

EUROPE'S TRAVEL & TOURISM SECTOR CALLS ON EU GOVERNMENTS TO CHART RESTART PLAN IN TIME FOR SUMMER

Over 60 travel and tourism organisations unveil concrete recommendations for re-opening travel & tourism in Europe, including creation of Commission-led Task Force to restore freedom of movement.

The European Tourism Manifesto alliance, a group of more than 60 public and private travel and tourism organisations and the voice of the sector in Europe, today unveiled a series of joint recommendations for EU Member States on how to relaunch travel and tourism in Europe in time for summer 2021. At the heart of the recommendations is the development of an EU roadmap for safely restoring travel once countries emerge from national lockdowns to be developed and implemented in close cooperation with industry and social partners.

A dedicated Commission Task Force for the restoration of free movement of people would lead the development and implementation of the roadmap – and provide ongoing assessments based on risk and the latest scientific data. The goal would be to identify the conditions and scenarios under which current restrictions to international travel could be loosened and ultimately lifted across Europe and beyond. As a result, the roadmap will need to be agile and updated on a regular basis.

The joint [recommendations](#) laid out by the European Tourism Manifesto alliance were shared with EU governments ahead of two crucial discussions – a videoconference of the European leaders on 25-26 February and an extraordinary meeting of Tourism Ministers on 1 March. The recommendations call on the Commission-led Task Force to track the progress and impact of ongoing vaccination campaigns as well as mitigation measures such as testing and quarantine, based on risk levels within the EU and internationally.

“Our goal is for Europe to return to its place as the leading tourist destination in the world – and a safe one. As EU vaccination programmes progress and protect the most vulnerable citizens, we must jointly prepare for the restart of travel. There is simply no time to lose – preparations on a common approach should begin now, in order to restore public confidence by the summer. Our recommendations detail a joint way forward towards restoring travel & tourism and freedom of movement on behalf of European citizens. We look forward to working with EU leaders to put this plan into action as soon as possible”, state the authors of the paper.

A summary of the recommendations to EU Member States includes:

1) Creation of an EU Task Force to restore freedom of movement of people:

- A Commission-led Task Force for the restoration of free movement of people, to develop and implement a travel restart plan and recovery roadmap.

2) Coordination of travel restrictions:

- An improved and effective European coordination of travel restrictions and requirements is urgently needed to facilitate the restart of travel and tourism (9.5% of EU GDP) and offer predictability to travellers as well as to travel and tourism businesses, and their workers.

3) Testing: A harmonised EU framework for travel-related testing should encompass the following:

- Member States to ensure affordable testing, sufficient capacity, mutual recognition of tests between Member States and continuous work at international level for the mutual recognition of tests.
- Validation of the use of antigen and other rapid tests for travel and tourism purposes¹ is urgently needed, alongside regular assessment of the accepted tests as test efficacy improves (LAMP² for instance).

4) E-Health certificates: EU coordination of national initiatives is urgently needed to avoid having 27 different certificates covering testing, vaccination and/or immunity:

- DG SANTE must take the lead and work with DG MOVE and DG GROW on an interoperable European system that would enable a fast and digital verification of travellers' vaccination and/or test status.
- Vaccination, or vaccination certificates, should not be mandatory in order to travel (once vaccination is more widely available), but vaccinated travellers or those with proven immunity should be exempted from entry bans, testing and quarantine restrictions in accordance with the latest scientific insights on the reduced ability of those vaccinated to still spread the virus.

5) Coordinated reopening of tourism activities: Once the health situation allows it, it is crucial to restart tourism and leisure activities alongside re-establishing freedom of movement for EU citizens.

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Note to editors

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.

The Secretariat and Chairmanship of the alliance are currently held by the European Travel Commission (ETC). For any enquiries, please contact us via <https://tourismmanifesto.eu/contact/>.

¹ The specificity and sensitivity of rapid antigen tests is now over 90%. It is also important to underline that the goal is rather to screen positive cases rather than diagnose, therefore reducing the risk of the travelling population to spread the virus further.

In addition, the Health Security Committee published on 17 February 2021 "A common list of COVID-19 rapid antigen tests, including those whose test results are mutually recognised, and a common standardised set of data to be included in COVID-19 test result certificates".

² Loop-mediated isothermal amplification test, LAMP