

Press release – MEPs demand safe and clean travel



The resolution on an EU strategy for sustainable tourism, adopted by 577 votes to 31, and 80 abstentions on Thursday, notes that the COVID-19 outbreak has paralysed the EU's tourism sector, with 6 out of 27 million jobs at risk. MEPs highlight that the tourism and travel sectors account for around 10% of the EU's GDP. They therefore urge EU countries to include them in their recovery plans and to consider temporarily reducing VAT on these services.

'Safe and clean' tourism

Due to the pandemic, travellers want "safe, clean and more sustainable tourism", Parliament says, calling on member states to fully implement common criteria for safe travel without delay. These should include an EU Health and Safety protocol for testing before departure, and establish that quarantine requirements should be applied only as a last resort.

A common vaccination certificate should facilitate travel and act as an alternative to PCR tests and quarantine requirements, MEPs say. A new certificate should follow privacy and data protection rules and could start being used once there is sufficient evidence that those who have been vaccinated do not transmit the virus.

The resolution also urges the Commission to introduce an EU hygiene certification seal, which could certify minimum COVID-19 virus prevention and control standards and could help restore consumer trust in the tourism and travel sectors.

Beyond the pandemic

MEPs welcome the '[Re-open EU](#)' portal and urge EU countries to send clear information to the Commission when they apply or lift restrictions on free movement.

They also stress that the Commission must look beyond the pandemic and replace the 2010 strategy on EU tourism to maintain Europe's standing as a leading destination. The text finally calls on the Commission to set up a European Agency for Tourism, which will support the tourism ecosystem, promote the European brand, provide the EU with the latest data on tourism, assist small businesses to access EU funding and help the tourism sector to prepare for future crises.

Quote

"This report calls for a truly European effort to relaunch tourism in the continent's worst-affected regions. The vaccination certificate and sanitary seal have been taken on board, but what is needed now is proper European coordination for testing regimes that do not impose additional costs on European citizens. The EU needs to urgently speed up the roll out of vaccines across Europe and to put in place proper financial instruments to support the green and digital transition", said EP rapporteur [Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar \(EPP, PT\)](#).