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PRESS RELEASE

WTAAA Criticises IATA Decision to Remove Local Remittance Flexibility

Brussels, 6 January 2026 – The World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA) strongly opposes IATA airlines’ decision to impose a globally standardised, shorter remittance period on travel agents. WTAAA warns that this move undermines local governance and jeopardises collaborative relationships between local airline and travel agent representatives.

In a recent mail vote of the Passenger Agency Conference, IATA airline delegates approved the enforcement of a globally aligned remittance period by mid-2026, eliminating the flexibility for local markets to set alternative dates through their Agency Programme Joint Councils (APJCs). These councils, comprised equally of local airlines and IATA-accredited agents, have historically set billing cycles and remittance timing in line with specific market conditions and the realities of local business relationships.

This new decision forces all BSP markets to adopt standard remittance periods at the end of each billing cycle, irrespective of whether local APJCs have previously agreed solutions that work for both airlines and agents. Agent representatives argue it is unacceptable that a global forum - composed solely of airlines - can unilaterally overrule local arrangements reached through joint negotiation.

Under the BSP, IATA-accredited agents centrally remit funds to IATA, which then distributes them to the participating airlines according to their share of ticket sales. Shortening and rigidly standardising remittance periods results in agents having to pre-finance customer payments to a greater extent and to advance money to airlines before (corporate) clients have paid in full. Locally agreed remittance periods are designed to reflect national payment cultures and corporate settlement practices.

Abuse of global decision power

WTAAA reiterates that the governance of the Passenger Agency Programme already suffers from a structural imbalance, as binding resolutions are adopted exclusively by airlines in the Passenger Agency Conference, whilst agents have only consultative status. The removal of the local flexibility clause on remittance periods is seen as a clear example of how this imbalance can be used to override balanced local solutions painstakingly negotiated in APJCs.

WTAAA Executive Director Otto de Vries said: “By depriving national markets of their ability to tailor remittance schedules to local needs, the global alignment decision disregards long-standing local relationships between airlines and agents and ignores the operational realities of diverse business models, including high-volume corporate and tour operator accounts.”

Call for restoration of local flexibility and genuine dialogue

WTAAA calls on IATA and its member airlines to restore the possibility for local APJCs to determine remittance periods in line with billing cycles and their local financial criteria as has been their historical role.

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About WTAAA

Incorporated in 2008 as an international non-profit trade association, the World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA) focuses and advocates for issues impacting the global travel agency community, engaging with like-minded organisations across the globe with a mission to improve business for member organisations, to share common problem-solving strategies and to foster more in-depth and meaningful working relationships within the travel and tourism industry. Members of the association include representation from 57 countries on six continents across the globe.

For media enquiries, please contact: Shelley Martin – shelley@bigambitions.co.za