ECTAA position

Strategy for a recovery of travel and tourism

C19 has had an unprecedented impact on people's lives and economies. A glimmer of hope surfaced with the development and gradual roll-out of the vaccine programmes. They will provide protection to the most vulnerable population groups and help our health systems better cope with the C19 crisis.

However, we cannot wait until all people are vaccinated to be able to travel again. This would shatter the hopes of many people wanting to travel and cripple an entire industry already at the brink of bankruptcy.

ECTAA is thus calling on the EU and national decision-makers to **prepare an EU roadmap for return to travel in time for spring and summer season**. We need to give travellers and the industry a **perspective when and under which conditions travel can resume** as vaccinations are progressively rolled out.

From ECTAA's perspective, the following elements need to be taken into consideration when preparing the recovery plan for travel and tourism – see below. To note, ECTAA's call for a roadmap is in line with the calls made by other European travel and tourism stakeholders[1].

1. Recovery plan

- Europe needs a **coordinated recovery plan** for travel, that should **focus on harmonisation, transparency and predictability** for citizens and businesses.
- Such a recovery plan should be **developed jointly by decision-makers with** the help of **the scientific community and industry stakeholders**.
- The plan should contain a **timeframe or milestones**: it should either indicate specific times by which certain actions should be completed (e.g. vaccine roll-out, harmonisation of health certificate) or determine 'trigger points' (dictated by the scientific evidence) to move from one level to the next.
- The plan should be **agile** enough to reflect developments, for example new or improved tests, new scientific insights on effectiveness of vaccination, etc.
- The recovery plan should be **comprehensive** and cover all aspects of travel and tourism, from transport (all modes), to accommodation, catering services, recreational activities, attractions and other tourism services.

2. Travel restrictions

- **Travel restrictions within Europe must be coordinated**. All Member States should be strongly encouraged to apply the same classification of risk areas as determined by the ECDC

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[1] See Tourism Manifesto alliance call on EU governments to chart restart plan in time for summer

colour-coded map and the definition of a colour zone (at origin and destination) should trigger the same consequences for travel restrictions.

- **Travel restrictions** must be based on the epidemiological situation in the destination in a **risk-based approach** - **Blanket travel bans or blanket negative travel advisories should be avoided**.
- The assessment of the epidemiological situation should distinguish between mainland and island destinations, which may have a completely different epidemiological evolution.
- As soon as possible, the **same criteria for assessing risk areas** in the EU should be applied for non-EU countries to **open up international travel.**
- The list of non-EU countries, for which the EU recommends lifting the travel restrictions, should be used to guide Member States in determining their **travel advisories**. If it is good for the third-country nationals to come to Europe, it must also be good for EU nationals to travel to these non-EU countries.
- The system of **assessing risk** needs to take into consideration the development of the vaccination programmes and new scientific insight into transmission of the virus. For example, travel restrictions should be reassessed in light of new scientific evidence that vaccinated persons are less likely to transmit enough virus to cause severe disease.

3. Testing

- The EU should develop a **harmonised testing protocol for travel within the EU** to ensure a common approach and mutual recognition of tests.
- The cost and processing time of tests can be a real deterrent to travel. Tests used in the context of travel should thus be **cheap, reliable and fast to process.** This is particularly relevant when several tests are required for a trip (and return).
- The testing protocol should be **regularly reviewed to assess and validate new tests** that prove acceptable in the context of travel.
- The EU should agree a **common minimum age for tests**.
- **Less invasive tests** should be considered for children.
- In view of the importance of family travel in the summer, Member States should **clearly communicate on the testing requirements for children**.

4. Vaccination and health certificates

- **Vaccination must not be mandatory to be able to travel**, as there are a great number of people who cannot be vaccinated, such as children.
- If governments or travel companies require travellers to be C19 negative, there should be an **option to prove** this by means of vaccination certificate or test or presence of antibodies after C19 recovery (not precluding other possible evidence in future).
- **Vaccination should facilitate travel** by lifting travel restrictions.
- There is a need to **standardise test and vaccination certificates** to ensure trust and mutual recognition of certificates, avoid fraud and language barriers. This should not prevent countries that are ready to go ahead with their plans to implement vaccination certificates.
- Health certificates **should be digital**, but a paper version should be acceptable in the beginning.
- **Digital solutions** to provide evidence of test / vaccine are already being developed and tested. The emergence of different solutions highlights the need for **common standards to ensure interoperability**.

5. Communication to travellers

Effective communication on what travellers require to enter to a destination (and return home) and what services they may expect in destination is key to regaining consumer confidence. Thus, communication to the travellers should meet the following requirements:

- **Easy accessibility** to travel restrictions and requirements from official websites.

- **Up-to-date information** on official websites, apps, other sources.

- **Reasonable advance notice, preferably 5 days,** of any new / changed travel restrictions or requirements to travellers and travel enterprises.

- **Information provided on the Re-open EU website / app must always be complete and up-to-date** and should include a link to the official website.