

PRESS RELEASE

ECTAA's Annual Meeting in Lamego, North Portugal: A Commitment to Climate Action and Embracing AI in the Travel Industry

Lamego, 31 October 2023 - The European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Association (ECTAA) convened with the support of APAVT, the Portuguese Travel Agents' Association, in the picturesque region of the Douro Valley, North Portugal, with over 50 delegates representing travel companies from across Europe. The primary focus of this meeting was on pioneering initiatives concerning the ECTAA Climate Action Plan and harnessing the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the travel industry.

Addressing Climate Change Head-On

At the heart of ECTAA's discussions was the ambitious ECTAA Climate Action Plan. After conducting a comprehensive assessment of the organization's carbon footprint, ECTAA has made the decision to commit to reducing and compensating its climate impact. The goal is to align with the global commitment of achieving a 50% reduction by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. ECTAA is committed to leading by example and "walking the talk" when it comes to environmental sustainability. Delegates also engaged in informative exchanges with other organizations to gain insights into their climate action plans. ECTAA recognizes the urgent need to raise awareness and knowledge within the industry and take responsibility to address climate change. By doing so, they aim to proactively anticipate future consumer demands and ensure the travel industry is prepared to meet those needs sustainably.

Embracing the Power of AI

In addition to the focus on climate action, ECTAA also dedicated time to discuss the importance of AI in the travel industry. The delegates engaged in discussions with Microsoft, academia, and fellow travel companies to explore the vast opportunities offered by AI technology. They also examined ongoing AI-driven projects that promise to enhance efficiency and customer experiences within the travel sector. While AI has the potential to automate and streamline various processes, it will not diminish the value of human expertise and personalized service provided by travel advisors. ECTAA believes that travel advisors will continue to be vital in the fully digital age. Furthermore, it was highlighted that AI is not the exclusive domain of large tech companies; even small travel companies can harness AI technologies to improve their services and remain competitive in the industry.

Frank Oostdam, President of ECTAA, expressed, "Our meeting in Lamego reflects our unwavering commitment to address climate change and embrace the future of the travel industry with AI. We believe that by setting an example in climate action and harnessing the power of AI, we can best serve our customers, the industry, and our planet."

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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.

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