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June 2019

Welcome to the redesigned ETOA Operators Update. Over the summer, we will be moving towards providing more updates directly on our website, ensuring members can find ETOA's latest news about destinations and our non-commercial work instantly.

Updated information on city and local taxes in over 100 European destinations will be published next week (link will be displayed on our [What's new](#) page).

This data will only be available to members. As well as the tax rates, information on reductions and exemptions and links to official sources will be included. If a colleague would like to view this information and does not have access to our website, please contact [Simon Smith](#).

This month's update includes important information regarding German VAT, guiding in Austria, coach plans and consultations for both Rome and Amsterdam.

POLICY

Sustainability

ETOA recently initiated a partnership between itself, CELTH, ETC and NECSTouR that will work on sustainability at a destination level. See recent press release [here](#), and current web materials [here](#).

At ETOA Advisory Council meeting on 06 June we will review ETOA's position on two aspects of sustainability: '**overtourism**' (current policy is to focus on destination engagement, capacity management and optimisation, product development and promotion) and whether ETOA should do or say more on **environmental** issues.

ETOA participated at a recent event hosted by Balearics tourism which showcased their 'Sustainable Islands' [website](#) whose purpose is to illustrate where ecotax revenue is spent. If members are aware of similar initiatives showing where tourism tax is spent, please advise. ETOA's increasing profile and frequency of speaking invitations on this topic shows the value of private sector input in public debate, hence current review of position and activity. Any input welcome at policy@etoa.org.

Visa policy

No further news since last update: we expect the European Parliament to approve the proposed changes to Schengen arrangements this summer. Key change for ETOA members will be acceptance of applications up to 6 months prior to travel.

DESTINATIONS

In May we held our bi-annual group tourism working group, discussing various challenges and updates from around Europe. We would like to thank all participants for their contributions. The next meeting will be held in the autumn, please contact [Sofie Jensen](#) if you would like to hear more.

Austria

Salzburg: We have been made aware of an increased level of local guide interference of non-local tour guides leading groups in Salzburg. Austria is one of the EU countries regulating guiding. This means EU guides established outside Austria who would like to provide their services in Austria on a temporary and occasional basis must make a prior declaration to the competent authorities. [Information can be found here](#). We are seeking clarification from the authorities about which exact documents are needed. More information about EU guiding regulations is on our [website](#).

France

Paris – Gare du Nord: The station will expand: tripling in size by 2023. Information about plans can be found [here](#).

Paris – Eiffel Tower: The area around the Eiffel Tower will be redeveloped by 2024. Information about the project can be found [here](#). There are still opportunities to take part in consultations until 13 July. Click [here](#) for information on how to get involved.

Paris Working group: Our next working group in Paris will take place 26 June. If you have questions or issues about operations in Paris, please contact policy@etoa.org.

Germany

Following conclusion of infraction case last year, Germany will now implement the September 2013 CJEU decision regarding application of the Tour Operators Margin Scheme (TOMS). This was expected. All forms of B2B supply, including wholesale, will

fall within TOMS. This will take effect once new domestic law is passed; we are seeking urgent clarification as to when that could be. The TOMS calculation will be performed on a sale by sale basis as from 01 January 2022, and should only affect those registered for VAT in Germany. German DMCs to date have been able to sell as principals as B2B sales were excluded from TOMS, so this change will affect them as well as tour operators. Similar issues affect those supplying MICE services to corporate clients. We will issue more a detailed briefing once we have further information.

Italy

Florence - Accademia: Some operators are reporting that reservations for the Accademia is becoming more challenging; bookings can only be done by phone; lack of availability; and issues with new regulations regarding group size (max 20 + 1 guide). We would like to hear from members about their experiences so we can take this further. Please contact [Tini Gattazzo](#).

Rome - coach and tourism strategy: Rome Comune invited stakeholders to attend meetings regarding the coach plan (03 June) and their tourism strategy in general (05 June). They are launching a new tourism strategy plan (English); [Futourama 2019-2015](#) (Italian page includes more information, [see here](#)) and are requesting contribution from all stakeholders. Our reports from the meeting on 03 June are that around 100 people participated and that the coach plan was only briefly touched on. Q&A time was limited. If you would like to hear more and get involved, please contact [Tini Gattazzo](#).

In January, when the new coach plan commenced, ETOA contacted Roma Mobilita with a range of questions regarding operational challenges of the plan. We have just received a response. Please click [here](#) to read it (in Italian).

Rome - Colosseum: Similar to Accademia, operators are reporting challenges with Colosseum's reservation system. There have been various technical issues with their online booking system, which has caused delays in the opening of time slots for the high season. Requests for flexibility getting little or no response and solutions for adding additional pax are impractical – including offering availability next day. We are in contact with CoopCulture, who manage the reservation system, and they are aware of the technical issues and are working on resolutions.

Spain

Alhambra: It has been suggested that the online booking system of the Alhambra was breached a few weeks ago, potentially affecting 4.5 million users and about 1000 travel agencies. We have contacted Alhambra to find out more.

Barcelona – Sagrada Familia: We are aware of frustrations and challenges regarding ticketing issues at Sagrada Familia. Lack of availability and a slow response rate from the reservations team have caused some operators to lose business. On 05 June we held a meeting with management at Sagrada Familia. Our aim is to explore opportunities to work closer together and to understand their challenges.

Barcelona networking drinks and working group: 06 June we will host a networking drinks event at La Pedrera. There are still very few spaces left. Please contact [Leyre Raimundo](#) if you are interested. 07 June we will hold our second working group meeting. If you have questions or issues about operations in Barcelona, please contact policy@etoa.org.

Netherlands

Amsterdam coach plan: In May, Amsterdam's city government (Gemeente) published their [Clean Air Action Plan](#). The ambition of the plan is to make all traffic emission-free by 2030 and would be implemented in stages. What happens in practice may differ significantly as the challenges of implementation clarify, but it is important to be aware of the scale and scope of the city's ambition.

For coaches, the plan towards 'emission-free' would start in 2022 with all diesel coaches (including Euro 6) excluded from entering the area (south of Centraal station and within the S100 ring road). In 2025, this area would be expanded to within the A10 ring road. The Gemeente are examining whether vehicle types (such as Euro 6 coaches) or routes can be temporarily exempt from the emission-free standard. We will continue dialogue with the Gemeente and Amsterdam and Partners. The consultation period for the new coach policy is expected to take place in the next few months and will be announced [here](#).



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