



FITUR - PRESS RELEASE FORECASTS FOR THE 2024 SEASON

## **ACAVE travel agencies anticipate a 2024 season where tourism will continue to break records**

- **50% of the agencies surveyed believe that this year the volume of bookings will be up to 15% higher than in 2023.**
- **The inbound sector points out that the United States will increase its activity to become one of the first markets of origin for travellers to Spain.**
- **The representatives of ACAVE commented on the progress of the modification of the Directive on package travel and linked travel services and the Regulations on passenger rights, which is currently being debated within the European Commission.**

**Madrid, Thursday, January 25, 2024.-** ACAVE, the main employers' association of the travel agency sector in Spain and which represents the interests of the sector in our country in ECTAA, the European employers' association of travel agencies and tour operators, participates once again in FITUR, and today presented the results of a survey on travel forecasts for 2024, carried out among the 450 agencies associated with ACAVE, which represent more than 1,000 points of sale throughout Spain.

**Jordi Martí, president of ACAVE,** introduced the session by commenting on the good prospects for the new season, explaining that *"after a record year such as 2023, the travel agency sector faces 2024 with forecasts that predict that this trend will continue. According to the survey conducted by ACAVE, more than 88% of respondents will equal or exceed last year's booking volume by 2024. As a result, the prospect of lower interest rates and the security of European markets continue to give travellers the confidence they need to continue planning their holidays."*

Among the agencies surveyed, 50% expect their booking volume to be up to 15% higher than in 2023. Another 10% of respondents expect their bookings to increase by 5-10% compared to last year. Another 28% expect at least to match last year's results and only 12% fear a drop in their bookings of around 5%.



The agencies say they remain concerned about the lack of staff in the tourism sector. Attracting and retaining talent – an issue that arose as a result of the pandemic – will continue to be a priority for travel agencies this season. Likewise, another of the great challenges for agencies this year is to deepen digitalization, especially in the field of AI, an area that offers enormous development potential for tourism companies both in the field of marketing, commercialization and also in the streamlining of processes.

### **Source sector: where Spaniards will travel**

The issuing agencies and TTOO state in the survey that the destinations that will experience the greatest growth in demand will be the **Asian markets**, especially trips to **China, Japan and Polynesia** (the latter particularly due to the reactivation of the honeymoon and honeymoon segment). Along with Asia, the most popular destinations for travel agencies are **Europe, the United States and Latin America**. According to the survey, the top 10 countries for Spaniards to travel to will be, in this order: **France, Italy, the United States, Central Europe, Japan, Egypt, China, Polynesia, Kenya and Tanzania**.

In the area of domestic destinations, respondents also expect a notable demand to remain in the contracting of travel through agencies. In this sense, the top 10 national destinations will follow the same trend as last year (in this order): **Andalusia and Catalonia** in first place, **the Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands** and also getaways to **urban destinations**, especially **Madrid** (which is experiencing the greatest growth), **Barcelona, Valencia or Seville**.

In terms of new trends in the choice of destinations, the agencies surveyed point to countries such as **Saudi Arabia, Korea, Panama, Ecuador, Uzbekistan, Cape Verde, Guatemala, India and the Philippines**.

He also asked about **new product trends**. This year, options such as cycling or cycling trips/routes, sports-related trips, train travel, health and wellness trips, or trips to diving destinations such as the Philippines and Okinawa (Japan) **will be highlighted**.

### **Inbound sector: travellers visiting Spain**

The agencies that receive travellers from other countries in our country explain that **France, the United States and the United Kingdom** will occupy the podium of the main source markets for our country. The outbound market of the United States has not stopped growing in the last two years, consolidating itself as one of the most desired by the Spanish tourism sector.



**Germany** will also continue to be a key market for Spain, along with other European countries such as Italy and the Benelux countries. Two other important growths within this list of main markets are **Latin American** countries, such as Mexico or Brazil, Asian countries such as China, or Canada.

### **Travellers' rights under debate at the European Commission**

On 29 November, the European Commission published the Passenger Mobility Package, which includes the proposal to amend the Package Travel and Linked Travel Services Directive and the Passenger Rights Regulations.

After the analysis carried out by ACAVE of the proposal presented, **the association makes the following considerations:**

#### **1.- A limitation on advance payment for package holidays should not be introduced (new Article 5a):**

The refund problems that originated during COVID 19 were mainly based on the lack of protection of advance payments for flights sold as single services, which is why ACAVE considers that the solution would be the protection of consumers against the insolvency of airlines.

Travel agencies already have a guarantee against their insolvency, which protects all package holidays they organise and market, while individual service providers do not have to provide such protections.

**The proposed changes to the definition of packages and linked travel services are too complex and impossible to implement (Article 3(3) and 3(5)), and need to be simplified.**

#### **3.- Travel agencies are not insurance companies: unavoidable and exceptional circumstances at the place of departure and return must be eliminated in the right of free cancellation (Article 12)**

From ACAVE we totally reject the inclusion of the situation of the place of departure and return as a possible cause of free cancellation by consumers. An organizer is responsible for providing for in the contract. Beyond this, we enter the realm of travel insurance and it should be an issue to discuss with insurance companies, not a new obligation for package travel organizers.

In addition, the rules for reimbursing suppliers have to be aligned with this obligation of free reimbursement of package travel organisers, since any service cancelled due to an unavoidable or exceptional circumstance must also be reimbursed by the supplier, even in those cases where the supplier is responsible for the reimbursement of the service.



The company has not cancelled the service, which is not the case today, and the travel agencies are the ones who unfairly have to assume these refunds.

At ACAVe, we are working on these modifications together with ECTAA and the rest of the European associations.

### **About ACAVe**

The Corporate Association of Specialized Travel Agencies (ACAVE) is the employers' association of state-wide travel agencies based in Catalonia. ACAVE is the most representative Association in Spain and encompasses 450 members and around 1,000 points of sale throughout Spain. The Association is made up of agencies of different types: holiday and corporate broadcasters, tour operators, coastal and city receptives, online agencies and cruise companies.

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