

## **PRESS RELEASE:**

### **Travel industry groups propose collaborative development of distribution standards, invite IATA to join**

**Brussels / Dublin, 25 October 2013 (11:00 ET, 15:00 Ireland time, 16:00 CET)** – Leading travel industry groups are proposing a new collaborative model for the development of neutral and open data standards to enable enhanced distribution of airline products through any channel. The goal of the initiative is to bring the entire airline and travel industry together to develop technical standards. They will facilitate airlines to make custom offers to travellers while fully preserving robust comparison shopping across multiple carriers and protecting consumers' data privacy.

The European Federation of Travel Agents' Associations (ECTAA) and the European Technology & Travel Services Association (ETTSA) are the European driving forces behind the new initiative.

Some of their U.S. peers, including the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), the Business Travel Coalition (BTC), the Consumer Travel Alliance (CTA), and the Travel Technology Association (Travel Tech), have issued a separate statement supporting the move.

The groups extend an open invitation to IATA and other interested and relevant travel industry stakeholders, to join the multilateral initiative in a truly collaborative manner.

They believe the initiative could effectively end the animosity caused by IATA's unilaterally proposed New Distribution Capability (NDC), which has received harsh criticism from many parts of the travel industry and from regulators.

"We need to join forces as a travel value chain and, together with IATA and the carriers, develop a neutral data standard that works for everyone, that enables airlines to effectively distribute rich content and that retains transparency and comparison-shopping for consumers and travel buyers," said Boris Zgomba, President of ECTAA.

"While IATA claims NDC is such a data standard and nothing more, in reality it appears to involve a group of airlines attempting to collectively impose on buyers, consumers and travel agents a business model. That model seems to be founded on the use of opaque fares and ancillaries to make real comparison shopping difficult, if not impossible," said Christoph Klenner, Secretary General of ETTSA.

"Also, IATA has failed to include its peers in the design and development of NDC, despite having promised such involvement for at least the last eighteen months," Klenner added. "For a data standard to be effective, it needs to be developed by all affected parties. It needs to be business model-agnostic. That's what this new initiative intends to achieve."



The initiative embraces key principles such as transparency, choice and robust protection of traveler data. At the same time, it will enable airlines to sell their product in smarter and more cost-effective ways across all distribution channels. The **Principles** are listed in more detail below this statement.

The groups will provide more information on the initiative during a press conference in Dublin, Ireland, on Monday 28 October 2013 (11am ET, 4pm Ireland time, 5pm CET), just before the start of IATA's World Passenger Symposium.

For details on joining the press conference in person, or by phone, please contact Christoph Klenner, ETTSA, [cklenner@etsa.eu](mailto:cklenner@etsa.eu)

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**ECTAA**, is the voice of European travel agents and tour operators. Founded in 1961, it regroups travel agents and tour operators Associations from 31 European Countries. ECTAA aims at representing the interests of the travel trade vis-à-vis European Union institutions and international organizations.

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**ETTSA**, the European Technology and Travel Services Association, was established in 2009 to represent and promote the interests of global distribution systems ("GDSs") and online travel agencies ("OTAs") towards policy-makers, opinion formers, consumer groups and all other relevant European stakeholders. Members include Amadeus, ebookers/Orbitz, eDreams, Expedia, GoVoyages, lastminute.com, Opodo, Sabre, Travellink, and Travelport.

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## **Principles for the Future of Air Travel Distribution**

Consumers today have an incredible range of options for searching, comparing, and purchasing travel services, from online travel sites to traditional travel agents, corporate travel departments, and provider web sites. The current system is robust and competitive, and participants are adapting quickly to meet the changing needs of their customers.

The undersigned organizations help distribute and book air, rail, hotel, cruise, and car rental services for hundreds of millions of business and leisure travelers around the world. Our organizations are driven by the needs of the traveling public. Our vision for a consumer-focused and competitive future of air travel is based on the principles below.

### Transparency

Travelers should be able to compare prices and purchase all of the services they will need for their flights at the time of booking, including ancillary services. Travelers (or their agents) should be able to see all of the options and fees available for a flight before travel is booked, so they can make informed decisions during the booking process.

### Choice

Travelers should be able to compare prices and services between a broad range of airlines, and they should be able to compare base fares and ancillary services with the base fares and services from other airlines that sell through the same distribution channel. Choice should be driven by the traveler's needs, and the traveler should be able to compare, contrast, and choose the supplier that best meets those needs.

### Competition

Travelers should have access to a robust and competitive marketplace of airlines and other travel suppliers who compete for their business on a level playing field. Both anonymous and self-identified travelers should be able to compare their full range of options among airlines.

### Innovation

Innovation is driven by competition, and travelers should have a broad range of options to book their travel, ranging from airlines to online travel companies, corporate travel departments, and traditional travel agencies. Each of those companies should be able to choose and develop the technologies that best meet its needs, so long as those systems do not interfere with open, transparent pricing and consumer choice.

### Privacy

Travelers should be able to shop anonymously in a setting in which all applicable privacy laws and regulations are respected. Customization should be at the request of the traveler, not at the demand of the supplier, and travel suppliers should allow travelers to decide which additional services they would like to receive, if any, whether traveling on business or for leisure with their family.