# MEADFA webinar paints optimistic picture

This week the Middle East and Africa Duty Free Association (MEADFA) hosted its first webinar of 2022, with a discussion of the future of travel retail.

The event, which welcomed over 200 participants, was moderated by John Hume, Managing Partner of Hume Brophy and someone knowledgeable of, and known in, the channel.

Speakers from different areas within the industry gave their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities as travel retail recovers and rebuilds after the pandemic that wreaked havoc worldwide for two years.

Speakers included Anna Marchesini (m1nd-set), Roger Jackson (SEVA) and Richard Gray (ARI Middle East), offering insights from the perspective of researcher, distributor and retailer, respectively.

Speaking after the event, MEADFA President Sherif Toulan said: "I am delighted with the turnout we had for this first webinar for 2022. The success of the various MEADFA events has shown that our industry is keen to regain its strong performance and profitability. It clearly demonstrates the interest and importance the travel retail sector has in the context of the recovery from the global Covid-19 pandemic.

"As we build back from the pandemic, we have seen consistent growth of international passengers in the region throughout 2021, to slowly approach Q1 2020 levels. This has been seen in key countries such as UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Morocco. Indeed, so far this year we have seen a sharp increase of Duty Free exclusive purchases amongst international travellers across the Middle East & Africa, up 59%."

Chair of the MEADFA Advocacy Committee Richard Gray said: "Today we saw some truly insightful perspectives shared from and to the entire travel retail value chain, and we all now have a greater understanding of the challenges we face. Only together can we rise to meet these challenges. But after seeing the strong support and commitment earlier today, I am confident our industry can and will adapt to these challenges and build back better because of it."