

PRESS RELEASE – for immediate release

ETTSA supports ECTAA antitrust complaint against IATA

Brussels, 27 May 2019

On Friday 24 May 2019, the European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Association (ECTAA) filed a complaint with the European competition authority against the airline trade association IATA for abuse of dominant position. ETTSA fully supports the pledge, which is aligned with its own complaint before the EU antitrust authority, dating from December 2018, requesting an immediate address of discriminatory practices of dominant airlines, and in particular of Lufthansa.

ECTAA requested the European Commission to start an investigation into infringements of competition rules by IATA. The complaint puts in evidence how, at present, airlines are direct competitors to travel agents in the distribution of tickets and yet IATA continuously imposes very strict, unilateral and disproportionate contractual constraints on travel agents for the distribution of tickets, namely through the IATA Passenger Agency Programme.

Such discriminatory practices are, unfortunately, becoming increasingly widespread in the air travel distribution market. In December 2018, ETTSA and Verband Internet Reisevertrieb (VIR), the German association representing the digital travel industry, also filed a joint complaint with DG COMP for abuse of dominance by Germany's Lufthansa Group concerning discriminatory and exclusionary practices against independent distributors of airline tickets, including global distribution systems (GDSs) and their travel agency users, which intentionally and unfairly restrict competition in both the air ticket distribution as well as airline services markets. Until this day, ETTSA is waiting for the European Commission's assessment of its complaint. [More details on ETTSA's complaint [here](#)]

“ECTAA's action is yet another proof of the substantial unfair competition and discriminatory practices originated by large airlines' abuse of dominant position which have not yet been properly addressed by the competent EU authorities. It is important to note that such practices are not only hindering businesses - from airlines' smaller competitors, to travel agents amongst others -, but ultimately it is also their ability to supply the best offers and prices to consumers which is at stake. Therefore, we reinstate our own request to the EU antitrust authority to take action”, says Secretary General of ETTSA, Emmanuel Mounier.

Pawel Niewiadomski, President of ECTAA also added that *“indirect distribution of air tickets is dangerously hurt by the abuse of IATA's dominant position while it is needed more than ever to help consumers navigate through complex ticket offers, including a growing number of ancillary services”*.

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Notes to editors

About ETTSA

The European Technology and Travel Services Association represents and promotes the interests of travel technology companies in Europe, including global distribution systems (GDSs), online travel platforms and metasearch sites. The association, based in Brussels, encourages and supports full transparency, fair competition and consumer choice in the travel distribution chain.