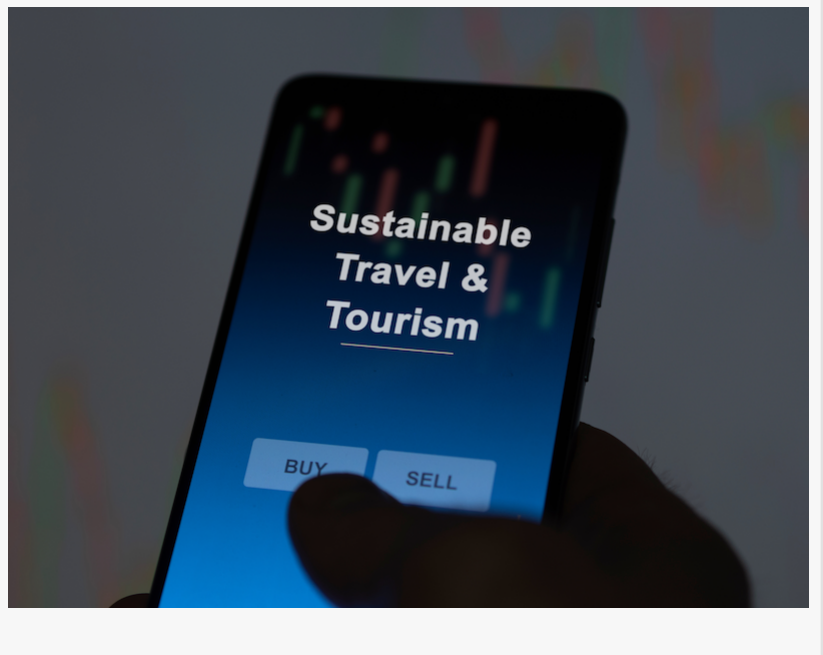


Tourism Sustainability Certification Alliance Urges EU to Introduce Sector-Specific Sustainability Frameworks

TSCA, a coalition of leading sustainability certification organisations in the tourism sector, urges EU to introduce sector-specific frameworks for tourism.

AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS, March 31, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Tourism Sustainability Certification Alliance ([TSCA](#)), a coalition of leading sustainability certification organisations in the global travel and tourism sector, today reaffirmed its strong support for the European Union's environmental ambitions while urging policymakers to introduce sector-specific implementation frameworks for tourism and hospitality.



TSCA notes that while the EU's sustainability agenda remains ambitious, implementation challenges and frequent policy shifts, such as the uncertainty surrounding the Green Claims Directive (GCD), create significant planning and compliance risks. Furthermore, indecision around the GCD has created operational challenges for companies that have already invested heavily in compliance preparation.

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We strongly support the EU's sustainability ambitions, but ambition must be matched with regulatory precision”

Daniel Schaffer, TSCA Vice President

“We strongly support the EU's sustainability ambitions, but ambition must be matched with regulatory precision,” said Daniel Schaffer, TSCA Vice President and CEO of the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), which operates the Green Key International programme.

“When regulations are too generic, they fail to account for how complex industries operate.

Tourism and its component sectors including construction, hospitality, and transport each have unique challenges and opportunities. For sustainability policies to deliver meaningful environmental impact, consultation must take place at the sector level so that EU directives reflect the operational realities of industries such as tourism and hospitality.

“Sector-specific engagement allows policymakers to design frameworks that are both ambitious and practical, while ensuring that sustainability tools remain affordable and relevant for SMEs, enabling them to actively participate in Europe’s sustainability transition,” added Schaffer.

With the collective experience of delivering sustainability certification for over 30 years, TSCA warns that sudden regulatory shifts divert resources from meaningful sustainability initiatives. These pressures are especially acute in cross border industries like travel and tourism, which already face expanding obligations under the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive (ECGTD).

TSCA is concerned that applying generalised requirements, across industries and sectors of vastly different scale and complexity, risks weakening the impact of the EU’s sustainability policies. Tourism, with its variety of small, medium, and large size enterprises, cannot be governed effectively with frameworks designed for multi-trillion-euro infrastructure, manufacturing and resource sectors. One-size-fits-all policies cannot be effectively legislated when applied across sectors with vastly different operational realities.

TSCA is calling for the EU to build deeper, earlier consultation mechanisms into future legislative processes, including standing committees or dedicated forums for major sectors such as travel and tourism. This would help ensure policy design reflects real world operating conditions and reduce fragmented implementation across member states.

TSCA Vice President Schaffer says, “Uncertainty is the enemy of progress. Businesses need stable, predictable policy signals if they are to invest confidently in long term environmental improvement. Early engagement with industry isn’t a checkbox, it’s essential for crafting legislation that works.”

As the peak industry group for sustainability certification, the TSCA’s mission is to serve as a constructive partner for policymakers, utilising its experience in translating the operational realities of travel and tourism into clear, actionable recommendations that improve clarity, reduce uncertainty, and accelerate environmental progress.

TSCA further stresses that sustainability certification has evolved into a governance and compliance mechanism, not simply a branding exercise. The TSCA members’ credible third party certification schemes offer verified environmental data, substantiated claims, and transparent governance processes that align with the EU’s direction for travel and tourism, which is the reduction of legal and reputational risks associated with unverified environmental communication.

TSCA also emphasises the critical role certification plays in supporting small and medium enterprises and destination ecosystems, which underpin the tourism economy. Structured certification frameworks provide SMEs with practical guidance, measurable benchmarks, and verified reporting pathways aligned with EU sustainability policies. In a policy landscape still in transition, certification enables tourism businesses to communicate responsibly, help meet expectations for evidence based sustainability claims, support CSRD ready reporting, and improve consumer trust.

TSCA therefore calls for more structured, sector-specific consultation within EU legislative processes. While consultation already plays an important role in policy development, sustainability frameworks are most effective when engagement takes place at the industry level, allowing policymakers to better understand the operational realities of sectors such as tourism and hospitality and to design directives that reflect these needs.

About the Tourism Sustainability Certification Alliance (TSCA)

As a global coalition of leading sustainability certification organisations, the TSCA works to translate the operational realities of travel and tourism into practical policy recommendations that support effective environmental regulation.

For over 30 years, this group of leading internationally recognised certification organisations has been responsible for developing the industry's best practice standard for accepted criteria in sustainable tourism. Together, these organisations have certified more than 19,000 of the world's leading travel and tourism companies, organisations and destinations. Among TSCA members are organisations such as the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), operator of the internationally recognised Green Key eco-label for sustainable tourism establishments. The Alliance was formed to address best practices and improve cooperation between organisations on a global scale. Ecotourism Australia holds the inaugural chairmanship of the Alliance.

TSCA Founding Members

- Biosphere Certification
- Ecotourism Australia
- Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) - Green Key, Blue Flag
- Good Travel Seal
- Green Globe Certification
- TourCert
- Travelife for Accommodation
- Travelife for Tour Operators

About European Union Sustainability Regulations

CSRD – Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive is the EU's major sustainability reporting law that requires large companies (and later, many non-EU companies with EU operations) to publish detailed, standardised ESG disclosures. It significantly expands the old Non-Financial

Reporting Directive (NFRD). Companies must report using European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS).

ECGTD – Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive (also called “ECGT” or “EmpCo”) is a 2024 EU directive that cracks down on greenwashing in consumer-facing marketing by amending the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive and Consumer Rights Directive. It requires that sustainability claims be specific, verifiable, and backed by evidence.

GCD – Green Claims Directive is a proposed EU law intended to set strict, science-based rules for substantiating environmental claims (“green claims”) and require independent, accredited verification before such claims can be made. The proposal has been paused/partially withdrawn, with negotiations suspended in mid-2025 due to political concerns over burdens on SMEs and disputes among Member States.

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