



NEWS RELEASE

Friday 26 August 2011

LCA PROTESTS NEW CCS PAYMENT TERMS

Calls for open, pragmatic and mutually respectful discussion ...

The Leading Cruise Agents of the UK, representing some 70 cruise specialist travel agencies, has voiced serious concern regarding the move by CCS (Complete Cruise Solution) to migrate its clients to direct payment, urging CCS management in the UK to reconsider its policy, and engage more pro-actively with its travel agency partners – formal and informal.

Comments Co-Chair Ian Hopley (Travelux), on behalf of the LCA Board ‘This is a precipitate move by CCS, and one which penalises the many thoroughly professional cruise agents, for the shortcomings of the few who have conducted their businesses less than sensibly. Of course we understand the scale of risk and the challenges facing CCS and other large cruise companies during these difficult economic times, and we stand ready to consider solutions which mitigate those risks, but which also acknowledge and respect those many agents who operate sensibly in terms of discounting, and with integrity in terms of financials.’

‘But we also urge CCS to accept and acknowledge that we’re where we are today, not least because historically, their acquiescence in heavy discounting – if not active participation, and their increasing resort to direct marketing – even to travel agents’ previously loyal customers, have contributed heavily to any problems they are experiencing by the erosion of sales through the traditional travel community or previously-trusted sales outlets. We are also having to apply the financial scenario of a much lower commission environment, now below realistic and sustainable levels and, again, provoked by CCS.’

‘He continues, ‘The LCA has long accepted the right and reality of cruise operators working through a number of distribution channels, but there is no doubt that the professional cruise agent is an intermediary valued by a steady and consistent group of consumers, and always will be. We would expect CCS to respect our members as a valid and valuable distribution channel, which

should not be undermined or penalised by decisions arrived at through self-determined practices totally beyond its control.'

'The widest spread of trusted business partners for CCS will surely lessen their dependence on a small number of high-risk, volume-dependent agents; offer their natural customers the widest range of booking channels, and professional cruise agents the opportunity to continue to support this excellent product range!'

www.thelca.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Ian Hopley – LCA Co-Chair

telephone 01580 762713 / ian@travelux.co.uk

Matt Bates Secretariat The Leading Cruise Agents of the UK 32d North Shore Road Troon KA10 6QZ

telephone 01292 316820 / lca.info@btinternet.com