

Resolution on transport and tourism in 2020 and beyond

2020/2649(RSP) - 17/06/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 587 votes to 32, with 46 abstentions, a resolution on transport and tourism in 2020 and beyond.

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL groups.

The tourism sector employs 22.6 million people, accounting for 11.2% of total EU employment; it contributed 9.5% to EU GDP in 2019 and is - together with transport and culture - one of the major economic sectors hardest hit by COVID-19.

European tourism and transport recovery plans following the COVID-19 outbreak

Parliament called for rapid, short-term and long-term support for the transport and tourism sectors to ensure their survival and competitiveness. It also stressed that the current crisis represented a historic opportunity to modernise tourism in the European Union, making it more sustainable and more accessible to people with disabilities.

Members insisted on the need to support and promote tourist areas in the EU, in particular through attractive offers for visitors, provided that the epidemiological and socio-health situation in the various areas allows it. This involves in particular:

- full respect and implementation, both by businesses and their customers, of health and hygiene requirements and health regulations, such as social distancing measures, in order to guarantee safe conditions for visitors;
- the definition of uniform assessment criteria throughout the EU in order to highlight the areas that represent safe environments for inbound and outbound tourism;
- the application of the highest levels of safety and security, possibly using interoperable digital technologies to support the travel industry and tourists themselves, while respecting the protection of personal data;
- the development of an early warning system that alerts tourists to any potential health threats at their destination, so that quarantine and evacuation protocols are immediate and effective.

The Commission is called on to:

- support the ‘restart of tourism’ with a recommendation to highlight ‘sustainable tourism’;
- prevent the application of any discriminatory and non-epidemiological measures resulting from bilateral agreements between Member States (‘tourist corridors’), which would aggravate the economic situation of Member States already particularly affected by the health crisis, and in particular their tourism sector;
- assess the possibility of lifting restrictions on non-essential travel at the external borders of the Union, without hampering public health and safety, taking into account the epidemiological situation in each third

country and working towards mutual recognition of protective measures against COVID-19, in particular in the aviation sector;

- create a European safety certification seal and clear health protocols, ensuring that within the Union, travel establishments and tour operators comply with the highest health and safety standards;
- launch an EU communication campaign on travel and tourism, including an EU-wide information application, which would aim to promote travel within the EU;
- cooperate with Member States and stakeholders to develop guidelines and action plans to prepare for a potential second wave of the pandemic.

Parliament called for a mechanism to be established at EU level to set a safety and security threshold, based on scientific evidence and reliable and uniform data, for the lifting or introduction of travel restrictions.

Enhanced solidarity and coordination in the EU tourism sector

Stressing the importance of gradually moving towards a genuine European tourism policy, Parliament called on the Commission to:

- adopt, in 2021, a new strategy and action plan for EU tourism in order to maintain Europe's position as a leading destination by means of a 'EU tourism brand'; this strategy shall support the green transition of the sector by adapting processes and renewing infrastructure and facilities;
- give the tourism sector the necessary importance in the EU Recovery plan and to issue guidelines to ensure rapid access to funding without placing a disproportionate administrative burden on current or future programmes;
- urgently support businesses and workers, including self-employed workers, in the transport, culture and tourism sectors, in particular SMEs, as well as macro-enterprises and family-run businesses, in managing their cash-flow, in order to help them safeguard employment and reduce unnecessary administrative burdens.

Towards a future-proof European tourism sector

Parliament called on the Commission to:

- promote sustainable modes of transport, for example by providing increased support for tourist cycling infrastructure and night trains;
- carry out fitness checks of the existing infrastructure network and propose immediate additional measures for the least developed and remote regions;
- explore the feasibility and potential benefits of a crisis management mechanism for the tourism sector;
- present a new European programme for inclusive tourism offering vulnerable social groups the possibility of using their national tourism vouchers with partner establishments in other Member States;
- promote rural tourism and agro tourism as well as health tourism;

- facilitate access to EU funding for tourism stakeholders, in particular small accommodation facilities, by ensuring that funding supports the transition to more sustainable tourism products and services and contributes to out-of-seasons travel and the geographical distribution of tourism flows.