

## 【欧州】 【Common】

# Common - COVID-19 response and tourism: Short-term measures to reviving tourism in the EU and long-term vision to reach the tourism sector' s sustainability

Andrea Antolini Former Researcher JTTRI

### 【概要 : Summary】

In pre-pandemic times, the EU' s tourism ecosystem was an important economy sector in many EU Member States. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has posed a severe impact on the sector as international, intra-EU and domestic travel were disrupted and restricted due to lockdown measures. One year into the pandemic, the situation of the tourism sector is still difficult as the pandemic is still hampering the free movement of people within the EU.

The current pandemic situation and its impacts require policy measures to support the tourism sector in distinct ways. On the one hand, tourism in the EU will need short-term support measures to recover from the direct impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that brought non-essential touristic travels to a halt within the EU and beyond. In this short-term vision to revive tourism, the approval of the Digital Green Certificate or Digital COVID Certificate including the EU gateway storing is expected to facilitate the free movement of people for intra-EU and for international travel. On the other hand, the EU' s tourism sector needs medium- and long-term changes towards a sustainable tourism sector and a new vision to achieving an economic, social, and environmental sustainability of tourism. This long-term vision is explained in the Council

conclusions of 27 May 2021. The Council of the European Union has adopted a set of conclusions that establish its vision for an economically, environmentally, resilient, and socially eco-friendly tourism sector in Europe.

### 【記事 : Article】

#### 1. Background of the short-term and long-term policy measures to support the tourism sector

Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit Europe, the tourism sector was an essential and successful economic sector in the EU. Europe accounted for half of the annual international tourist arrivals in 2018, with 51%, and a total of 710 million arrivals. In fact, the EU' s tourism ecosystem employs around 20.3 million people and in 2019, the last year before the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU tourist accommodation sector reached more than 3.1 billion nights spent by tourists in the EU. In 2019, the tourism sector accounted for 9.5% of the EU' s GDP, according to the Commission Staff Working Document SWD (2020) 98 final.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdown measures, the EU tourism industry continues to show severe impacts caused by the disruptions of international, intra-EU and domestic travel since March 2020.

The EU's tourism industry had suffered severe economic damages and one year into the pandemic, the situation of the tourism sector is still difficult, as the pandemic still continues and is hampering the free movement of people within the EU. In 2020, in 93% of European destinations, complete or partial closure of borders and the complete or partial suspension of flights were introduced in spring and the summer vacation season showed only a short-lived improvement, due to the resurging number of COVID-19 cases in holiday destinations, the touristic activities came to a new halt. According to Eurostat (2021), tourism statistics on the nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments in 2020 showed a decrease of 52% compared with 2019. EU Member States like Cyprus, Greece and Malta were even affected worse, with decreases exceeding 70%, while the Netherlands and Denmark reported the smallest drops of less than 35%.

However, since currently the vaccination campaigns in many EU Member States are starting to show a positive effect and the numbers of infected people decrease significantly, the 2021 summer vacation season could see a fresh start of tourism in many European touristic destinations. Therefore, the European Commission and the EU Member States have been considering measures to support the restart of tourism, with short-term measures like the introduction of the single EU-wide standardised EU Digital COVID Certificate allowing people to travel and to facilitate the free movement of people within the EU.

## 2. The measures to restore tourism in the EU

On 29 April 2020, the European Commission presented a package of measures, aiming at providing significant relief to the transport sector, and on 13 May 2020, it adopted a tourism and transport package to help the Member States to gradually lifting travel restrictions and to save the EU's tourism sector, among others. The guidelines recommend measures for each individual

mode of transport and called for the gradual re-establishment of connections between the Member States. 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. It included a guidance on resuming tourism services, among others.

One year later, the COVID-19 pandemic is still having a detrimental impact on the tourism sector as many EU Member States continue to restrict non-essential travel for touristic reason. However, the summer season (June-August) is a crucial time for the tourism sector as residents of the EU Member States make 385 million tourism trips and spend €190 billion on their holidays. Currently, it highly depends on the further spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and on the speed of vaccination campaigns in all EU Member States if a safe reopening for travel and a recovery of the EU's tourism sector in the 2021 summer season can be achieved.

Therefore, an important discussion on how to facilitate the travels for vaccinated citizens in the 2021 summer season has led to the Commission proposal on a Regulation on a "Digital Green Certificate" on Vaccination, Testing, and Recovery to facilitate the free movement of vaccinated, tested or recovered people in the EU on 17 March 2021. Meanwhile, the European Commission's proposed certificate has been renamed in "EU Digital COVID Certificate". It is issued to a person who has either been vaccinated against COVID-19, received a negative test result, or recovered from COVID-19. It is expected to allow the EU's tourism industry to partially recover, starting in summer 2021.

On 20 May 2021, the European Parliament and the Council negotiators reached a provisional agreement on an EU Digital COVID Certificate to facilitate free movement in Europe during the COVID-19 pandemic. They agreed that the certificate would be available in either digital

or paper format. It will attest that a person has been vaccinated against coronavirus or has a recent negative test result or has recovered from the infection. The EU Digital COVID Certificate regulation should be in place for 12 months. The certificate is issued in a digital and/or paper format with QR code, free of charge in national language and English. The QR code contains essential information, as well as a digital seal to make sure the certificate is authentic. It is not a precondition for exercising free movement rights and it is not a travel document. Nevertheless, the certificate is expected to facilitate the free movement of all Europeans during the summer vacation season. The digital certificate should be available by 1 July 2021. Member States must accept vaccination certificates issued in other Member States for persons vaccinated with a vaccine authorised for use in the EU by the European Medicines Agency (EMA). Personal data obtained from the certificates cannot be stored in destination Member States and there will be no central database established at EU level. It was underlined that the certificate was no precondition to exercise the right to free movement and it would not be considered a travel document. However, the EU Digital COVID-19 Certificate can be expected to facilitating movement and touristic travel in Europe.

### 3. European Commission's short-term measures: Reopening Europe for travel based on the EU Digital COVID Certificate

In the light of the still existing patchwork of restrictions for the free movement of people in the EU ahead of the summer vacation time, most important for the tourism sector in many EU Member States, the European Commission proposes to update the travel measures in the EU. At their meeting on 24-25 May 2021, the European heads of states and governments called for the revision by mid-June of the Council Recommendation on travel

within the EU, with the view of facilitating free movement in the EU. As a follow-up on this request, on 31 May 2021, the European Commission presented its "Proposal for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION amending Council Recommendation (EU) 2020/1475 of 13 October 2020 on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic" to update to the Council Recommendation (EU) 2020/1475 of 13 October 2020 on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU (COM(2021) 294 final) . This recommendation serves to facilitate the implementation of provisions to allow the free movement of people and most importantly for the holders of the EU Digital COVID Certificate.

The Commission's recommendation also includes an "emergency brake" to re-impose restrictions for travellers from areas where there is a surge of infections or many cases of a particular virus variant. This "emergency brake" would allow Member States to re-introduce travel measures for vaccinated and recovered persons if the epidemiological situation deteriorates rapidly or where a high prevalence of variants of concern has been reported.

According to the Commission proposal, travel from "dark red" areas, with more than 150 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people over 14 days, would be "strongly discouraged", while no restrictions should be applied for green areas with fewer than 25 cases.

In addition, the Commission calls for further efforts to ensure a smooth rollout of the EU Digital COVID Certificate. The Commission has already supported this process by launching the central part of the EU Digital COVID Certificate, the EU gateway storing the public keys needed for the verification of an EU Digital COVID Certificate, on 1 June 2021.

The Commission proposal COM(2021) 294 final of 31 May 2021 is also consistent with the rules on non-essential travel to the EU from third

countries, which were updated by the Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/816 on 20 May 2021. In its recommendation on non-essential travel to the EU, restrictions on non-essential travel to the EU should be eased, in particular for vaccinated third-country nationals. The Council also increased the threshold for new infections to determine the list of non-EU countries from where non-essential travel should be permitted.

At the same time the proposed new “emergency brake” mechanism, to be coordinated at EU level, would allow to immediately suspend all inbound travel by non-EU citizens in case of a risk that variants of concern or interest enter the EU and the epidemiological situation of a non-EU country worsens quickly.

The proposal for a “Council Recommendation amending Council Recommendation (EU) 2020/912 on the temporary restriction on non-essential travel into the EU and the possible lifting of such restriction” (COM (2021) 232 final) of 3 May 2021 encourages the EU Member States to lift restrictions on non-essential travel for vaccinated persons travelling to the EU. It considers the progress of vaccination campaigns and developments in the epidemiological situation worldwide. The EU Member States should allow travel into the EU of those people who have received, at least 14 days before arrival, the last recommended dose of a vaccine having received authorisation in the EU. In this sense, this proposal aims at progressively resuming travel from third countries in a safe manner, relaunching tourism, especially in view of the summer season, particularly for those already vaccinated. Until the EU Digital COVID Certificate becomes operational, Member States should be able to accept certificates from non-EU countries based on national law, considering the ability to verify the authenticity, validity, and integrity of the certificate and whether it contains all relevant data. Children who are excluded from vaccination should be able to

travel with their vaccinated parents if they have a negative PCR COVID-19 test taken at the earliest 72 hours before arrival area. In these cases, Member States could require additional testing after arrival.

The adoption of the Regulation on the EU Digital COVID Certificate (a.k.a. Digital Green Certificate) will provide the basis, through a Commission implementing act, also for treating third country vaccination certificates as Digital COVID Certificates, or to issue such certificates to persons having been vaccinated in third countries. Finally, the political agreement to establish the EU Digital COVID Certificate to facilitate free movement inside the EU was confirmed by the Council’s Permanent Representatives Committee and the Parliaments’ Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. Until 30 June 2021, the EU Member States can launch the certificate on a voluntary basis provided they are ready to issue and verify certificates. On 1 July 2021, the EU Digital COVID Certificate will enter application throughout the EU, and until 12 August, the phasing-in period will follow. If a Member State is not yet ready to issue the new certificate to its citizens, other formats can still be used and should be accepted in other Member States.

The Council will also review the list of non-EU countries exempted from the travel restriction considering the updated criteria and continue doing so every 2 weeks.

#### **4. Council conclusions on the long-term measures towards a sustainable tourism sector in Europe**

According to the Council of the European Union’s conclusions of 27 May 2021, tourism is seen as an important sector for the EU regions’ sustainable economic, social, and environmental development, which also contributes significantly to the preservation and promotion of European values and cultural heritage. However, tourism is also one

of the sectors hit worst by the COVID-19 pandemic and needs to adapt to the climate targets and become economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable and resilient

As background of the “Council Conclusions on Tourism in Europe for the next decade: Sustainable, resilient, digital, global and social”, the Council considered several communications and plans of the past years. This includes the communication from the Commission on “Europe, the world’s No 1 tourist destination - a new political framework for tourism in Europe” of June 2010 and the Council conclusions of October 2010 on this communication; The Council conclusions on “The competitiveness of the tourism sector as a driver for sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion in the EU for the next decade” of 27 May 2019; the Commission’s “European Green Deal” of 11 December 2019 and the “Sustainable Europe Investment Plan - European Green Deal Investment Plan” of 14 January 2020, as well as the Commission’s Tourism and Transport package of 13 May 2020 and the related, the “European Parliament resolution on transport and tourism in 2020 and beyond” of 19 June 2020.

The Council conclusions of 27 May 2021 encourage the EU Member States to develop evidence-based sustainable, responsible, and resilient tourism policies and strategies, and to monitor the impact on global, national, and regional levels. This should be achieved by a sustainable and responsible tourism and business conduct and by improving connectivity and multi-modal sustainable travel, considering cross-border, rural, insular, peripheral, and depopulated areas, as well as outermost regions. Furthermore, sustainable coastal and maritime tourism needs to be promoted as part of the tourism ecosystem and of the blue economy. The new technologies, digitalisation, ICT, and data-sharing should be promoted to enhance the performance of tourism businesses. The value of tourism destinations

should be considered, and tourism development planning and the smart management of tourism flows should be improved, among others. Moreover, the European-wide dialogue and exchange of best practice among Member States needs to be encouraged to develop innovative approaches, including in smart tourism. The Member States should share their vision, ideas, and potential projects on how the tourism ecosystem could help achieving the European Green Deal objectives, aligned with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals of the Agenda 2030. Innovative instruments to modernise tourism business models and destination management should be implemented. Decarbonisation, more resource efficiency, and promotion of circular economy in tourism needs to be achieved.

Regarding the further measures, the Council invites the Commission and Member States to design a European Agenda for Tourism 2030/2050 to strengthen competitiveness and to support the green and digital transitions of the European tourism ecosystem and to strengthen its competitiveness. The Council also invites the Commission to include the tourism sector in relevant EU policies to ensure they coherently encourage sustainable and responsible tourism in respect of the Sustainable Development Goals, among others. The Commission should also launch as soon as possible, and at the latest by September 2021, a comprehensive overview of current funding sources for tourism in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027 and the “NextGeneration EU” instrument. The Council conclusions call for a smart use of existing funding opportunities for reviving the European tourism ecosystem and make it more resilient in the post-pandemic era.

The Council conclusions also call on the European Commission to cooperate with the Member States and relevant international organizations to jointly design an EU Tourism Dashboard, as an EU flagship tool for the tourism ecosystem. The

Council highlighted the importance of steady cooperation and exchanges of practices and invited the Commission to present a first outline of the European Agenda for Tourism 2030/2050 by the end of 2021.

## 5. Conclusion

Tourism is a sector of high importance for the economy in many regions in the EU. At the same time, the sector has been severely hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Only this year summer season has the potential to allow the sector to start its recovery. To support the reactivation of the tourism sector, the European Commission has proposed short-term measures. Currently most important, the EU Digital COVID Certificate needs to be introduced until 1 July 2021 to allow a smooth and seamless travel and free movement of vaccinated, recovered or tested people within the EU, for EU citizens and third-country travelers to the EU.

Furthermore, considering the mid- and long-term vision of the tourism sector, the Council conclusions call for a revival of the tourism sector and its sustainable economic, social, and environmental development within the next decade. The Council urges the European Commission and the EU Member States to move towards a collective and well-coordinated response to the current pandemic crisis with a joint effort to develop voluntary standards for health and safety protocols by tourism services and establishments. The Council conclusions also call for the smart use of existing funding opportunities under the EU's MFF for 2021-2027 and the NextGeneration EU instrument for reviving the European tourism ecosystem, and for making it more resilient for the future. In the long-term vision, the tourism sector in the EU will have to be reformed to become more sustainable and resilient. Therefore, the Council conclusion also calls on Member States and the European Commission to present a European Agenda for Tourism 2030/2050 by the end

of 2021, to support the necessary green and digital transitions of the European tourism ecosystem for a more sustainable future.

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