

Brussels, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015

## **Letter concerning the update of the EU Package Travel Directive**

To whom it may concern,

The [European Passengers' Federation](#) has been following with great interest the developments in relation to the update of the EU Package Travel Directive. EPF supports this as the Directive needs updating to meet the challenges of an increasingly digitalised travel and passenger market.

EPF warmly welcomes the aim of this Directive to provide transparent consumer protection and a fairer regulatory framework for travel businesses across the EU. For an ordinary passenger, it should basically be a reform aimed at ensuring that if he/she buys what amounts to a holiday package online, he/she enjoys the same protection as another person buying a pre-packaged travel and holiday from a tour operator, and that the cost of that protection is proportionate to the financial risk the consumer is exposed to.

From a passenger's perspective, it is important that he or she is informed about which passenger and consumer rights apply to the services he or she is purchasing. The Council and the European Parliament agreed with the general principles of the proposal although both have proposed amendments. EPF has some concerns that the update of the Package Travel Directive will not achieve its aim if focus turns away from the reality of today's travel purchases – a reality where some consumers wish to purchase package holidays with corresponding consumer protection, while other consumers opt to forfeit package protection in order to have more flexible choice and lower prices, as long as they are able to make an informed choice and traders are held to clear and straightforward information requirements.

Passengers shopping online for travel and other arrangements have often several websites opened and for them it needs to be clear when all browser windows are closed what level of consumer protection is afforded for the travel service(s) they purchased. There needs to be a simple, clear and well defined information requirement which makes it clear for a passenger visiting a travel agency or sitting behind his/her computer screen when he or she is compiling a package or a product similar to a package, and when a combination of products is not a package. In the case where several traders are involved in the transaction, transfer of the traveller's name and contact details between traders seems to be a clear and well-defined factor to determine whether or not an arrangement should fall within or outside of the scope of the proposed Directive. In case the traveller's name and contact details are transferred to the second trader, the traveller will naturally assume that the two traders are structurally working together as opposed to a mere click to another website following a marketing/advertising link.

EPF would like to stress to the Council and the European Parliament not to forget the reality of the ordinary passengers in this update of the Package Travel Directive. They want to have a choice of purchase, whether they buy online or at a high-street travel agent. They need transparent protection standards and passenger rights which are able to be explained to them in a clear and simple manner, e.g. a disclaimer or pop-up. A future-proof Package Travel Directive is one that imposes on all travel agents to comprehensively and correctly inform consumers about their choice and respects the freedom of passengers to decide on the level of protection that they want for their travel arrangements.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trevor Garrod". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Trevor Garrod  
Chairman EPF