

Open letter: GBTA calls on Members of the European Parliament to confirm EU plans for Transport & Travel as part of new Commissioners Hearings

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

The Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) wants to express its congratulations on your election in June. The new term has already started in earnest, with the recent nomination of the Commissioners-designate for the 2024-29 College. We sincerely welcome the nomination of Mr Apostolos Tzitzikostas as the new Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism and we look forward to working with him and the full College of Commissioners, pending their confirmation by the European Parliament.

At [GBTA](#) we represent the interests of business travel professionals on the user and supplier side and have been very active in recent years in promoting a business travel sector that is more sustainable and efficient. We have already worked together with the EU to achieve this and prior to last June's election, we released a [policy document](#) outlining our sector's priorities for the 2024-29 political cycle. These can be summarised in three pillars: facilitating traveller mobility, promoting sustainable business travel, and modernising the travel distribution ecosystem. We are ready to continue our cooperation with the new Commission and Parliament to move towards these goals in the benefit of all travellers in the EU.

In this context, as parliamentarians, you have an essential role to play in clarifying the European Commission's plans for the next five years, in particular during the confirmation hearings scheduled for November. Having read – with great interest – the mission letter shared with Mr Tzitzikostas in September, we would like to take this opportunity to respectfully suggest a few questions for you to ask the Commissioners-designate. In order to better understand his views and ideas on the priority issues for the next five years.

Firstly, on the topic of **facilitating traveller mobility**, we would sincerely appreciate if you could ask the following questions:

*The European Commission launched in 2022 a [consultation](#) to decide on a common format for **digital travel documents** that would make travelling in Europe easier. It very recently presented a [proposal](#) to introduce **digital passports and ID cards**. In this context:*

- 1. How will the Commission make sure that the information in these digital documents is well protected from possible cyber-attacks?*
- 2. How will you promote the swift adoption of this measure by individuals that will greatly facilitate travel to and from the Schengen area?*

Secondly, regarding the **promotion of sustainable travel**:

- 1. The [RefuelEU Aviation Regulation](#) was approved during the past term to make aviation more sustainable by mandating the use of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF).*
 - a. What are your plans to increase the production of SAF, which is essential to achieving the goals of the Regulation?*
 - b. Could you update the Parliament on the Commission's assessment of "possible*

improvements or additional measures to the existing SAF flexibility mechanism” as established in the Regulation (Article 15 (2)?

- c. Could you update the Parliament on the Commission’s expectations for the recently presented [Flight Emissions Label](#) that EASA has developed?*
- 2. The mission letter from President von der Leyen asked you to put forward a “plan for an ambitious European high speed rail network to help connect EU capitals”. Could you provide more details on what this plan would entail, what EU resources will be made available for this and what you expect to achieve by 2029?*
- 3. The letter also mentioned proposals for “clean corporate fleets”. Could you provide more details on what the Commission plans to propose in this regard?*

Finally, on the issue of **modernising the travel distribution ecosystem**:

- 1. To achieve a more sustainable and efficient travel system, Europe needs a modern and competitive ticket distribution system that supports multimodal options, proven to contribute to a more sustainable travel system. The mission letter from President von der Leyen asked you to “prepare a proposal for a Single Digital Booking and Ticketing Regulation to ensure Europeans can buy one single ticket on one single platform and benefit from passenger rights protection for the whole trip”. In this context:
 - a. Can you clarify if this would apply to all modes of transport, enabling Europeans to easily book a single ticket for a multimodal trip?*
 - b. What are the specific objectives of the proposed regulation and what will be its scope?**

We hope these suggested questions are useful for you ahead of the confirmation hearings. As representatives of the business travel sector, we look forward to continuing our cooperation with the EU in the coming five years to improve the travel sector’s efficiency and sustainability.