



## PRESS RELEASE

### ***Another blow to Europe's incoming tourism***

**Visa fees to be charged for the processing of visa applications are set to rise by more than 70%, from 35€ to 60€ This is another setback for Europe's incoming tourism, which is already facing a declining market share.**

Under the EU's common visa policy, Member States apply the same administrative fee for third country nationals requesting an entry visa to the EU. As from 1 January 2007, the Council has decided to increase the fee by 25€ to cover the additional security costs relating to the introduction of biometric identifiers.

ECTAA and HOTREC are concerned about the imminent increase of visa fees. It will have a significant impact on Europe's incoming tourism, which is facing increasing competition from cheaper destinations in other parts of the world. Said ECTAA President Norbert Draskovits: "Europe's incoming tourism cannot be sustainable in an environment, where increasing charges are levied on the travelling public, such as security costs related to biometric identifiers. Such costs should not be passed on to the tourists. As a major contributor to growth and employment, European decision makers should focus their efforts on improving the competitiveness of the European tourism industry."

*ECTAA regroups the national associations of travel agents and tour operators of 28 European countries, of which 23 are within the European Union. Altogether it represents 80.000 enterprises.*

*HOTREC represents the hotel, restaurant and café sector at European level. This sector counts 1.4 million businesses and provides 7.5 million jobs in the EU alone. HOTREC brings together 38 National Trade and Employer Associations representing the interest of the sector in 23 different European countries.*

Publication date: 3 May 2006

For more information, please contact:

Christina Russe, Industry Affairs Manager  
ECTAA - Group of National Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations within the EU  
Rue Dautzenberg 36, B-1050 Brussels  
Tel: +32 2 644 34 50 or fax: +32 2 644 24 21  
e-mail: [secretariat@ectaa.org](mailto:secretariat@ectaa.org)

Jonatan Henriksson, Policy Adviser  
HOTREC - Hotels, Restaurants & Cafés in Europe  
111, Bd Anspach - box 4, B-1000 Brussels  
Tel: +32 2 513 63 23 or fax: +32 2 502 41 73  
e-mail: [jonatan.henriksson@hotrec.org](mailto:jonatan.henriksson@hotrec.org)