

# ASATA concerned other airlines may follow Lufthansa strategy

THE ASSOCIATION of Southern African Travel Agents said last month it was preparing to confront the Lufthansa Group's planned €16 surcharge for new GDS bookings with its airlines.

Chief Executive Officer, Otto de Vries, addressed the new strategy during last month's AVIAREPS Airline Mini Fair in Cape Town.

Mr. De Vries described the GDS levy as "very disturbing" and predicted fallout from agencies and shared customers. "It is not just tick-

lenced: "It has been our customers who have been perhaps more vocal about absorbing this cost... Lufthansa's customers are angry.

"We need resolution on it. If this is the unravelling of the distribution 'trilogy' – agent, GDS and airline – there will be major ramifications.

"... If it is about costs (to the airline), that is an issue that needs to be dealt with. The reality is, yes, there are other carriers that are looking at this... It is not just

convenienced but is resolute that the new requirement will better safeguard children.

"South Africa is the only country in the world requiring children to carry the documentation when they are travelling but when you implement a unique policy, you are going to create mass confusion," he said.

Mr. De Vries explained there had been multiple drafts of the new requirements and changes to operating procedures, which had caused havoc at check-in counters and immigration points.

"We have a situation where airlines have different documents to immigration officials... No one knows what the hell they are meant to apply," he said.

**"We need resolution on it. If this is the unravelling of the distribution 'trilogy' – agent, GDS and airline – there will be major ramifications." – Otto de Vries, ASATA CEO**

eting affected by this... it is a new booking method," he maintained and acknowledged concern that other carriers were also considering similar moves.

The association was taking advice on how to proceed but said concerns ranged from the potential for off-selling, collection and transparency issues.

Although he conceded Lufthansa had appeared "non-negotiable, the airline needs to start giving us some clarity".

The suggestion corporate agreements would "somehow be registered" within Lufthansa's system was "vague". More so, Mr. De Vries chal-

lenged: "It has been our customers who have been perhaps more vocal about absorbing this cost... Lufthansa's customers are angry.

Mr. De Vries also referred to the association's ongoing review of air fare tax and fuel surcharge transparency issues and challenges surrounding the implementation of Home Affairs' new unbridged birth certificate requirement for families travelling to or from South Africa with children.

ASATA said airlines have been unfairly disadvantaged by the new requirement, saying they have been left to enforce the new rules and carry the bulk of the cost implications from lost business and non-compliance.

Home Affairs has conceded travellers may be in-

*effect September 1, whether affect their workflow...*

"I don't agree with it [the most is TK]."  
– Terry Stone, Club Travellers

"I am still weighing it up..."  
– Khaya Ndlumbini, M...

"Why do I have a GDS? I paid time for multiple systems."  
– Shiraz Khan, Adven...

"I will also follow my conse..."  
– Karen Merkel, Disa...

