

THE EUROPEAN TOURISM SECTOR SPEAKS UP AGAINST DIGITAL REGISTRATION OF TRAVELERS



The digital registry of travelers in Europe goes into effect on October 1. This has caused dissatisfaction among travel agencies and hotel companies. A coalition of European associations in the tourism and travel sector has expressed their rejection, stating that Royal Decree 933/2021 is "disproportionate and unnecessary."

In a letter, ETOA, ECTAA, EFCO&HPA, Hotrec, and RuralTour argue that the implementation of the digital registration of travelers will place a significant and unnecessary administrative burden and additional costs on companies. **They believe this will increase the price of holidays in a highly competitive market.** As a result, they propose that the Decree be revoked or an alternative solution be put in place to avoid a negative impact on the sector's competitiveness.

Concerns exist about the significant administrative burden of this implementation on European tourism companies. It's been pointed out that there will be unnecessary duplication of data collection and processing and a distortion of competition between direct and indirect bookings. Additionally, a detailed legal analysis in the letter highlights the concerns regarding the Royal Decree, focusing on the contradiction with payment regulations.

European tourism associations argue that tour operators do not typically collect most of the data the Decree requires in their reservation systems. Therefore, they lack the necessary systems to collect and transmit the data and will not be able to develop such systems before October 1, 2024.

Additionally, the data collection platform is only available in Spanish when writing the letter, even though the Decree will primarily apply to non-Spanish users (foreign travel companies). As a result, travelers' data will have to be processed manually. The associations state that companies, especially microenterprises, will struggle to comply with the proposed obligations.

They further explain that it would be burdensome for hotels to process the detailed information required for large groups of people. Consumers are also unwilling to provide specific personal data to avoid subsequent marketing communications. Moreover, frequent reservation cancellations would result in companies wasting time collecting unnecessary data.

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