



News Release

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ETTSA: ONLINE TRAVEL COMPANIES WELCOME AMBITIOUS AIR PASSENGER RIGHTS INITIATIVE, BUT URGE COMMISSION TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD

ETTSA (the European Technology & Travel Services Association) applauds European Commission Vice President Siim Kallas' strong commitment to rigorous passenger rights across all modes of transport in Europe. It welcomes the information campaign the Commission has launched to inform air passengers of their rights ahead of the busy Summer travel season.

"Providing travellers with full and transparent information enhances competition and allows consumers to make the best choice. This transparency together with the provision of proper assistance in case of delay or cancellation, are essential elements to increase consumer confidence in the European air transport system," says Tom Parker, Secretary General of ETTSA.

Although the existing initiatives are very important steps in the right direction, ETTSA believes the Commission should promote the creation of standards that would allow the consumers to effectively compare the services provided by the different airlines and should as well carefully look at protection of travellers in case of airline insolvency. "Travel agencies are under the obligation to bond in order to protect passengers against highly unlikely agency insolvency," Parker says. "Airlines, are under no such obligation. This put travel agents at a competitive disadvantage and may expose travellers to financial risk and substantial inconvenience. We think that the Commission should promote a uniform system that would protect consumers in the event of an airline insolvency."

ETTSA is looking forward to working further with the Commission and all other stakeholders to find fair and sensible solutions in the interest of levelling the playing field for all travel vendors, while at the same time properly protecting all passengers to the same degree.

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ETTSA (the European Technology and Travel Services Association) was launched in 2009 to represent and promote the interests of travel distributors and Global Distribution Systems (GDS). Working with industry, policymakers, opinion formers, consumer groups and other relevant European stakeholders, the Brussels-based association encourages and supports fair competition and consumer choice in the travel distribution chain. Members include Amadeus, ebookers, Expedia, Opodo, Sabre (including its affiliate lastminute.com) and Travelport. Associate members include Booking.com and eDreams. www.etsa.eu