

# MarketHub Europe 2025: HBX Group highlights the transformation of European tourism through technology, AI and hyper-personalisation

Submitted by clatruyols on Tue, 08/04/2025 - 09:18

**London, 4 April 2025-HBX Group** (HBX.SM), the leading independent B2B TravelTech marketplace, held its flagship event, MarketHub Europe 2025, this week, bringing together industry leaders to discuss the key trends shaping the future of travel in Europe. During the event, held in the Portuguese Algarve region, company executives and guest sector experts shared their views on Europe's role in the global landscape, advancements in technology and artificial intelligence, the rise of Gen Z and the growing importance of digital payments.

## **Technology, AI, and digital payments**

Paula Felstead, Chief Information Officer at HBX Group, highlighted the role of technology in data processing and trend prediction. *"Our platform processes more than 6.2 billion searches and 80,000 requests per second. Therefore, we have invested €200 million in technology in the last 3 years, with the aim of facilitating **faster, more reliable, and scalable connections** between our partners, whether they are travel product providers or distributors."*

The commitment to technological innovation is also reflected in the advanced use of Artificial Intelligence in operational processes. Therefore, Xabier Zabala, Chief Operations Officer of HBX Group, focused his presentation on the real-world applications of generative AI in travel operations. From "Olivia," the AI- powered customer service platform, to voice coaching systems, machine translations, and image fraud detection, Zabala demonstrated how **technology is empowering human talent and transforming key processes**.

Furthermore, this digital transformation also extends to the financial sector. **Daniel Nordholm, Chief Product & New Business Officer**, addressed the transformation of the payment ecosystem in tourism. *"The integration of smart payments and efficient treasury management are key to the sustainable growth of the sector"*, he stated.

## **Europe: A strategic market in full evolution**

Europe continues to consolidate its position as a key region for global tourism growth. **Destinations such as Portugal, Greece, and Croatia are leading the surge in international arrivals following the pandemic**, with the Algarve serving as an example of sustainable development and a comprehensive travel experience. *"The Algarve welcomed 5.2 million visitors in 2024, double the number ten years ago, and represents a model for a diversified, responsible destination connected to the new demands of travellers,"* Carlos Muñoz, Chief Commercial Officer and Deputy CEO at HBX Group, explained.

During his speech, Muñoz also highlighted that the global travel industry is valued at \$11 trillion and is growing twice as fast as the global economy. Furthermore, **the B2B travel market is projected to reach \$94 billion by 2032**, reinforcing the importance of strategic alliances.

At the same time, the **rise of experiential tourism and the arrival of new profiles such as digital nomads** are redefining the offerings throughout the region, with a growing focus on sustainability, authenticity, and technology.

Along these lines, Javier Cabrerizo, Chief Strategy & Transformation Officer at HBX Group, focused on the impact of Gen Z on the travel industry. Cabrerizo explained that, for them, travel is not just a form of leisure, but an essential part of their identity, a way to express themselves, connect, and share. He also emphasised that **Gen Z travellers seek authentic, personalised, and sustainable experiences**. They represent 30% of the global population and 40% of all consumers, and their way of travelling is redefining the rules of the game: they seek convenience, flexibility, and a seamless digital experience from start to finish. They are also heavy users of social media content, which becomes their primary source of inspiration and decision-making when planning. *"If I don't post it and no one sees it, did it really happen?"* he explains. They also value peace of mind: **more than 70% suffer from frequent anxiety, which is why they prioritise trips with support, insurance, and frictionless logistics**.

### **A new phase as a listed company**

The recent debut of HBX Group as a listed company in the Spanish Stock Market was also part of the conversation. Isabel Green, Director of Investor Relations, and Carla Stent, independent board member of the Group, highlighted **the role of governance and transparency as fundamental pillars following the IPO**. *"This milestone positions us to attract new investments and continue promoting our B2B model with a unique value proposition,"* said Stent.

MarketHub Europe consolidates its position as a leading event for thought leadership, industry collaboration, and trend analysis, reaffirming HBX Group's commitment to collaborative growth, responsible technology, and the future of global tourism.

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### **About HBX Group**

HBX Group is a leading global independent B2B travel technology marketplace that owns and operates Hotelbeds, Bedsonline, and Roiback. We offer a network of interconnected travel technology products and services to partners including online marketplaces, tour operators, travel advisors, airlines, loyalty programmes, destinations, and travel suppliers.

Our vision is to simplify the complex and fragmented travel industry through a combination of cloud-based technology solutions, curated data, and a broad portfolio of products designed to maximise revenue. HBX Group is present in 170 countries and employs more than 3,600 people worldwide. We are committed to making travel a force for good, creating a positive social and environmental impact.

HBX Group International PLC (HBX.SM) is listed on the Spanish Stock Exchange, ISIN:GB00BNXJB679.

### **More information:**

[www.hbxgroup.com](http://www.hbxgroup.com)

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