



### **TOM JENKINS: «ANYONE CONCERNED WITH THE FUTURE OF ONLINE DISTRIBUTION SHOULD ATTEND BTO»**

*«All people involved in travel are going to be interested in how clients will behave online», states the ETOA's (European Tour Operators Association) Director Mr. Tom Jenkins commenting on the workshop **Buy Tourism Online (BTO)**, whose first edition is scheduled in Florence on November 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>.*

The first edition of **Buy Tourism Online**, the revolutionary new event dedicated to the demand and offer of online tourism, will celebrate its **first edition on 17-18 November this year in Florence at the Leopolda Station**. The organizing committee is now receiving many registration forms both from portals/web operators and from hotel/chain managers. BTO will include an exhibition area, a series of training events, a forum on the “state-of-the-art” of electronic tourist distribution, a convention on the most profitable and synergic online applications for the congress industry and, most of all, a **workshop with pre-fixed appointments** between companies in the web sector and tour operators on one side and representatives of the hotel industry in the other. This workshop will be organised in collaboration with the **ETOA** (European Tour Operator Association), gathering over 400 members including individual hotels, hotel groups, tourist attractions, ground handlers, technology systems and services, transport providers, tourist boards and other tourism services. Altogether they brought in 2006 3.6 billion of revenue to Europe. In BTO, **ETOA will match demand and offer throughout the whole workshop**.

«ETOA was established nearly 20 years ago to represent the European incoming industry», says Director Mr. **Tom Jenkins**. «This industry has been transformed by new distribution channels, to the extent that notions of “inbound” and even “operator” have now changed. Even the distinction between “operator and “agent” is now fraught. At the heart of these conundra lies the client, the choice that has been granted to him and the enormous power that this ability brings. ETOA has been discussing the role of online communities for four years: its members bring clients in from Japan and America, and members who sell online to anyone. The one thing

these people have in common is that they are interested in content. The most important content is Italy, and at the heart of Italy lies Florence. These are the reasons why I feel convinced that anyone concerned with the future of online distribution should attend BTO».

«Everybody involved in the travel industry is going to be interested in how clients will behave online», concludes Mr. Jenkins. «BTO has right the purpose to bring in people who are interested in the future of ecommerce and travel, and those who are interested in selling Italy as a destination. A synergy with us is therefore much appropriate, since ETOA members are furthermore interested in sourcing new product in Italy, above all hotels who want to work online with operators. ETOA has been involved with Eye4travel and HEDNA (Hotel Electronic Distribution Network Association) over a number of years, and has hosted a number of seminars on eCommerce. **I'm thus positive it will be a remarkable event**».

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The **Buy Tourism Online** workshop is a training, informative and commercial coming together between the actors (demand and offer) on the online tourist market. The first edition will be held in Florence at the Leopolda Station on November 17 and 18, 2009, according to an innovative format that combines professional updating with one-to-one business contact. Hand in hand with a rich training programme that includes a forum, convention, and various product/service presentations, the real workshop represents the main aspect of the event and is organised in collaboration with the ETOA (European Tour Operator Association). The organising committee consists of the Regione Toscana, Toscana Promozione, the APT, the Chamber of Commerce of Florence, hotelier associations, the Florence City Council and the Province of Florence.

*For further information*

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