

Article – MEPs want a safer and more sustainable tourism after Covid



Tourism and Covid-19

Tourism is one of the sectors affected the most by the Covid-19 pandemic. It employs about 27 million people and represents around 10% of the EU's gross domestic products. Six million jobs are currently at risk. Europe, the world's top tourist destination, welcomed 66% fewer international tourists in the first half of 2020 and 97% fewer in the second half.

Read more: [Covid-19: EU support for the tourism industry](#)

Need for a new tourism strategy in Europe

MEPs are set to call for a new European strategy to make tourism cleaner, safer and more sustainable as well as get it back on its feet, after the pandemic, including a common vaccination certificate.

“With summer just around the corner, we want to avoid past errors and put in place coordinated and uniform EU measures, such as a protocol of tests before departure, a certificate of vaccination, a sanitary seal, to facilitate travel, with no costs for citizens.” said report author [Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar](#) (EPP, Portugal) .

Financial assistance

Continued short-term financial support is essential to the survival of the sector, the report says, urging EU countries to include travel and tourism in their Covid recovery plans. It also calls for public and private investment in the digitalisation and overall modernisation of the sector and says countries should consider temporarily reducing VAT rates on travel and tourism services,

Common vaccination certificate

In order to re-establish freedom of movement, the report calls a common vaccination certificate, which could become an alternative to PCR tests and quarantine requirements once vaccines are available for everyone and there is sufficient scientific evidence that vaccinated people do not transmit the virus. Quarantine should remain the instrument of last resort, according to the report.

On 17 March the European Commission proposed a [digital green certificate](#) in line with the suggestion in the report.

Making tourism more sustainable

The report says the pandemic has shifted consumer preferences to greener options that bring them closer to nature. It calls for a roadmap to develop more sustainable forms of tourism to reduce the environmental footprint of the sector.

Other proposals in the report include:

- An EU hygiene certification seal, certifying minimum Covid-19 virus prevention and control standards to help restore consumer trust in tourism and travel
- A new EU gency for tourism.