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PRESS RELEASE FROM HOLIDAYTRAVELWATCH™

CONSUMER GROUP EXPRESSES CONCERN FOLLOWING RELEASE OF PACKAGE TRAVEL GUIDANCE NOTE

The Government has finally released its long awaited Guidance as to what apparently constitutes a 'Package'. It is evident that the response to the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) consultation has created a great deal of debate within the department.

The new Guidance seeks to clarify a Court of Appeal hearing in 2006 into how a 'Package Holiday' is defined. We consider that this issue is extremely important to the ordinary travel consumer. We believe that if the Travel Industry is allowed to by-pass current consumer protections, it will reverse the hard fought rights gained under the Package Travel Directive, which were introduced in 1992.

BERR have produced a somewhat torturous document, which in our view, despite the optimistic accompanying statements, provides sufficient opportunity for large segments of the travel industry to 'de-regulate' themselves from the statutory obligations of the Package Travel Regulations. This is all the more likely, given that the document is silent on the activities of airline websites, a point which has caused much disappointment to the mainstream Travel Industry.

Frank Brehany, the MD of HTW states,

"At best this document can only be described as aspirational"

He continues,

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"We have long advocated that the Government should not have been tempted to produce this document. They should have waited for the outcome of the wider EU enquiry. The Guidance advances nothing, and leaves consumers potentially less protected"

He concludes,

"The production of this Guidance means,

That they have forgotten the plight of an 81 year old woman who cannot fathom how to deal with a dispute because the travel providers are all pointing her the other way; they have forgotten the vulnerability of the travel consumer, young or old, who are faced against a powerful industry;

They have forgotten the plight of the bride and her 20 guests, shunted around and delivered a shoddy product, an experience shared by many;

They have forgotten the plight of a little girl who has suffered injury from her bedding and the extensive steps she will now have to take to resolve her claim;

They have forgotten the 160 case studies we produced to support the view that the consumer was suffering detriment during the holiday season of 2007, and the lessons that could have been learnt from those experiences for the 2008 holiday season;

We shall provide our own analysis of this Guidance in due course, for the present; we shall continue to deal with the high volume of complaints and campaign actively on behalf of travel consumers, for the urgent amendment and enhancement of the Package Travel Directive".

All Holidaymakers affected by any of these issues should call the National Helpline 08450179229 or make contact through the Organisation's website –

www.holidaytravelwatch.com

HolidayTravelWatch is a National Consumer Organisation which provides information, advice and assistance to the holidaymaker or independent traveller, who experiences problems with their travel arrangements. In eleven years 130,000 people have benefited from the help provided by HolidayTravelWatch, with over 46% being empowered to resolve their own claims by the information the organisation provides on their consumer rights.

HolidayTravelWatch has campaigned in the past for improvements in travel safety and is proud to have been associated with some of the leading broadcast and print media projects aimed at informing the consumer. HolidayTravelWatch continues with that campaigning spirit and continues to work closely with the media and government departments alike.

Full details of the work of HolidayTravelWatch can be found on www.holidaytravelwatch.com

For further information on this press release and any other associated matters please contact Frank Brehany on 08450179229

www.holidaytravelwatch.com