

ECTAA

THE EUROPEAN TRAVEL AGENTS'
AND TOUR OPERATORS' ASSOCIATIONS

The voice of Europe's travel intermediaries, promoting sustainable, innovative and consumer-focused travel

PRESS KIT 2026



80,000
TRAVEL
INTERMEDIARIES
REPRESENTED



34 NATIONAL
ASSOCIATIONS
ACROSS
EUROPE



210 MILLION
TRAVEL
PACKAGES
SOLD



COMMITTED TO
QUALITY, INNOVATION
AND CONSUMER
PROTECTION

Working together for a strong
and **sustainable** future for travel in Europe

www.ectaa.org

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About ECTAA

The European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations (ECTAA) **brings together 34 national associations across Europe**, including ACCKA in Czechia, collectively representing more than **80,000 travel companies**, including travel agents, tour operators, online travel agencies (OTAs), destination management companies (DMCs), and business travel specialists.

ECTAA works to **promote a competitive, innovative and sustainable travel sector**, while supporting high standards of consumer protection and encouraging the transition towards more responsible and sustainable tourism across Europe.

ECTAA is actively **engaged in a broad range of policy areas** affecting the travel industry, including passenger rights, package travel legislation, sustainability, digitalisation, rail and multimodal mobility, tourism policy, taxation, and international travel regulation. The association also supports initiatives aimed at strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of the European tourism ecosystem.

ECTAA also **works closely with tourism destinations** and partners to help promote destinations across Europe and beyond through the extensive network of travel agents and tour operators represented by its members. By connecting destinations with the travel distribution community, ECTAA helps increase visibility, market reach and consumer awareness in key European source markets.

In addition to its advocacy work, ECTAA provides a **platform for cooperation and exchange of best practices** among national associations and travel professionals across Europe. Through its working groups, events and partnerships, ECTAA contributes to shaping the future of travel and tourism in Europe.

For more information:



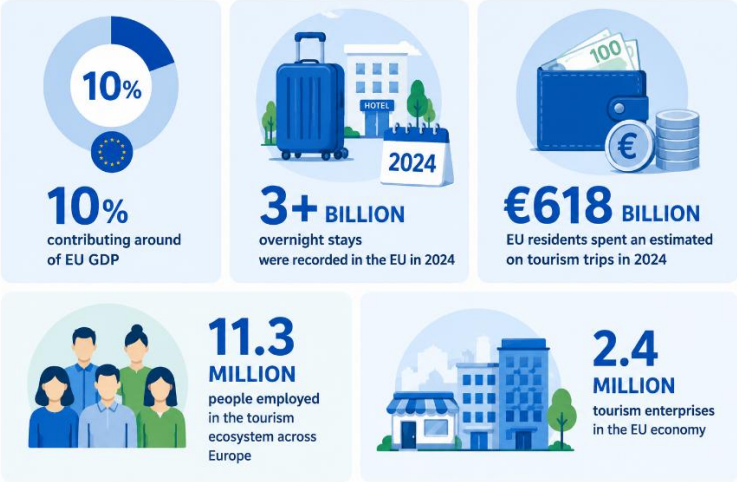
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Facts & figures on European tourism and travel intermediaries

Tourism remains one of Europe’s key economic sectors, contributing around 10% of EU GDP and playing a vital role in employment, regional development and connectivity across the continent. According to Eurostat data, European tourism contributed 10% to the EU GDP and is an important growth and employment generator.



The travel agency and tour operator sector remains a key pillar of the European tourism ecosystem. According to the latest available Eurostat figures for NACE 79 activities (travel agencies, tour operators, reservation services and related activities), the sector accounted for approximately 116,000 enterprises in 2023, generating more than €159 billion in turnover.

In addition, according to IATA data, travel agents and tour operators sold more than USD 80 billion worth of air tickets through the IATA Billing and Settlement Plan (BSP) alone, excluding other ticket distribution channels.

These figures underline the continued importance of travel intermediaries in supporting tourism distribution, consumer protection, connectivity, and the transition towards more sustainable travel across Europe.



Prague to host ECTAA's 2026 semi-annual meeting

From 27 to 29 May 2026, Prague will welcome more than 50 travel industry representatives from across Europe for the semi-annual meeting of ECTAA, the European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations. The event is hosted by CzechTourism and jointly organised with the Czech Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators (ACCKA).

ECTAA brings together national associations of travel agents and tour operators from across Europe. Its regular meetings provide an important platform for members to review and discuss key European policy and industry developments affecting the travel sector.

This year's meeting in Prague comes at a particularly important moment for the tourism industry. Discussions will focus on the ongoing crisis in the Middle East and its consequences for travel and tourism across Europe. Delegates will exchange experiences on how the crisis has been managed so far, from the repatriation of travellers to operational disruptions and the continuing challenges linked to rising prices and consumer uncertainty.

Participants will also examine the broader impact of geopolitical instability on the tourism sector and discuss possible economic and geopolitical scenarios for the months ahead. For European travel organisations, cooperation and information-sharing remain essential in helping the industry respond effectively to rapidly changing circumstances.

The Prague meeting will combine high-level business discussions with opportunities for delegates to experience the destination firsthand. Alongside the official board meetings, general assembly sessions and networking events, the programme includes a gala dinner at Prague's iconic Ginger & Fred Restaurant in the Dancing House, one of the city's best-known modern architectural landmarks.

After the formal meetings conclude on Friday afternoon, delegates will have the opportunity to discover more of the destination through specially organised social and post-meeting programmes. Participants may join a guided tour of Prague inspired by Dan Brown's upcoming novel *The Secret of Secrets*, ending at the historic Charles Bridge, or extend their stay with a post-tour to the South Moravian Region, including Brno and the surrounding area, where cultural activities, regional gastronomy and networking opportunities will continue throughout Saturday.

These additional experiences highlight the importance of the meeting not only as a professional gathering, but also as an opportunity to showcase the diversity and attractiveness of Czech tourism products and destinations.

Holding the meeting in Prague provides an excellent opportunity for ECTAA members to discover — or rediscover — the many attractions of Czechia as a tourism destination. Prague remains one of Europe's most vibrant and culturally rich capitals, combining historical heritage, architecture, gastronomy and modern tourism infrastructure. Beyond the capital, Czechia offers diverse experiences ranging from spa towns and UNESCO heritage sites to wine regions, nature tourism and regional cultural traditions.

For CzechTourism and the Czech travel industry, hosting the ECTAA meeting represents an important opportunity to place Czechia firmly in the European tourism spotlight. Meetings of European travel associations often encourage additional industry events, professional gatherings and future travel trade activities, bringing further international travel companies and decision-makers to the destination.

The presence of delegates from all corners of Europe will not only strengthen professional cooperation within the sector but also reinforce Czechia's reputation as a safe, accessible and high-quality destination for European and international travellers alike.

"The ECTAA meetings are always a valuable opportunity to exchange views and strengthen cooperation between the European travel associations, but meeting in Prague gives this gathering a very special dimension," said the President of ECTAA. "As someone with a strong interest in history and a passion for

travel, I am particularly looking forward to experiencing Prague and Czechia — destinations where history, culture and modern tourism come together in such a unique way. I am convinced our delegates will leave with a deeper appreciation of what Czechia has to offer visitors from across Europe and beyond.”

ECTAA Survey Highlights: Booking Trends Through Travel Agents and Tour Operators

ECTAA conducted a survey between 4 and 22 May 2026 among its Member associations. The survey provides an overview of current booking trends across outbound, inbound and business travel markets from 19 European countries and reflects the perspective of the European travel distribution sector.

The results show that outbound leisure travel remains relatively resilient despite continued geopolitical uncertainty and rising travel costs. Southern European and Mediterranean destinations — particularly Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece — continue to perform strongly, benefiting from their perception as safe, accessible and reliable destinations. Several respondents also reported growing demand for destinations such as Albania, Croatia, Malta and selected African destinations. At the same time, long-haul travel remains under pressure, especially to destinations affected by geopolitical tensions or complex air connectivity. Demand for parts of the Middle East, Asia and some long-haul routes to the Americas continues to lag behind previous levels. Respondents also report that customers are booking later, seeking greater flexibility and relying more heavily on professional advice and support when making travel decisions.

Inbound travel trends are generally stable to moderately positive. European source markets — including France, the United Kingdom, Germany and the Benelux countries — continue to generate solid demand, while North American markets also show encouraging performance. However, some markets in Asia and the Middle East remain weaker due to reduced connectivity, longer decision-making times and ongoing geopolitical concerns. Across the inbound sector, operators report increasing pressure from higher supplier costs, reduced flexibility, stricter cancellation conditions and stronger direct competition from hotels and airlines.

Business travel remains comparatively stable, with many respondents reporting flat or slightly positive performance. Corporate clients are placing increasing emphasis on cost control, compliance with travel policies, sustainability reporting and traveller safety, reinforcing the role of professional travel management companies. However, uncertainty in the global economic and geopolitical environment continues to affect business travel demand in some regions, particularly for travel linked to the Middle East and Asia. Respondents also note that booking patterns remain shorter-term and more cautious than in previous years.

A recurring theme throughout the survey is the growing value of travel agents and tour operators in an increasingly uncertain environment. Respondents highlighted that travellers are placing greater importance on expert advice, flexibility, customer protection and operational support, particularly when disruptions or geopolitical events affect travel plans. The survey also underlines that professionally curated travel experiences, combined with reliable assistance and crisis management, remain a key strength of the organised travel sector.

Recent press articles of ECTAA

Announcement of cooperation with CzechTourism

ECTAA and CzechTourism announce strategic partnership with Prague meeting in May

The European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Association (ECTAA) and CzechTourism are pleased to announce a collaborative partnership aimed at promoting Czechia as a premier destination to European travel professionals. ECTAA will hold its general meeting in Prague in May 2026, marking the association's return to Czechia for the first time in over a decade.

Brussels/Prague, 19 January 2026. ECTAA, the European umbrella association representing travel agents and tour operators across Europe, and CzechTourism, the national tourism authority of Czechia, have agreed to strengthen their cooperation through a strategic partnership. This collaboration will culminate in ECTAA's general meeting in Prague in May 2026, an important milestone that underscores the growing significance of Czechia as a destination for both leisure and business tourism.

The last time ECTAA held its general meeting in the Czechia was more than a decade ago, making this upcoming event particularly significant for deepening ties between European travel professionals and Czech tourism partners. This high-level gathering will bring together leaders, decision-makers, and industry experts from across Europe, providing an optimal platform to showcase Czechia's diverse offerings and discuss strategies for mutual growth.

Czechia presents compelling opportunities for European travel companies. With 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites – including the Historic Centre of Prague, the spa towns of Karlovy Vary, Mariánské Lázně, and Františkovy Lázně (part of the Great Spa Towns of Europe), and the historic centres of Český Krumlov and Telč – the country offers exceptional cultural and historical richness. In 2024, Czechia welcomed approximately 22.8 million tourists, surpassing pre-pandemic levels and demonstrating the destination's enduring appeal.

Prague, the capital city, has established itself as one of Europe's leading MICE destinations, ranking fifth globally and fourth in Europe for international association meetings according to the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA). The city's modern infrastructure, including the Prague Congress Centre with over 118,000 square feet of convention space and LEED Platinum-certified venues such as Cubex Centre Prague, offers European travel agents and tour operators world-class facilities for their clients' business events.

Beyond Prague, Czechia compact geography and excellent connectivity – boasting one of Europe's densest railway networks – make it ideal for multi-destination itineraries. The country's famous beer culture, wellness tourism with traditional spa treatments and innovative beer spas, and commitment to sustainable tourism further distinguish it as a versatile destination catering to diverse traveller interests.

We are very pleased that the ECTAA Spring conference will be held this year in Prague. It offers us an excellent opportunity to present Czechia as a modern, competitive, and sustainable destination, while also opening up new B2B opportunities for Czech partners towards European travel agencies and tour operators," highlighted František Reismüller, Director of the Czech Tourist Authority – CzechTourism.

"We are delighted to return to Czechia and to strengthen our partnership with CzechTourism," said Eric Drésin, Secretary General of ECTAA. "Czechia combines rich cultural heritage with modern infrastructure and excellent accessibility – all essential elements for European travel professionals.

Adoption of new package travel rules

The revised Package Travel Directive receives final approval from the Council

Brussels, 30 March 2026. ECTAA, the European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations, welcomes today's formal adoption of the revised Package Travel Directive by the European Council. This marks the conclusion of an important legislative process and delivers a clearer, more workable framework for organised travel in Europe.

The new text introduces a number of useful clarifications and improvements while maintaining a high level of protection for travellers. ECTAA particularly welcomes the simplified definition of package travel and the removal of linked travel arrangements, a concept that had added complexity without delivering clear benefits to either travellers or businesses. ECTAA also notes with satisfaction that some of the most problematic proposals discussed during the review, such as limits on advance payments and the overly broad "3-hour package" concept, were not retained in the final text.

ECTAA considers this outcome a positive step forward for the travel distribution sector and a significant improvement to the legal framework governing organised travel in the European Union. Clearer and more proportionate rules are essential to support legal certainty, fair competition and consistent application across the internal market.

"While the revised Directive brings a clearer and more proportionate framework, which is good news for both travel businesses and travellers, it does not go far enough in addressing the realities of crisis situations," said Eric Drésin, Secretary General of ECTAA. "The European Commission initially set out to draw lessons from past disruptions and strengthen the framework for the future. Unfortunately, that ambition has only been partially delivered."

The revised Directive does not fully meet the original objective of creating a framework better suited to major crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and large-scale travel disruption. In light of recent and ongoing geopolitical instability in the Middle East, and the operational consequences it carries for tour operators, travel agents and travellers alike, it is clear that the sector still needs rules that are more effective and more workable in exceptional circumstances.

Moving forward, ECTAA will continue to engage constructively with European institutions and Member States. We remain committed to supporting the effective implementation of the new Directive and actively participating in future policy discussions, always aiming to promote rules that are clear, proportionate, resilient during disruptions, and consistent across the travel market.

NB: The text is expected to be published in the Official Journal of the European Union within the next two months. Over the subsequent 28 months, ECTAA and its member organisations will work closely together to ensure a qualitative transposition of the text into national laws.

Adoption of passenger package

ECTAA backs EU passenger package, but flags competition risks

Brussels, 13 May 2026 – ECTAA welcomes today’s adoption by the European Commission of the new passenger package, including proposals on Rail Ticketing, Multimodal Digital Mobility Services (MDMS) and revised Rail Passenger Rights. The package reflects the Commission’s ambition to promote more sustainable rail and multimodal travel across Europe while improving the passenger experience.

While these objectives are both commendable and long overdue, ECTAA questions whether the proposed measures will ultimately deliver a truly competitive, open and consumer-friendly multimodal market — particularly in relation to the proposed Rail Ticketing Regulation.

The proposal has the potential to significantly improve consumers’ access to rail services across Europe. By introducing fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory (FRAND) access conditions for rail operators, it could enable independent travel intermediaries to access rail content on equal terms, thereby increasing transparency, consumer choice and innovation in rail distribution.

Consumers increasingly expect to compare and combine travel options across rail operators, transport modes and ancillary services on a single platform. Better access to rail content is therefore essential to building a genuinely integrated European mobility market.

However, ECTAA has identified several important concerns that deserve careful scrutiny during the legislative process.

First, ECTAA believes FRAND principles should not be limited to rail transport. While concerns surrounding dominant rail operators are well documented, similar anti-competitive practices are increasingly visible in air transport and other mobility sectors. The recent Ryanair antitrust case in Italy illustrates how dominant carriers can impose unfair commercial conditions on independent distributors, to the detriment of competition, innovation and consumer choice.

ECTAA therefore calls on legislators to ensure that FRAND principles apply consistently across all transport sectors whenever dominant market players impose unfair conditions on weaker commercial partners.

“Ensuring fair access to rail content is an important and welcome step for consumers and independent travel distributors alike. However, the same market failures exist in air transport and should be addressed consistently. FRAND principles should apply whenever dominant operators impose unfair conditions on weaker market participants, regardless of the transport mode,” said Eric Drésin, Secretary General of ECTAA.

ECTAA also expresses concern about provisions requiring dominant railway undertakings to open their own retail platforms to competing rail services in order to increase the visibility of new entrants.

While greater competition between rail operators could positively impact prices and service quality, such measures risk further strengthening the market power of incumbent operators by turning their platforms into the primary gateways for rail distribution.

ECTAA warns that this could unintentionally accelerate market concentration by reinforcing the direct distribution power of dominant operators, while weakening independent travel intermediaries that provide consumers with impartial comparison tools, transparency and access to competing services across multiple operators and transport modes.

Any regulatory framework that indirectly favours vertically integrated dominant operators risks reducing distribution diversity and undermining innovation over the longer term.

“We are concerned that some of the proposed measures could unintentionally create ‘super competitors’, to the detriment of independent travel intermediaries that cannot compete with the brand recognition and customer reach of dominant transport operators,” said Eric Drésin.

In the same vein, the proposed MDMS Regulation aims to address the market power of certain MDMS providers in their relationships with transport operators, yet comparable safeguards are not foreseen for dominant transport operators outside the rail sector. This appears disproportionate given that concentration levels are considerably higher in the transport sector, whereas the distribution market remains highly fragmented and consists predominantly of small and medium-sized enterprises.

ECTAA therefore calls on the co-legislators to carry out a thorough assessment of the competitive impact of the legislative proposals adopted today and to avoid measures that could inadvertently undermine independent distribution channels or further entrench dominant market positions.