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- **OTE works with the developer community in Cyprus to form a national chapter for the island. Also agreed: a scheme to license OPCs – Offsite Personal Contacts.**
- **Four levels of sponsorship available for OTE8 -- the European Timeshare Business Forum to be held in Prague in November.**
- **New online rental service for resorts holds forth the promise of access to new consumer markets.**

OTE MOVES TO DEFINE THE FUTURE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR TIMESHARE

In a new legislative position paper, the Organisation for Timeshare in Europe (OTE) spells out its support for the European Union's new approach to 1) Better enforcement; 2) Smarter and better laws, and 3) Analysing the effectiveness of existing laws before possibly updating them.

Currently OTE is engaged with European institutions in discussions on how its Code of Ethics can be supported, how enforcement of current laws can be enhanced and how new horizontal legislation will improve the timeshare market and better protect consumers. At the same time, it aims to promote awareness of consumer rights.

Leading politicians and regulatory authorities have already recognised the key role OTE plays in striking a balance between the interests of the supply side of the industry

and consumer protection. Tangible results have stemmed from OTE efforts that reflect the ongoing decline of consumer complaints about timeshare -- a key indicator that the industry is capable of effective self-regulation.

The new European Commission (EC), which started work in November 2004, has embraced an agenda of economic growth, based on making the European economy more competitive. As part of this programme, it is favouring legislation that applies to all sales activity in the Fair Trading Directive (formally known as the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive). Concurrently, the Commission has initiated a study to determine how current consumer protection legislation has worked in practice which will take several years; the outcome will form the basis of new legislation -- if necessary also for timeshare.

The EC is also considering options for a European version of contract law, aimed at creating a truly common market for business-to-consumer transactions. It recognises that new legislation would be inopportune and ineffective without first creating an environment in which laws can be enforced throughout the European Union. For this reason, the EU has adopted the Consumer Protection Regulation which creates a system of effective enforcement cooperation between Member States.

To date OTE has established a programme for self-regulation, reflected in its Code of Ethics, the independent arbitration service (officially termed the Alternative Dispute Resolution scheme) and the work of VOICE – the Vacation Owners' Independent Coalition in Europe. OTE is actively engaged with regulatory agencies to ensure that laws are effectively enforced. It is also analysing new holiday concepts with the objective of recommending how they can be regulated or subject to existing laws.

At the same time OTE is conducting its own study into the effectiveness of the existing Timeshare Directive and its implementation across EU Member States.

OTE FORMS A NATIONAL CHAPTER IN CYPRUS

A short visit to Cyprus by OTE chief executive Anthony Arke and secretary-general Peter van der Mark has achieved two key objectives: 1) To establish an OTE chapter, and all the Cypriot companies involved are now members; 2) To propose a scheme to regulate OPCs -- Offsite Personal Contacts – with the island authorities.

Working with the Cyprus Tourist Organisation (CTO), OTE arranged a meeting with the resort developer community to form a new national chapter which will carry the same legal entity as the Timeshare Council in the UK. In the next few weeks the group will elect a chairman. All parties have pledged to cooperate and work for a stable timeshare environment on the island.

The Cypriot authorities are working on a licensing scheme for OPCs. Both government officials and the director of the CTO, Lefkos Phylactides, have welcomed this OTE initiative and are actively supporting it. A second meeting will be held soon with the authorities to introduce a temporary licensing system for the upcoming summer season.

Initially the Cyprus chapter will have up to eight members. They include: Paradise Kings Club – Patrick O'Doherty; Royal Coral Bay – Neophytos Ioannou; Amathus Vacation Ownership – Telemachos Hassapis; Lion Resorts (Club Alias) – Jack Mably and Andrew Chapman; PricewaterhouseCoopers – Savvas Costa Michail and J.A.T. Vacation Ownership – Anna Theodoulou.

SPONSORSHIP OPTIONS FOR THE OTE8 BUSINESS FORUM

Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze are the four categories of sponsorship available to member companies intent on raising their profile at OTE8 -- the European

Timeshare Business Forum in Prague. Each category offers sponsors a wide range of promotional benefits

The annual OTE conference is the highlight of the industry calendar in Europe. To date Platinum sponsors are Club La Costa Resorts & Hotels, First National—A GE Company, RCI and RMI Consortium.

For more information on becoming a sponsor, **email** oteforum@coplus.co.uk Or phone: +44 (0)1920 873025.

Footnote: *The 8th European Timeshare Business Forum is to be held at The Hilton in Prague. Dates: 3 – 5 November 2005. More information will be published later.*

ARE YOU PLANNING TO ATTEND THE ARDA CONVENTION?

Later this month the ARDA 2005 Convention & Exposition takes place at Lake Buena Vista, Florida, at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Hotel. Dates: Sunday, 24 April to Thursday, 28 April.

A special OTE session is scheduled at 08.30 to 10am on Tuesday, 26 April, chaired by Robin Mills, chairman of the Communications Council. Also participating are OTE chairman Ward Woods, chief executive Anthony Arke and Preben Vestdam, CEO, RCI Europe & Middle East.

OTE NATIONAL CHAPTERS

HUNGARY:

REMEMBERING JÁNOS HEGYMEGI

It is with deep regret that we report the death of Janos Hegymegi who at 57 has lost his fight with cancer. He was managing partner of Horwath Consulting Hungary, a member of the Hungarian Tourism Committee, founder of Horwath Consulting Hungary and Horwath Consulting Russia and a key member of Horwath Europe. At the OTE Hungary chapter, he represented the interests of Hotel St Lorenzen.

On behalf of OTE and his many industry friends and colleagues, we extend our condolences to his wife, Éva, two young sons, János and András, and extended family.

PORTUGAL:

THREE PROPERTIES BOLSTER RCI'S RESORT PORTFOLIO

Three new affiliations in Portugal and Madeira have increased RCI's resort tally in the country to 85. The deal was termed "a real coup for our sales team" by the exchange company.

Iberotel Praia Monte Gordo is situated on the Algarve at Monte Gordo. Operated by Iberotel-Hotelaria e Turismo S.A., it offers RCI's traditional week for week exchange programme. A second Algarve property is the Ponta Grande Resort in S. Rafael, Albufeira, also offering the RCI Weeks programme. Operated by J. Xufre Investimentos S.A., the resort is close to several beaches and the Salgados golf course.

The third affiliate is the Pestana Atalaia Hotel in Canico, Madeira. Located just 15 minutes from the island capital, Funchal, it is owned and operated by Pestana Hotels & Resorts and offers RCI Weeks, Points and Pestana Plus, a club managed by the exchange company.

SPAIN:

STILL TOPS WITH OUTBOUND EUROPEAN TRAVELLERS

The most popular outbound destination for Europeans in 2004 was Spain with a market share of 13 per cent. France was in second place with 12 per cent while Italy and Germany both had an eight per cent market share. The UK had a five per cent share.

In data released by the Munich-based research group, IPK International, 'sun and beach' breaks are still the most popular holidays for Europeans, up five per cent -- or 3.6million more trips -- over 2003. Overall, Europeans took 356 million outbound trips in 2004, an increase of five per cent over the previous year.

BUSINESS NEWS

NEW RENTAL SCHEME FOR TIMESHARE RESORTS

This week a UK marketing agency launches a new service for resorts -- an IT platform developed specifically for the timeshare industry that provides rental options for resort developers. The Global Accommodation Platform (The GAP) is the brainchild of Just About Marketing (JAM), established in 2002 by Beverley Vincent and Jenny Arterton, two former marketing executives of RCI Europe.

Using this online distribution system, developers can rent unused weeks to multiple consumer groups through promotional channels that are part of The GAP. They include membership organisations, employee groups and travel portals. According to JAM director Beverley Vincent, "The benefit of this service is that it enables resorts to make their inventory available to many different audiences in different countries using one system. By working with developers, it is an attractive consumer proposition as there is inventory in July/August and school holidays as well as at new resorts such as Paradise Kings Club in Cyprus."

Other developer benefits include: 1) Full control over what inventory they make available, at what price and in their chosen currency, 2) No business development, marketing or IT costs, and 3) Automated back office, so no paperwork for the resorts.

The GAP is able to facilitate owner rentals and complement a resort's existing club inventory. Also, it can be 'plugged in' to an existing club and bolster inventory overnight.

Among the first channels to sign up for the scheme are time4leisure.com and laterooms.com which between them access some 10million consumers a year in the UK and across Europe. "This is an innovative venture offering real benefits to timeshare resorts," said Mrs Vincent. "We have other channels in the pipeline."

For further information, telephone +44 (0) 1933 470670. Web site contact: www.justaboutmarketing.co.uk

LUXURY HOTEL ACCOMMODATION ON OFFER VIA A NEW CLUB

Interval International has launched a luxury hotel room, membership club which, it claims, will generate profits for hoteliers from their empty room inventory. At the same time, it will lock in long-term future high occupancies without changing their pricing model or impacting their core business.

The Interval Collection is a unique, points-based hotel room membership and exchange programme aimed at the upper segment of the hospitality market. Initially it will feature properties in key urban and resort areas, starting in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

David Clifton, Interval's managing director Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia, said: "We firmly believe that urban timeshare is the next logical trend developing in the dynamic vacation ownership industry."

AND...

SPREADING THE WORD...

If you have associates and contacts who would like to receive *Ote-news*, then register their names and email contacts with info@ote-info.com

DO YOU HAVE A MESSAGE TO COMMUNICATE TO THE INDUSTRY?

If you have news about key developments, acquisitions, senior appointments and new products and services to share with timeshare professionals throughout Europe, then send the relevant information to: The Editor, *Ote-news*, Organisation for Timeshare in Europe, Rue Defacqz 78-80, 4th Floor, 1060 Brussels, Belgium. Or email: info@ote-info.com

Ote is the pan European trade association representing the timeshare industry from all EU member states. It promotes best practice in the industry for the benefit of both consumers and the industry. All members are bound by a code of ethics which ensures the protection of consumers' rights. Ote also provides information and advice to consumers and offers a free conciliation service to consumers dealing with its members.

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