practices firsthand, they become ambassadors for change, spreading awareness and inspiring others to make conscious choices.

HATTA and ECTAA delegates were committed to sharing experiences and knowledge on sustainable tourism. This collective commitment is aimed at building a brighter, more responsible, and more inspiring future for the travel industry and the world.

In addition to the efforts, the discussions during the meeting focused on the EU Climate Action and its impact for Member States and the travel and tourism industry. As similar attention was given to the Green Claims proposal currently being debated in the European Parliament which aims to address greenwashing, protect consumers, and promote environmental responsibility in business-to-consumer

commercial practices and to the legislative proposal CountEmissionEU which seeks to overcome barriers to harmonizing the measurement and calculation of greenhouse gas emissions in the transport sector, the main source of GHG emissions of the tourism industry.

ECTAA, HATTA, remain committed to these initiatives and continue to work collaboratively to ensure the travel industry's responsible evolution and its alignment with global sustainability goals.

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About ECTAA: ECTAA (European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations) is the representative body for about 80.000 travel agents and tour operators in Europe, comprising the national associations of travel agents and tour operators from 30 European countries.

About HATTA: HATTA, the Association of Travel and Tourist Agencies in Greece, was founded in 1927. Since then, it represents its members, tourist agencies. Regular Members of HATTA are travel and travel agencies licensed by EOT, and are active in all sectors of tourism.

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