

RAS AL KHAIMAH TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY PARTNERS WITH THE EUROPEAN TRAVEL AGENTS' AND TOUR OPERATORS' ASSOCIATIONS

- As per the agreement, Ras Al Khaimah is now one of ECTAA's preferred destinations for 2019/2020
- The partnership comes in line with Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority's extensive promotional efforts in key target markets in Europe

Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, 15 April 2019: Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with The European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations (ECTAA) to boost European outbound tourism to Ras Al Khaimah. The agreement was signed in Ras Al Khaimah on 11th April 2019 by Haitham Mattar, CEO of Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority and Michel de Blust, Secretary General ECTAA.

As per the agreement, ECTAA pledges to promote Ras Al Khaimah as its Preferred Destination among the 70,000 travel agents and tour operators across Europe, while showcasing the Emirate's 64km of beautiful beaches, historic forts, scenic mountains, terracotta deserts and some of the most diverse and enchanting landscapes in the region – all just 45 minutes from Dubai International Airport.

The Preferred Destination Programme involves two semi-annual meetings; the first which will be held in Poland during the first week of June 2019 and will see Haitham Mattar take the stage as one of the main speakers, while the second meeting will be hosted in Ras Al Khaimah in mid-December 2019 – enabling the European trade members to discover the destination while showcasing Ras Al Khaimah's world class Meetings, Incentives and Conference Events offering.

Moreover, ECTAA will become an essential partner in the travel and tourism promotion programme outside of Ras Al Khaimah by fostering relations between European travel agents and tour operators with the local destination management companies, travel agents and other partners.

Commenting on the partnership, **Haitham Mattar CEO of Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority** said: "We have seen significant growth in European Markets

during 2018, who contributed to double digit visitor number growth year on year. As we look towards our goal of 1.5 million visitors by the end of 2021 and 3 million by 2025, it's important that we maintain this momentum and as such we are keen on building strategic relationships with key players in the travel and tourism sector to allow us to showcase the unrivaled experiences Ras Al Khaimah has to offer. Our incredible experiences such as the world's longest zip-line have helped put Ras Al Khaimah on the world map, but we need to continue to showcase the diversity of the destination to our core audiences in this part of the world."

Michel de Blust, Secretary General ECTAA said: "Ras Al Khaimah is a popular tourist destination amongst Europeans due to its year-round sunshine, beautiful beaches, rich cultural history and authentic Arabian experiences. We are confident that this partnership with Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority will showcase the diversity of the Emirate's offering and increase visitor numbers to this beautiful Emirate".

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Notes to Editors:

About Ras Al Khaimah

One of the world's fastest growing tourism destinations, Ras Al Khaimah boasts a rich culture and long-standing history dating back 7,000 years. The Emirate boasts an array of archaeological sites and breath-taking natural vistas, from golden sand beaches, awe-inspiring terracotta dunes and a green belt of date palms to Jebel Jais, the highest mountain in the UAE.

To learn more about Ras Al Khaimah, visit us at:

- www.rasalkhaimah.ae
- www.raktda.com
- www.facebook.com/visitrasalkhaimah
- www.youtube.com/visitrasalkhaimah
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About Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (TDA)

The Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (TDA) was established in May 2011 under the government of Ras Al Khaimah. In order to achieve target growth of one million visitors by the end of 2018, the authority aims to develop the Emirate's tourism infrastructure and establish Ras Al Khaimah as a world-class destination for leisure and business travel, creating sustainable investment opportunities and enhancing the quality of life for its residents. In order to achieve its goals, the Ras Al Khaimah TDA has a government mandate to license, regulate and monitor the Emirate's tourism and hospitality industry.

About ECTAA

ECTAA regroups 36 national associations of travel agents and tour operators of 30 European and 4 non-European countries. It represents an industry of 70.000 enterprises, employing some 500.000 people.

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