

Common: European Commission presents Tourism and Transport Package to achieve an organised reopening of the EU Member States

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【概要 : Summary】

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, almost all EU Member States have implemented individual measures and temporarily reintroduced internal border controls to confine the further spread of the virus. Therefore, the EU's external borders but also internal borders between the 26 Schengen Area states have temporarily closed their borders to non-essential travel and reintroduced passport and other types of border controls at their mutual borders. This meant that millions of European citizens were unable to cross the borders for work, education or pleasure, with many citizens being also separated from their families and friends for months.

The scale of the restrictions is unprecedented in the transport sector, but most severely the tourism sector is experiencing the full impact of the lockdown measures. Since the EU Member States have shown some lack of coordination in the introduction of lockdown measures and the closing of their borders, the European Commission has urged them to better coordinate the reopening. It is the European Commission's intention to at least encourage the EU Member States to better coordinate the exit measures at EU level, while taking into account the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on the Single Market. However, this is no easy task for the Commission since the EU institutions are

not responsible for infection control or tourism, since all decisions regarding the health and tourism sectors are in the discretion of the individual Member States.

The European Commission is trying to coordinate the EU Member States decisions by giving some guidelines or recommendations. On 29 April 2020, the European Commission adopted a package of measures that aims at providing significant relief to the transport sector by removing administrative burdens, and increasing flexibility. With this package, the European Commission presents a number of guidelines and recommendations to the Member States in order to help them gradually lifting travel restrictions and to safely reopen the tourism industry. Following this package, the European Commission has also prepared a tourism and transport package to save the EU's tourism sector. The European Commission adopted a comprehensive strategy on 13 May 2020, which aims to make sure governments reopen for tourism business in a coordinated manner. The guidelines advise the Member States to replace blanket restrictions to free movement by more targeted measures, among others. The Commission proposes a phased and coordinated approach, by firstly lifting restrictions between the Member States or areas with approximately similar epidemiological situations, if a generalised lifting of

restrictions is not justified by the health situation. The guidelines consist of general principles applicable to all transport services and specific recommendations designed to address the characteristics of each transport mode and to be realistic and practical. The guidelines provide a common framework to support authorities, stakeholders, social partners and businesses operating in the transport sector during the gradual re-establishment of connectivity. They aim to provide guidance on how to progressively restore transport services, connectivity and free movement as swiftly as the health situation allows it.

【記事 : Article】

1. The COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the tourism and transport sector and phasing out of lockdown measures

The scale of disruption to global tourism due to the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented and has affected about 96% of destinations in global tourism have implemented travel restrictions in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Also many EU Member States have restricted the free movement of people and set up a prohibition of non-essential travel. All EU Member States commonly closed their external borders to third countries. However, they also temporarily reintroduced border controls at EU internal borders in March 2020 and closed their borders for non-essential travel. This severely affected also Europe's passport-free European Schengen zone, as European countries closed their national borders to stop the further spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to this uncoordinated lockdown between EU Member States to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, on 13 March 2020, the Commission published a Communication COM (2020) 112 final in order to give a coordinated economic response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Furthermore, since not only the movement of people but also freight transport had been affected by the lockdown and the closing of borders within the Schengen Area, the European Commission published a

Communication on the implementation of the Green Lanes in freight transport (C (2020) 1897 final) on 23 March 2020 in order to improve the border management to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services in the EU.

Due to the COVID-19 related travel restrictions, nearly 90% of flights had been cancelled, which caused the grounding of nearly the entire fleet of European airlines. More than half of the EU's businesses in the tourism sector are located in the Member States Italy, Spain and France, which were also the European countries hit worst by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The European Commission wants the EU Member States to coordinate the exist strategies from the lockdown and to lift travel restrictions and border controls once the border regions' epidemiological situation improves sufficiently and social-distancing rules are widely and responsibly applied. The Commission calls for the Member States to notify each other and the Commission about their planned measures for a gradual reopening and presented the Joint European Roadmap to lifting COVID-19 containment measures and recommendations to EU Member States on how to manage easing their lockdown measures while restarting the economy.

On 21 April 2020, the European Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee urged the Commission to come up with a European action plan to help the tourism sector overcome the COVID-19 crisis. In their debate with Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton, MEPs reiterated that the tourism sector needs specific measures in the COVID-19 crisis and a targeted roadmap. In particular, considering the summer holiday time, the MEPs highlighted that clarity was needed for travel during the summer months.

On 29 April 2020, the European Commission adopted a package of measures to support the aviation, rail, maritime, inland navigation and road sectors. The proposals are related to the postponement of the transposition period of the 4th Railway Package,

aviation relief, ports relief, and the postponement of the prolongation of the validity of certificates, licences and authorisations among others.

On 13 May 2020, the European Commission presented guidelines and recommendations in a Tourism and Transport Package in order to coordinate a support for the European tourism sector and transport sector to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic related lockdown. The travel, transport, accommodation, food, recreation or culture, contribute to almost 10% of EU GDP and provide a key source of employment and income in numerous European regions.

In a response to the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns on the Tourism and Transport sector, the Commission is looking into measures that could help to restoring the save reintroduction of the freedom of movement and the lifting internal border controls, which are the most important preconditions for a recovery of the European tourism sector. If a generalised lifting of restrictions is not justified by the health situation, the Commission proposes a phased and coordinated approach that starts by lifting restrictions between areas or Member States with sufficiently similar epidemiological situations.

2. The European Commission's considerations for lifting restrictions

The European Commission has no decision-making power regarding the re-opening of internal borders or the tourism sector. Furthermore, the Commission cannot decide when some EU Member States will re-open for tourism. Although it is expected that the EU Member States will progressively lift their restrictions and re-open their borders, it will depend on the different situation of each individual country. While the Commission will need to accept this uncoordinated approach, it sees its task in helping the Member States and business to get prepared. Restoring the free movement of people in Europe and opening internal borders is crucial to rescue the 2020 summer season while millions of jobs are at stake in the tourism sector. It needs to be set up

health protocols for the tourism sector. This is important for the tourists to give them reassurance to find the same level of precaution and preparedness in all the EU's destinations for holidays.

On 13 May 2020, the European Commission presented a package on the future of tourism and transport in the EU. The Commission's guidance aims at offering people the chance to get some summer vacation and as soon as the health situation allows. People should be able to travel in their own EU country or across borders, under the precondition that the needed safety and precautionary measures are in place. Where a Member State decides to lift its restrictions on movement to and from another Member States, or as regards regions or areas of either such Member State, this must apply, without discrimination, to all EU citizens and to all residents of that Member State regardless of their nationality, and should apply to all parts of the Union in a similar epidemiological situation.

The Commission Package on Tourism and Transport in 2020 and beyond is composed of an overall strategy, three guidelines and a recommendation to help EU countries gradually lift travel restrictions, allow businesses to reopen and ensure that people in Europe can benefit from a safe and relaxing summer after months of confinement.

The progressive restoration of transport services and connectivity will be fully dependent on the approach to travel restrictions, on epidemiological assessments, as well as on expert medical advice on necessary health and sanitary protection and precautions.

While a generalised lifting of restrictions would be desirable if the health situation were sufficiently positive across the EU, the Commission anticipates that a staged and coordinated approach is necessary. Travelling abroad will depend on the evolution of the public health situation in Member States. The approach must also be flexible, including the possibility to reintroduce certain measures if the health situation requires.

The Commission invited the EU Member States to engage in a process of re-opening unrestricted cross-border movement within the EU on the basis of 3 criteria:

- (1) Epidemiological, notably focusing on areas and Member States where the situation is improving, based on the regional map being developed by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control;
- (2) The ability to apply containment measures (e.g. physical distancing, hygiene) throughout the whole journey, including at border crossings and;
- (3) Economic and social considerations, prioritising cross-border movement in key areas of health, social and economic activity.

The lifting of restrictions at borders in the first phase between regions or Member States with similar epidemiological situations does not only concern neighbouring Member States. When restrictions are lifted between two regions, the same treatment should be extended to all regions in Europe where the health situation is comparable. The European Commission guidelines on resuming virus-disrupted transport links do not address whether airlines should block out the middle-seat of aircraft or not. In order to keep a close eye on the progress of the disease and quickly identify any hotspots, Commissioner for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age Margrethe Vestager stated the various contact-tracing apps being worked on by European countries to monitor the spread of COVID-19 would have to work across Europe.

The Commission is proposing a gradual approach to lifting travel restriction, comprised of three phases.

In phase 0, several travel restrictions are in place for non-essential travel, but Member States should still allow workers, in particular transport, frontier, posted and seasonal workers, and service providers to cross borders and have unhindered access to their place of work- especially for essential services and passage of goods. In phase 1, travel restrictions and border controls should be gradually lifted throughout the EU starting between

regions, areas and Member States with a positively evolving and sufficiently similar epidemiological situation. During this phase, smooth transit should be facilitated for professional and for personal reasons as well as for tourism.

During phase 2, all coronavirus related restrictions and controls at the internal borders should be lifted, while keeping the necessary health measures in place. Travel for all purposes should be permitted throughout the EU.

3. The Commission's tourism and transport package

The overall strategy on the recovery of tourism in 2020 and beyond is the general communication of the Commission, entitled "Communication on tourism and transport in 2020 and beyond" COM (2020) 550 final. This communication aims at providing measures and recommendations for a recovery of the tourism and transport sector. The COM (2020) 550 final (Chapeau Communication) is accompanied by a package of measures, providing recommendations for a phased lifting of restrictions to free movement, including the reopening of internal borders and lifting of internal border controls. It includes a guidance on transport, the save resuming of tourism services including the Guidance on tourism, in particular hospitality. Finally, the package addresses the liquidity crunch and measures to rebuild consumer confidence, including a Recommendation on vouchers. The common approach includes the "Communication from the Commission. COVID-19: Towards a phased and coordinated approach for restoring freedom of movement and lifting internal border controls" (C(2020) 3250 final) and intends to support the restoring of free movement and lifting restrictions at EU internal borders in a gradual and coordinated way.

The framework "Communication from the Commission. COVID-19: Guidelines on the progressive restoration of transport services and connectivity" (C(2020) 3139 final) supports the gradual re-establishment of transport while guaranteeing the safety of

passengers and personnel.

The recommendation of the Commission entitled “Commission Recommendation of 13.5.2020 on vouchers offered to passengers and travellers as an alternative to reimbursement for cancelled package travel and transport services in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic” (C(2020) 3125 final) aims to make travel vouchers an attractive alternative to a cash reimbursement for consumers. The EU consumers have a right to a cash refund, but many companies will come under financial pressure. If customers accepted vouchers, instead of cash refunds, companies could avoid a liquidity crunch. Accordingly, the Commission adopted a recommendation on how to make these vouchers more attractive and to make them a viable and attractive alternative to reimbursement for cancelled trips. Carriers and travel operators could give passengers and travellers an attractive and reliable alternative to a cash refund.

Finally, the Commission proposes criteria for restoring tourism activities safely and gradually and for developing health protocols for hospitality establishments such as hotels. In its “Communication for the Commission: COVID-19: EU Guidance for the progressive resumption of tourism services and for health protocols in hospitality establishments” (C (2020) 3251 final), the Commission gives guidance based on the advice of the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC) for gradually restoring the tourism and transport in EU Member States. The Commission will work to ensure that measures taken in Member States are compatible, coordinated and mutually accepted across borders and between regions. This will give people more freedom, safety and certainty to travel. These Guidelines also address how to protect the health of transport workers and passengers, and minimise the risk of infections at transport hubs and in vehicles across all modes. Taking into account the development of epidemiological circumstances and changing connectivity needs, Member States will need to adjust measures

proactively to ensure the right balance between protecting public health and restoring transport services, in relation to other economic activities, such as tourism. The principle for safe and gradual restoration of tourism activities in C (2020)3251 include also that sufficient health system capacity is in place for local people and tourists. This would be especially important on a regional level, for tourism regions that can expect higher rates of visitors, such as resorts, areas close to beaches, landmarks, etc., which may not be necessarily close to healthcare infrastructure.

Finally, the European Commission will organise, as soon as the COVID-19 pandemic situation will allow, a European tourism convention, in order to reflect - together with EU institutions, the industry, regions and cities and stakeholders - about the European tourism and jointly start building a roadmap 2050 towards a sustainable, innovative and resilient European tourism ecosystem (“European Agenda for Tourism 2050”).

According to the European Commission Vice-President Margrethe Vestager, the Tourism and Transport Package of the European Commission is a package of guidance and recommendations, to coordinate a safe return to travel and tourism this summer. It is expected to help coordinating, not replacing, the work of governments at national and local level in Europe.

4. Outlook

Beyond the immediate steps to bring relief to the transport and tourism sectors, also the future development needs to be looked at and how to make the sectors more resilient and sustainable, learning from the crisis and anticipating new trends and consumer patterns related to it.

While economic activity all over Europe is slowly starting back up, the strictest measures, the closure of national borders, are partially still in effect. These measures were deemed necessary at the start of the epidemic in Europe to pull the emergency brakes and stop cross-border contagion.

However, lifting measures too quickly could cause a sudden resurgence of infections. Until a vaccine or treatment is available, the needs and benefits of travel and tourism must be weighed against the risks of facilitating the spread of the virus and a resurgence of cases.

With the presentation on the Tourism and Transport package, the European Commission is urging the EU Member States governments to consider economic and social factors as well as health as they weigh up reopening their borders.

However, the continuation of closed borders is now disproportionate in light of the national internal measures and facilitations. Countries have managed to get the epidemic under control; new cases can be recognised and isolated much quicker than at the start of the crisis. This is why the Schengen area should be restored as a matter of urgency. If the Schengen area should be restored, the EU Member States will need a coordinated minimum standard of protocols for air, sea and train travel and common health and sanitary standards for hotels, restaurants and museums and their personnel that need to be followed rather than a patchwork of different rules in each Member States. The major aims of the EU tourism package of course will be to restoring traveller freedom as well as to save the ailing travel industry. As the COVID-19 pandemic eases, it will have to be the EU Member States' shared ambition to maintain Europe as the world's leading tourist destination in terms of value, quality, sustainability and innovation. The aim should be to enable affordable and more sustainable transport and to establish a smart management of tourism flows based on sound measurement and tools, to diversify the tourism offer and extend off season opportunities and develop sustainability skills for tourism professionals.

The Member States need a coordinated response at European level for the short-term exit from the COVID-19 crisis, but also for the longer-term future of the tourism and transport sectors by addressing shared challenges.

The Commission sets out a common framework providing criteria to safely and gradually restore tourism activities and developing health protocols for hotels and other forms of accommodation, to protect the health of both guests and employees.

Under sufficient epidemiological evidence, health system capacity, robust surveillance, monitoring and testing capacity and contact tracing, the citizens will be allowed to do non-essential travels in the EU and the Schengen area. The Commission proposes guidance, based on the principles of safety and non-discrimination. While the decision on reopening internal Schengen borders falls to the EU Member States, the Commission urges the 27 EU Member States to take a coordinated approach to lifting restrictions. The Commission's guidelines and recommendations can increase the chance for a return of tourism and mobility in the summer season in a coordinated manner.

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