

## **The European travel agents and tour operators call upon the new Commission to work towards a competitive, transparent and sustainable travel market**

**The European Parliament approved yesterday the new von der Leyen Commission that will lead the European Commission until 2024. All the Commissioners are now ready to take office. ECTAA, the European organisation representing the travel agents and tour operators, is committed to help them make the travel market more competitive, more transparent and more sustainable.**

Brussels, 28 November 2019. The Commission “von der Leyen” has been approved by the European Parliament. This is the right time for ECTAA to unveil its key priorities for the period 2019-2024. Price transparency, neutral distribution systems, sustainability and consumer protection should underpin the policy framework of the new Commission. According to the European organisation, these principles are fully in line with the ambitions presented by the President Ursula von der Leyen: the European economy should be more sustainable, fit for the digital age and working for the people.

“Travel agents and tour operators are able to contribute to the agenda of the Commission and not least to the future European Green Deal”, said Pawel Niewiadomski, President of ECTAA. “They indeed play a vital role in affecting changes in consumer behaviours and attitudes towards more responsible forms of tourism. They also help offer more sustainable tourism products, using for instance high environmental and social performance indicators in their selection of suppliers.”

Each year, travel agents in Europe issue 300 million air tickets on scheduled flights. They sell approximately 120 million of prearranged and 90 million dynamic travel packages. They are one of the first industries to have entered the digital age. An ever growing abundance of travel information and offers create an even growing need for guidance and advice. To keep on helping consumers finding the most suitable offer, saving time and money and avoiding disadvantageous choices, the EU legislation should maintain the possibility for travel agents to access the most up-to-date information and offer a neutral display of prices to consumers.

Consumers want protection and transparency. The EU provided protection with the Package Travel Directive. With the failure of Thomas Cook we have seen the benefits of this legislation for consumers; they have been repatriated and refunded. Adapting the legislation on air ticket distribution to new market realities is now urgent. Consumers are not able to make a proper comparison of airline offers; the Commission should ensure a truly neutral and unbiased display of fares, irrespective of the booking channel.

“We are fully committed to working with the European Commission and Parliament and present our positive vision of a European agenda for an innovative and sustainable tourism sector”, Pawel Niewiadomski concluded.

The manifesto “For a competitive, transparent and sustainable market, ECTAA priorities for the EU Institutions 2019-2024” is available online: <http://www.ectaa.org/files/cms/ectaa-manifesto-2019-2024.pdf> and <https://www.flipsnack.com/ectaa/ectaa-manifesto-2019-2024-ft9sze4ap.html>

ECTAA regroups the national associations of travel agents and tour operators of 30 European countries, of which 27 are within the European Union, and represents some 70.000 enterprises. It also has four International Members from Israel, Malaysia, Morocco and Tunisia.

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