

## PRESS RELEASE

### **ECTAA opposes unworkable reimbursement rules in the proposed Passenger Mobility Package**

Brussels, 28 October 2024 – The European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Association (ECTAA) met in Sofia on 24-25 October for its Semi-Annual Meeting, where members addressed critical issues within the proposed enforcement of unimodal and new multimodal passenger rights. The passenger mobility package, introduced by the European Commission in November 2023, is under active discussion in the Council of Ministers and will soon be debated in the European Parliament.

Among the proposals, new reimbursement rules when an intermediary is involved present major challenges. These rules disregard existing processes, creating impractical expectations that could burden travel intermediaries with undue obligations. Under the current proposal, intermediaries would be required to refund fees they charge for facilitating ticket sales, regardless of the nature of the service provided. For ECTAA, this is a costly and unrealistic expectation, especially as transport operators rarely compensate intermediaries for their services in ticket sales.

ECTAA is also concerned about customer data handling, calling for stringent measures to prevent transport operators from misusing sensitive customer information shared by intermediaries for commercial purposes.

While ECTAA supports the principle of multimodal passenger rights, it emphasizes that such rights must be fair and balanced. "Intermediaries create transparency and offer choice by presenting various options across numerous transport operators, a service that is not typically provided by transport operators themselves," noted Frank Oostdam, President of ECTAA. "It is essential that intermediaries are not held liable for the performance of transport services they neither operate nor control."

Frank Oostdam concluded, "ECTAA has always backed fair, effective passenger rights legislation. However, regulations that are practically impossible to implement are counterproductive. Legislation should not disadvantage indirect distribution channels to the benefit of transport operators' direct channels, as this would ultimately harm consumer choice."

ECTAA will continue advocating for practical, consumer-friendly solutions within the ongoing legislative discussions.

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#### About ECTAA

ECTAA represents the interests of 80,000 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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