

eu travel tech

eu travel tech position on the recovery of the travel and tourism sector

As key contributors to the travel and tourism ecosystem, eu travel tech members have experienced first-hand the impact of COVID-19 on the European travel industry.

As we move forward, it is critical to identify and implement the most effective instruments for the economic recovery and the green transition of the sector. eu travel tech members continue to support the travel and tourism ecosystem as well as policymakers with concrete actions that will accelerate the recovery of the industry:

1. Share travel information and insights with select policymakers to support data-driven decision making, identify recovery trends, and promote the diversification of European destinations;
2. Continue to invest in, develop and adopt innovative and digital technologies that drive demand to European destinations, particularly for the many SMEs that are the backbone of the tourism industry, and support the global competitiveness of Europe as a tourism destination
3. Support passengers and travel suppliers alike through flexible management of bookings affected by COVID- 19;
4. Use our technology and our reach to provide consistent and coordinated communication to travellers to facilitate their journeys and enhance their experience.

A close cooperation between the public and private sector is crucial to supporting tourism recovery. We are playing our role to stimulate and bring back demand. We heavily depend on governments putting in place the right frameworks so that consumers have the confidence to start booking and travelling again. This is where we see a strong role for EU alignment and coordination. We strongly urge EU coordination in clarifying conditions for cross-border travel. A clear and accessible framework is essential to restoring consumer confidence in travel.

1. Different options for restoring consumer confidence include:

- Testing

While we very much welcome the announcement of the Commission of a European testing protocol for travellers and a common approach to quarantines, we believe that for testing to be effective, it is important to include the following:

- o Sufficient testing capacity in airports, bus terminals, stations and any other strategic travel locations;
- o Deployment of rapid and cheap testing methods, such as antigen tests, for all travellers;
- o Lifting of quarantine and movement restrictions as soon as a negative test result is received;

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- Vaccination
The recent announcements on the COVID-19 vaccines' candidates are undoubtedly great news for the whole world. Furthermore, it presents a unique opportunity for the recovery of the travel and tourism ecosystem. That is why we urge policymakers to immediately start efforts to agree on a coordinated and consistent approach, both regionally and globally. Important questions such as whether the vaccine will be a mandatory requirement for travel need to be tackled early on. We also support the innovation and progress that has already been made by digital apps on digital health cards, such as the Common Trust Framework and CommonPass, which are great examples of the power of harnessing tech for a common good and purpose. Stakeholders and EU Member States will need to work closely together to ensure consistency and predictability for travelers and for the industry. It is also crucial that the EU remains united and works with its counterparts around the world on a global approach – without it, the future of international travel will remain uncertain in the coming years.
- Safe travel corridors
We have witnessed the success of a number of 'safe travel corridors' across Europe (Mallorca – Germany, for example). This has an immediate and positive effect on the tourism industry, signaling to customers that traveling is safe. We urge the European Commission to work with European and global destinations to create more safe corridors. This is especially important for business traffic as we encourage the reopening of safe corridors between key business markets (US – EU, China – EU, Japan – EU).
- EU and/ or national marketing funds to support European destinations
Creation of EU and/or national marketing funds to support European destinations to progressively attract more visitors. The EU and Member States should work together on a solution to ensure complementarity of public funds and private sector investments to support tourism recovery.

2. Continued prioritisation of tourism through a travel and tourism budget

Any fiscal and monetary support must be open to all parts of the tourism value chain; going forward, the European Commission should establish a clear budget line for travel and tourism exclusively.

Here are some ideas we have for how EU funds could be used to support a safe, seamless and greener tourism sector:

- i. Touchless travel can reignite consumer confidence. The role of biometrics that reduce friction caused by physical touchpoints should be a priority.

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- ii. Supporting SMEs, including accommodations to integrate sustainable practices into their business.
- iii. Multimodal travel could be a great stimulus for the whole European travel ecosystem, and would contribute to a greener and more digital industry. However, it will remain a political objective unless concrete regulatory obligations on travel suppliers to share data with intermediaries are enforced.