

Press Release

25 January 2012

AETTA calls for the review of European marine passenger safety regulations following the Costa Concordia accident

The recent tragic accident of the Costa Concordia led to loss of lives in the heart of Europe. It is certainly a concern for the European tourism sector, especially for those involved in the marine travel segment. The thorough investigation of all the circumstances of the crash is underway, however some details of it already now give ground to think that the accident, if not could have been avoided altogether, at least, should have resulted in less tragic consequences if tighter safety standards were implemented by the cruise ship owner.

Association of European Travel and Tourist Agencies definitely is not looking to speculate on this topic and certainly does not underestimate difficulties involved in the organisation of marine passenger travel. Nevertheless, a review of the European safety regulations applicable to the marine travel appears necessary. This particularly concerns such issues such as orderly evacuation, communication to passengers and their safety training as well as damage stability.

Helmet Messner, Secretary General of AETTA, commented: "It is surely not in our interests to dramatise the situation. However, passenger safety comes first and the health of the marine travel sector will highly depend on how well the stakeholders of the tourism sector will react to this accident. We do know that the majority of cruise ship owners show a high level of responsibility and do what should be done in such circumstances. Nevertheless, a broad approach to higher safety standards in marine passenger sector appears justified. Therefore, we call upon the European Commission and EU Member States to implement higher safety requirements and ensure compliance with the established safety rules."

For further information, please contact:

Alexandra Goodwin

Public Relations Manager

Phone: +32 (0)2 403 3888 - Email: alexandra.goodwin@aetta.org

Note to the Editor: Association of European Travel and Tourist Agencies (AETTA) brings under one roof over one thousand travel and tourist agencies working in Europe or serving European destinations. Each year these collectively serve 8.5 million clients, generate a total turnover of some €4.8 billion and employ directly 22 000 people.

Association of European Travel and Tourist Agencies

Quartier Européen – Schuman, Rue de la Loi 227, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32 (0)2 403 3888 Fax: +32 (0)2 403 3888

secretariat@aetta.org - www.aetta.org