

Brussels, 20th May 2020

EUROPEAN COMMISSION GUIDELINES ARE PAVING THE WAY TO RECOVERY FOR THE EUROPEAN TOURISM SECTOR FROM THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The European Tourism Manifesto alliance, the voice of the European travel and tourism sector, has issued the following statement on the European Commission's guidance on how to safely resume travel and reboot Europe's tourism in 2020 and beyond.

European travel and tourism is one of the ecosystems most affected by the coronavirus crisis. The European Tourism Manifesto alliance welcomes the European Commission's adoption of a comprehensive package on Tourism and Transport¹ on 13 May 2020 which acknowledges the importance of the travel and tourism sector for the economy and employment in Europe, and it proposes a coordinated approach to the lifting of travel restrictions and safely and gradually re-establishing transportation links and tourism activities. This package represents a first and important step to facilitate travel in Europe, support the sector's recovery from this unprecedented crisis and enable a more sustainable tourism ecosystem in the future.

SAVING THE 2020 SUMMER SEASON IN EUROPE

We call on national governments to urgently follow the European Commission's recommendations to lift travel restrictions in a coordinated way and implement harmonised health and safety protocols.

As soon as the health situation allows, it is crucial to restart leisure and business travel in 2020 to save at least part of the summer season and support the millions of livelihoods that depend on our sector. However, we need a well-coordinated and timely approach across the EU to re-establish effective operations, remove travel barriers and re-build confidence in travel. Unilateral and fragmented measures should be avoided as they would only lead to confusion and disruption for travellers and businesses alike. WTTC² research shows that at least 6.4 million jobs will be impacted across the EU this year if a coordinated approach for the travel and tourism sector is not followed.

Governments should implement harmonised protocols for health and safety that seek to protect all travellers including those from vulnerable groups, senior travellers and people with disabilities or long-term health conditions, as well the workers providing services in travel and tourism.

The alliance remains open to work with the Commission and Member States to ensure that recommendations are turned into concrete actions that are workable and feasible for all players, big and small, and for all leisure and business travellers. In this regard, we commend the commitment already made by several EU governments to coordinate the lifting of border controls and work on a common understanding of health-related standards and procedures as published in a joint statement³ on 18 May 2020.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_854

² <https://wttc.org/News-Article/WTTC-welcomes-European-Commission-guidelines-to-safely-restart-Travel-Tourism>

³ Joint statement by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain - <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/coordinated-approach-restoring-freedom/2342740>

We ask governments to carefully reflect before deciding whether all arrivals need to self-isolate and before encouraging domestic tourism only.

Travellers will be deterred from embarking on trips of any kind if a blanket quarantine is imposed when they arrive at the destination of their choice and then again when going back to their original destination. According to a survey carried out by IATA⁴ in April 2020, 69% of recent travellers would not consider travelling if it involved a 14-day quarantine period. Quarantine requirements for travellers can be avoided if Member States follow the guidelines proposed by the European Commission.

We welcome the Commission's proposal to set up a dedicated website with a map combining real-time information related to tourism and we call for its swift launch.

Such a website should map information from Member States and stakeholders of the tourism value chain, including detailed and up-to-date information on the situation of the borders of all EU countries (air, land, sea borders), travel restrictions, public health and safety measures, and available tourism services including openings of tourist attractions and events across the EU. This will facilitate business planning as well as travel planning of prospective visitors.

However, businesses (especially microenterprises and SMEs) should not be burdened with a requirement to provide more information as they are fighting to survive and those who will open will be subject to additional workload to follow strict health and safety procedures.

With the holiday season about to start in a few weeks, this website must be operative as soon as possible, even if with – initially – limited content.

SUPPORT MEASURES FOR THE SECTOR

We welcome the Commission's proposed financial measures which shall be adapted to the needs of players of all sizes and made available to all types of workers.

The European Commission's communication acknowledges the sector is in a critical situation and proposes several financial rescue programmes. The Commission and Member States shall make sure that also small businesses (such as microenterprises) can easily access and benefit from this financial support.

Moreover, the SURE mechanism should be implemented as soon as possible as workers cannot wait any longer. This instrument must cover all workers, including those with non-standard forms of employment who are so far widely excluded from short-term arrangements or other forms of state wage compensation schemes.

We urge EU, national and regional governments to continue to aid and assist the tourism ecosystem to overcome this crisis and strengthen its resilience in the long run. Support for leisure and business travel must be included in recovery plans and actions of all affected economies.

Destinations, businesses, private owners, workers (including students and people with disabilities), entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals need to get through this devastating period and prepare tomorrow's tourism. Availability of liquidity remains a big issue. Therefore, further action from the EU and governments including direct grants is fundamental to help them during the recovery phase and after.

⁴ <https://www.iata.org/en/pressroom/pr/2020-05-13-03/>



Once the COVID-19 pandemic has been brought under control, governments should focus on attracting all types of visitors back, from markets worldwide (including group travel, low-income and disabled travellers), and offering them reassurance that it is safe to explore and visit their destinations.

To activate a prompt recovery, it is crucial to reinstate trust and confidence in travelling and rebuild the demand by supporting destinations and tourist attractions, increasing budgets for promotion, marketing and product development purposes, and by supporting public-private partnerships.

We believe that the next step shall be a proposal from the European Commission on a wider economic package for travel and tourism recovery to benefit all workers, including those with non-standard forms of employment, as well as economic operators of all sizes.

TOURISM OF TOMORROW

We applaud the European Commission's vision to create a sustainable future for the travel and tourism ecosystem, which is in line with our long-established policy priorities.

This crisis creates a downturn, but also an opportunity for change, for a new beginning in tourism across Europe. We shall use this opportunity to create a more resilient and sustainable destination Europe in the future, which is better for our communities and our visitors and all those providing tourism and travel services.

This is why the European Tourism Manifesto alliance endorses the Commission's ambition to strengthen the green and digital transformation of EU tourism and maintain Europe as the world's leading tourism destination in terms of value, quality, sustainability, and innovation. This new long-term vision is in line with the policy priorities set out by the alliance long before this crisis began - remaining competitive, further digitalisation of the sector, good governance, joint promotion of Europe as a tourist destination, sustainability, improving skills and mutual recognition of qualifications, reducing seasonality and fostering connectivity.

We are ready to work with the European Commission to accelerate the transformation to the tourism of tomorrow.

The organisations of the European Tourism Manifesto alliance look forward to continue working with, and supporting the European Commission, in identifying additional measures needed to guarantee a full-speed recovery of the sector from this unprecedented crisis. We are ready to contribute to the European tourism convention regarding the European tourism of tomorrow and jointly start building a roadmap 2050 towards a sustainable, innovative, and resilient European tourism ecosystem ('European Agenda for Tourism 2050').

Tourism is an engine for economic recovery. However, it needs continuous support and strategic policy integration in order to contribute to the recovery and growth of economies. Working together is key to ensure that we have common rules and offer certainty to travellers.

The **European Tourism Manifesto alliance** gathers more than 60 European public and private organisations, covering the whole tourism value chain and beyond. The alliance calls on the European Union for action on key policy priorities for the tourism sector. For more information, please visit tourismmanifesto.eu.