



Farewells

As we near year-end, a number of big-name departures:

- **Peter de Jong**, CEO of PATA (Pacific Asia Travel Association), leaving this month. No replacement yet, but temporarily replaced by Brian Deeson – who has had his own company, Century Hotels as well as working with Accor and Hyatt, and has been involved with PATA for some time. Always an issue, but this time PATA's next CEO will likely be an ethnic Asian.

De Jong started in the job seven years ago, after 10 years as head of Federation of International Youth Travel Organisations.

Under his rule, apart from what we would consider general administrative work associated with the job, PATA:

- Took back control of its travel mart – which was being operated by Reed Exhibitions.
- Closed its Europe office, opened in China and Dubai.
- Created an 'Allied Partner' membership category.
- Stopped its annual conference, under pressure from China, which did not want it held in Taiwan. After a gap of one year, launched another annual conference, whose current name is the 'PATA CEO Challenge'.

- **Francesco Frangialli**, 61, head of the World Tourism Organization, due to leave "beginning of 2009". Despite his name, he was born in France and is French. He had a long career in various parts of France's civil service, culminating in the tourism ministry, which led him into WTO in 1990.

Taleb Rifai, 59, current deputy, is likely to fill Frangialli's position until a new head is elected. But he must also be a favourite to be appointed to the post. A Jordanian, he was minister of tourism there 2000–3 – his first role in the travel business. After that he joined an international association in Geneva before moving to the WTO in 2006.

Frangialli became head of WTO in 1998, won a second term in 2001, and a third in 2004. He has almost one year before his term of office officially ends. On other occasions he has announced plans to leave, but this time he is expected to.

Under his rule, apart from what we would consider general administrative work associated with the job, WTO:

- Became a specialised agency of the United Nations in 2003.
- Has established Crisis Response Mechanism – tsunamis, 9/11 etc.

- Has created the so-called Tourism Satellite Accounts to better measure the travel business. *(However, almost nothing from TSA is included in the travel data that WTO publishes, partly because few countries have implemented TSA. And although TSA includes outbound travel, this measure is still hardly enumerated by WTO.)*

There are other achievements claimed for Frangialli, but some we believe are little more than (honourable) proposals, but with no specific implementation activity remain proposals. These include Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, Sustainable Tourism–Elimination of Poverty, Davos Declaration Process on Climate Change.

- **Steven Rudnitsky**, 49, CEO Wyndham Hotel Group, left last month; no replacement as yet. He headed Cendant Hotels 2002–6, then became head of Wyndham after it was split from Cendant in 2006. Before 2000 he was primarily in the food business.



The company's chairman says Rudnitsky transformed Wyndham from a "domestic" franchise (meaning US, meaning the chairman still sees the company as a US business) into a "major global franchise and management company through the acquisition of world-class brands".

Well, not quite. The acquisition of 'world-class brands' – meaning primarily Ramada – was done some time earlier. Indeed, the fact that Wyndham with its 6550 hotels and 551,000 rooms is still hardly known outside the US – because it has no dominant brands – must surely be one reason Rudnitsky is going after only two years.

Rudnitsky is credited with "spearheading the acquisition of [the non-US Ramada company]..."; Cendant bought it from Marriott in 2004.

- **Jean-Cyril Spinetta**, 65, CEO of Air France and Air France KLM, leaving year-end. Replaced by Pierre-Henri Gourgeon, 62, deputy CEO.



Spinetta took over in 1999. His first move was to stop the planned privatisation of the airline, started by his predecessor, although he later opened some of the capital to private investors. He also oversaw the takeover of KLM, but failed in an earlier plan to buy Alitalia (that airline and its government owners are due to decide this month who, if anyone, will take it over; AF is a candidate).

Gourgeon has been with AF for 15 years, joining when he was 47 but becoming president only five years later. He was director-general of civil aviation in France 1990–93, and before that he was a military man.

His career suggests there will be no break in the nationalistic conservatism of the company. And his appointment shows that KLM is a subsidiary of Air France – the way we present it – and not a merger, as the companies like to present it. Nevertheless, it is a surprise that no effort was made to boost the Dutch participation. Spinetta said he proposed "... an internal solution that would guarantee continuity of governance..." Is KLM not internal?

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