

With the upcoming stakeholders' conference on the revision of the Package Travel Directive (PTD), the European Commission is moving forward towards the publication of a legislative proposal by autumn of this year. This revision is of major importance for ECTAA, which provided significant input to the European Commission throughout its preparatory work, notably on the scope of the new Directive as well as on other important issues such as information, pricing, right of withdrawal, proper performance, force majeure and insolvency. The next bi-annual meeting of ECTAA in Krakow will be an opportunity to further discuss this important dossier, in preparation of the Stakeholders' conference.

Michel de Blust

Consumer protection: Stakeholder conference on the revision of the Package Travel Directive

The stakeholder conference scheduled on the 5th of June will present the initial findings of a behavioural study on a possible package travel label, the aim of which is to inform the customer that he is buying a package offering him certain protection. The conference will also allow an exchange of views on the definition & scope (only leisure travellers or also corporate customers), rights and obligations of travellers before and after travel as well as liability of organisers.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 14 May 2012

Consumer protection: EP study analyses PTD implementation and recommends an 'EU travel code'

The EP has published a study on the implementation of the package travel Directive, which analyses the scope and weaknesses of the package travel Directive (dynamic packages, distinction between retailer / organiser, inconsistencies, etc.) and makes a number of recommendations, for example the consolidation of all relevant legislation into a single 'EU travel code'.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 19 April 2012 or consult [study](#)

Consumer protection: Beyond the PTD – UNWTO Convention

Work is progressing on the UNWTO Convention on the protection of tourists and tourism service providers. Many elements of the Convention are similar to the PTD though some go beyond the scope of the European legislation. Members have been invited to provide input on a new draft in view of the next meeting of the Working Group scheduled on 7-8 June.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 16 May 2012

Consumer protection: Update of Council recommendation on fire safety in existing hotels

The European Commission intends to update the Council Recommendation 86/666/EEC on fire safety in existing hotels by replacing the technical annex with HOTREC's fire safety MBS (Management, Building and Systems) methodology. Members have been invited to indicate whether they support the update of the recommendation, which is not a binding act, or whether more stringent legislation is required.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 4 May 2012

Consumer Protection: Alternative and online dispute resolution

The competent committees of the EP have presented their draft reports / opinions on the two legislative proposals on alternative and online dispute resolution. Members have been invited to provide their views on the drafts before the 21st of May.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 10 May 2012

Air transport: ECoJ Advocate General suggests upholding the Sturgeon ruling!

Opinions have been delivered in two cases concerning Regulation 261/2004. In the case C-22/11 the Advocate General concluded that an air carrier must compensate passengers if they have been denied boarding on account of the rescheduling of their flight following a strike at the airport which took place two days beforehand and affected a previous flight. In the joined cases C-581/10 and C-629/10 the Advocate General proposes to uphold the interpretation given in the case Sturgeon and others that passengers whose flights are delayed may be entitled to compensation.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 19 April and 16 May or see opinions in case [C-22/11](#) and joined cases [C-581/10 and C-629/10](#)

Air transport: MALEV and SPANAIR failures not so well handled

Contrary to the statement of Commissioner responsible for Transport, the MALEV and SPANAIR airline failures were not cases of good examples. ECTAA and GEBTA have written to the Commissioner reporting back the information received from Members that affected passengers have not been refunded, re-routed nor benefitted from any assistance.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 2 May 2012

Air transport: Air transport taxes on the rise

After the UK it is now the Spanish authorities that are planning a massive increase in airport taxes, almost doubling at Madrid and Barcelona airports. ECTAA and some of its Members have written to the Spanish national authorities to denounce this tax hike.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 27 April 2012

PNR: EU-US agreement on PNR transfers had been adopted!

The EP has finally given its green light to the EU-US PNR agreement, which is expected to come into force as of 1 June 2012. Travel agents have no obligations in terms of informing passengers about the use of their PNR.

Meanwhile, the EU is making progress on the EU PNR proposal. The Council has adopted a general approach leaving it up to the Member States to decide whether to collect PNR on intra-EU flights. The EP has yet to go through the 500 amendments tabled and propose compromise amendments. Members have been invited to contact their MEPs in this respect before the end of May.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 11 May 2012

Home affairs: How can Schengen visa procedure be improved for bona fide travellers?

DG Enterprise is working with DG Home to ensure that the economic and tourism dimension is being taken into account when reviewing the EU visa code. ECTAA Members have reported many problems encountered by visa applicants, among other the long time to issue a visa, the number and type of documents required, the fact that travel must be arranged prior to knowing whether visa will be granted, etc. ECTAA has fed this back to the Commission.

Tourism: Public consultation on the European Tourism Quality Label

The Commission is carrying out a public consultation on the development of a European Tourism Quality Label. The European Label would complement the existing tourism quality evaluation systems by recognizing those ones which comply with the common European principles and criteria. Your views are welcome until 22 June 2012.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 7 May 2012

Tourism: Product offers put together for the Low Season Tourism pilot project

A number of trans-national packages have been presented that are eligible to be promoted under the Low Season Tourism pilot project, which aims to boost tourism from Argentina and Brazil to Europe in the low season. Interested travel agents / tour operators can participate to the B2B match-making events scheduled to take place in July in Buenos Aires / Sao Paolo. Pls contact Secretariat.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 9 May 2012

Tourism: What do you want from a Virtual Tourism Observatory?

The Commission is carrying out a feasibility study on the development of a Virtual Tourism Observatory, the aim of which is to collect tourism data, analyze the data and use it for better policy making. ECTAA has responded to the survey. Members are free to do so too.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 24 April 2012 or compete [survey](#)

Tourism: Maximising the economic potential of sustainable coastal and maritime tourism

The Commission has launched a public consultation on maritime and coastal tourism in the EU, the aim of which is to gather stakeholders' views on how to ensure a more competitive and sustainable growth.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 16 May 2012 or view [consultation document](#)

Standardisation: Guidelines for Universal Design of Tourism Services

ENAT, the European network for accessible tourism, is consulting stakeholders on a proposal for a "CEN workshop agreement on Guidelines for Universal design of tourism services", which aims to produce guidelines on accessible tourism services for tourism operators, agents and suppliers, including tour operators and travel agents. Members' feedback is welcome until 25 May 2012.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 21 May 2012

Standardisation: Standardisation of terminology for skills, competence and occupations

The Commission intends to develop a classification of European skills / competences, qualifications and occupations, called ESCO, the aim of which is to standardise the terminology of skills / competences, qualifications and occupations. The Commission is calling for experts to develop such terminology for travel agencies, tour operators, reservation and related services.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 11 May 2012 or consult [application website](#)

Taxation: Commission adopts Directive proposal on the VAT treatment of vouchers

Common rules are proposed on the VAT treatment of vouchers, including a definition of vouchers, rules on the time and place of supply of single- and multi-purpose vouchers and as well as provisions for the distribution of vouchers through intermediaries and for discount vouchers. The Fiscal Committee is invited to assess the impact of this proposal on vouchers used in our industry.

For more details, see e-mail sent on 21 May 2012 or view [Directive proposal](#)

Other News in Brief

- [Annual fair on cultural tourism "Crossroads of Europe"](#), 6-10 June, Pavia (Italy)
- [Call for proposals under the CALYPSO programme on "facilitating Transnational Low Season Exchanges in Europe through the Development of Social Tourism"](#). The overall: support tourism related public authorities to team up with private stakeholders to be able to undertake in the forthcoming future transnational low season exchanges in the CALYPSO target group. The budget: 450,000.00 Euros
- [Public consultation on a review of EU passenger ship safety legislation](#)