

With only a few more days before the end of the year, ECTAA would like to dedicate this space to our Preferred Destination 2015, Montenegro. As you will have experienced during our semi-annual meeting in May 2015, this is a country of exceptional natural beauty and diversity of landscapes, rich architectural and cultural heritage, a long history and hospitable people. Known as the pearl of the Mediterranean, it is a place not to miss on a trip around Europe with 117 sandy beaches, five national parks, scenic mountain ski resorts, Europe's deepest canyon, medieval cities and many villages and ruins to explore. If you needed further convincing, then we invite you to look at a selection of '13 Places You Must Visit While In Montenegro':

<http://wowtravel.me/13-places-you-must-visit-while-in-montenegro/>

Christina Russe



Transport: Commission and EP are looking into the LH DCC

Following the announcement of Lufthansa to impose the Distribution Cost Charge on bookings processed via GDS, ECTAA filed a formal complaint in July with the European Commission based on the CRS Code of Conduct. ECTAA is also contemplating a complaint based on the antitrust provisions. In August the EU MEP Ana Claudia Tapardel submitted a parliamentary question on the possible effects of the Lufthansa's charge. The Commission replied that in principle market players are free to decide on the prices they charge for the sale of their products or services, and are in principle free to decide which distribution channels they want to use. On the basis of the preliminary information available, the Commission has not detected a violation of EU competition law for the time being, but continues to follow closely developments concerning the distribution of airline tickets, and is prepared to act against anti-competitive practices by market operators wherever appropriate. In the meantime, ECTAA continued the constructive dialogue with DG MOVE and DG COMP.

For more details, please see memo sent on 25 November

Transport: Agreement on EU PNR Directive

On 4 December Council and Parliament reached agreement on an EU PNR Directive (Passenger Name Records). ECTAA managed that non-carrier economic operators, such as travel agencies and tour operators, which collect and process PNR data when making reservations, are not included in the Directive's scope. However, there is a risk that Member States will provide for such obligation under national law, as announced in a joint statement of Member States.

For more details, please see memos sent on 13, 20 November and 2, 4, 10 December or see press release of [Council](#) and [EP](#)

IATA Affairs: PAConf/38 - Adoption of NGISS framework

Following approval of the New Gen ISS framework by PAConf, IATA will start revising the Resolutions in 2016. ECTAA has been invited to participate in a Working Group in charge of the revision. Amongst other decisions, the PAConf took into consideration the concerns expressed by ECTAA/ WTAAA, ETTSA, Sabre and Travelport and deferred action on the proposal to increase remittance frequency for web sales.

For more details, please see memo sent on 16 October, 30 November and 2 December 2015

Transport: Commission adopts an ambitious Aviation Strategy for Europe

On 7 December the Commission presented the new Aviation Strategy for Europe to boost the competitiveness of the EU airlines. Among the initiatives foreseen in this strategy are the adoption of interpretative guidelines on air passenger rights and a fitness check of the CRS code of conduct on the distribution of airline products. These will be important topics of ECTAA in 2016.

For more details, please see memo sent on 7 December or consult [Aviation Strategy](#) or [press release](#)

Transport: Nordic Aviation Group replaced Air Estonia

Estonian Air ceased its business activity on 8 November following the Commission decision that state aid granted to Estonian Air are incompatible with the EU State Aid Rules and must be recovered by the government. A fully state-owned Nordic Aviation Group has been created and is operational since 8 November, which has taken over the majority of routes of Estonian Air. IATA suspended Estonian Air and instructed agents to settle the outstanding amounts with the airline.

For more details, please see memo sent on 9 November 2015

Transport: EU updates Air Safety List

A new Air Safety List is in place since 13 December 2015. The updated EU list includes all airlines certified in 20 states as well as 7 individual airlines with operational restrictions. In light of the recent ICAO audits which identified significant safety concerns with the Thai operational aviation safety, the Commission and EASA closely monitored the situation and decided against including them into the list.

For more details, please see memo sent on 10 and 14 December or consult the [Air safety List](#)

Transport: Ryanair takes legal action against eDreams

On 1st of December, Ryanair confirmed the launch of legal action in Ireland against eDreams and Google in an attempt to stop promoting advertisements for selling Ryanair flights through the eDreams website. Ryanair claims that adverts for eDreams' websites regularly appear at the top of Google's search rankings, above the carrier's own website, and the airline claims that this causes consumers to book Ryanair tickets through the travel agent.

For more details, please see memo sent on 3 December

Transport: Progress on the Full Service Initiative in rail transport

The high level business and functional requirements for a an efficient rail distribution system offering single and multi-carrier offers, ancillary services and eventually also multi-modal offers in a standardized way have been drawn up for part 1 and work is focusing on the detailed technical specifications (design phase), which will be validated by a proof of concept. Work is also advancing in parallel on part 2.

For more details, please see memo sent on 4 December.

Internal Market: ECTAA seeks input to Commission consultation on geo-blocking

The Commission announced an initiative in its Communication on the Digital Single Market Strategy (DSM) to end unjustified geo-blocking by way of legislative proposals on the basis of the e-Commerce

framework or the Services Directive framework. Examples of unjustified geo-blocking include blocking access to websites across borders or providing different prices and conditions depending on nationality, country of residence or location of the customer.

For more details, please see memo sent on 23 November or consult [public consultation](#)

Online platforms: Opportunity to provide input to Commission consultation on online platforms

The aim of the consultation is to better understand the social and economic role of online platforms, market trends, the dynamics of platform-development and the various business models underpinning platforms. The consultation covers –among other- the social and economic role of online platforms; transparency e.g. in search results; terms of use; ratings and reviews; the use of information by platforms; the relation between platforms and their suppliers; the conditions of switching between comparable services offered by platforms; the role of online intermediaries including ways to tackle illegal content on the Internet. The consultation also tackles the sharing economy related activities.

For more details, please see memo sent on 24 November or consult [public consultation](#)

Package Travel: Formal adoption of the revised Package Travel Directive

Following the agreement reached between the EP and the Council on the revised Package Travel Directive on 5 May 2015, the two institutions have now formally adopted the legal text. It has been published in the Official Journal of the EU on 11 December 2015 and will have to be transposed in national legislation by 1 January 2018.

For more details, please see memo sent on 16 November and 14 December or consult the new [Directive](#)

Insurance Distribution: Formal adoption by the Council

The European Council has adopted the Insurance Distribution Directive on 14 December 2015, concluding a 3 years long procedure. Previously, the European Parliament had approved the text on 24 November 2015. The Insurance distribution directive has to be published in the Official Journal of the European Union to enter into force (end 2015/beginning 2016).

For more details, please see memo sent on 14 December or consult the [Directive](#)

Data protection: Clarification following annulment of Safe Harbour Decision

Following the annulment of the Safe Harbour Decision, providing adequate protection for personal data transferred to US companies from the EU, the Commission issued guidance until a new framework is established. The guidance recalls that personal data may still be transferred to US entities to the extent that the transfer is necessary for the conclusion or performance of a contract. This would be the case when travel agents forward the details of a flight booking to an airline.

For more details, please see memo sent on 13 November or consult the [guidance](#).

Payment services: Formal adoption of revision of Payment Services Directive in sight

The revised Payment Services Directive prohibits surcharging for card payments in the vast majority of cases (including debit and credit cards), both online and in shops. In all cases where card charges imposed on merchants are capped, in accordance with the Interchange Fee Regulation, merchants will no longer be allowed to surcharge consumers for using their payment card. This will apply to domestic as well as cross-border payments.

For more details, please see memo sent on 2 November

Tourism: Travel and tourism sector unites behind Tourism for Growth and Jobs Manifesto

Europe's public and private tourism actors have come together to call for the European Union to do more for this important industry. Published to coincide with the European Tourism Day on Wednesday 16th December, the Tourism for Growth and Jobs Manifesto highlights the key EU policy priorities for the sector in the coming years on topics ranging from skills and qualifications to sustainability and competitiveness of Europe's tourism.

Other News in Brief

- [Eurostat: Tourism Statistics](#)
- [Eurostat: Online purchases in the EU](#) - In 2015, 52% of travel and holiday accommodation was bought online
- [HOTREC Policy paper on the "sharing" economy - Levelling the playing field](#) – Presentation of 10 steps towards a sustainable and responsible “sharing” economy in tourism accommodation
- [ETC: Improving the Visa Regimes of European Nations to Grow Tourism](#) – Research demonstrating benefits of visa facilitation in terms of additional visitors, revenue and jobs

Calendar of ECTAA meetings

19 January 2016	ECTAA review working group, Brussels
February 2016 - tba	Air Matters Committee, Brussels
March 2016 - tba	Fiscal Committee, Brussels
Date tba	Joint Legal Committee & Tour Operators Committee, Brussels
May 2016 - tba	Destination, Incoming Tourism & Sustainability Committee, Brussels
25-27 May 2016	ECTAA semi-annual meeting, Ljubljana, Slovenia

EU consultations

- [Public consultation on the regulatory environment for online platforms, online intermediaries, data and the collaborative economy](#), deadline 30 December 2015
- [Public consultation on Geo-Blocking and Other geographically based restrictions when shopping and accessing information in the EU](#); deadline 28 December 2015

Destination updates

- **Canada:** Introduction of an electronic travel authorization (eTA) for visa-exempt foreign nationals travelling to Canada by air - mandatory as from 15 March 2016: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp>
- **India:** Reduced fee for e-Tourist visa from US\$ 60 to US\$ 48 for a number of countries: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>