

Mr Niall O'Connor
Commission for Aviation Regulation
Alexandra House
Earlsfort Terrace
Dublin 2

12 June 2008

Dear Niall

Re : Review of Travel Trade Regulations

I refer to the Commission's invitation to comment on the draft terms of reference published on 22 May last.

The Irish Travel Agents Association (ITAA) welcomes the Minister's decision and the Commission's engagement in a review of licensing. We concur that the regime is outdated and broadly agree with the terms of reference as set out. In previous exchanges we have highlighted to the Commission a range of concerns related to equity, administrative burden, enforcement and consumer protection arising from the regime currently in operation. We believe these matters are within the scope of the published terms of reference and we look forward to them being dealt with comprehensively in the review which is now commencing.

At this stage we would draw attention to four elements that are not explicitly referenced in the notice, but which we believe will have importance in ensuring the review is successful.

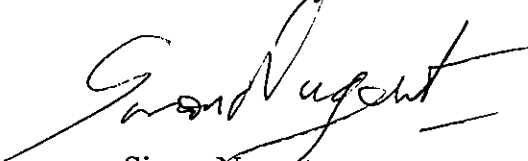
- Firstly, the reference to "on-line vendors" in the terms of reference must be broadly interpreted. In particular, airlines that sell not only flights but also a wide range of other travel services, through their websites currently fall completely outside the travel trade consumer protection regime. The development of other on-line suppliers of travel services such as accommodation brokers also needs to be taken into account as do on-line

travel agents based outside the jurisdiction and beyond the reach of the existing licensing regime.

- Secondly, the extent of development of horizontal consumer protection legislation since 1982, most recently the Consumer Protection Act 2007, should be taken into account in the review. In this respect it might be noted that there is an absence of any specific regime of consumer protection in the event of airline insolvency.
- Thirdly, the consumer protection afforded through financial services such as credit card purchasing and various travel insurance products is extensive and ought be taken into account in such a review.
- Fourthly, we would recommend that a review would embrace an analysis of best practice in regulation in other jurisdictions both within and beyond the EU so as to identify the least burdensome, but effective, regimes that apply.

The ITAA looks forward to playing an active and constructive role in the full review that is to roll out over the coming months. We are at the Commission's disposal to provide any information on the experience of our members - licensed and compliant travel agents and tour operators - as may be required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Nugent', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Simon Nugent
Chief Executive