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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0175/2020**

10.6.2020

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

Committee on Transport and Tourism:  
(2020/2649(RSP))

**Roberts Zīle, Carlo Fidanza**  
on behalf of the ECR Group

**B9-0175/2020**

**European Parliament resolution on Transport and Tourism  
(2020/2649(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas tourism is a crosscutting economic activity with wide-ranging impact on economic growth, employment, and social development;
- B. whereas the tourism sector employs 22.6 million people, 11.2 % of total EU employment, and contributed 9.5 % to EU GDP in 2019, promotes balanced regional structure, and has a positive impact on regional development;
- C. whereas tourism consists of a complex value chain of many stakeholders with a direct link to passenger transport activities;
- D. whereas the transport and tourism sectors have been the most negatively affected of all major economic sectors by COVID-19;
- E. whereas by adopting the communication entitled ‘Tourism and transport in 2020 and beyond’, and the Tourism and Transport Package on the 13 May 2020, the Commission took the first necessary step to support the recovery of our valuable transport and tourism sectors from the COVID-19 outbreak;
- F. whereas it has been a very long time since the European Commission adopted the Communication, ‘Europe, the world’s No. 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe’ in June 2010, which sets out a new strategy and action plan for EU tourism;

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

1. Recognises that the transport sector is one of the sectors most affected by the current COVID-19 crisis, and therefore asks for specific support, including for road freight companies, providing credit lines in order to face the lack of liquidity;
2. Stresses that in the recovery plans for transport, along with support aimed at saving existing transport sectors, support should also be focused on innovative growth opportunities, such as hyperloop connections between the major cities of Europe as an affordable, clean and fast alternative to short-haul air traffic;
3. Underlines that in current crisis circumstances when many transport companies struggle for survival, it is of utmost importance to prevent and protect strategic transport infrastructure, such as ports and railways, from foreign takeovers, notably by China, and to carefully look into the actual scope of Chinese investments in strategic European transport sectors;
4. Believes that swift short-term support for the transport and tourism sectors is necessary

to ensure their survival, while implementing measures which give tourists the confidence to travel again to and within Europe is imperative for the longer-term sustainability of the sector; stresses that the current crisis also represents a historic opportunity to modernise tourism in the EU, and to start considering it a proper industrial ecosystem with its own investment targets, human capital, technological innovation needs and performance indicators;

5. Welcomes the communication entitled ‘COVID-19 - Towards a phased and coordinated approach for restoring freedom of movement and lifting internal border controls’ adopted by the Commission as part of the package, and the proposal for a phased and coordinated approach, aiming at returning to the unrestricted free movement of persons;
6. Reiterates the importance of the principle of non-discrimination in the progressive lifting of domestic and cross-border restrictions, and stresses the paramount importance of avoiding uncoordinated bilateral agreements between individual Member States, discussed outside the European Union framework (so-called tourism corridors), that would further impact the economy of those Member States which have been particularly affected by the health crisis, and especially their tourism sector, in order to safeguard the integrity of the single market and the freedom of movement;
7. Underlines that measures must be taken to ensure that when a Member State decides to allow travel into its territory, it should not take into account similar epidemiological conditions, but the real capacity of Member States to ensure respect of health protocols as stated in the Commission guidelines;
8. In light of the difficult situation facing the beach tourism sector, calls on the European Commission to revise Directive 2006/123/CE, with particular reference to the authorisation procedures for the use of maritime public property in order to guarantee business continuity and the relaunch of investments;
9. Is deeply concerned that several Member States have recently imposed unilateral and highly disruptive measures which put a heavy burden not only on the functioning of the single market and on the lives of millions of EU citizens, but also strike a further blow to tourism and confidence; urges, therefore, the Commission to prevent the implementation of any type of discriminatory and non-epidemiological measures by Member States, which only undermine the integrity of the Schengen area and impede the swift recovery of Europe’s travel and tourism industry; welcomes the European Commission’s initiative aiming to ensure the continuous flow of goods, especially food and medical devices, across EU and all initiatives aimed at ensuring the full functioning of the EU internal market without unjustified checks and delay;
10. Recognises the importance that international travellers play in our tourism every year; calls, therefore, on the Commission and the Member States to gradually lift non-essential travel restrictions applied at the external borders of the Union ahead of the 2020 summer season, without hampering public health and safety and taking into account the epidemiological situation in each third country;
11. Welcomes the Commission communication entitled ‘COVID-19: Guidelines on the progressive restoration of transport services and connectivity’, as well as the guidance based on a framework of principles and a common toolbox that will help resume

transport services of all kinds across the EU by taking coordinated, non-discriminatory and proportionate measures;

12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to agree on temporary, proportionate and clearly linked to the COVID-19 outbreak non-quarantine measures, based on scientific evidence and a robust risk assessment, following international standards defined by credible sources, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) or the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC);
13. Highlights the importance of ensuring mutual recognition of the measures agreed at EU level for the resumption of EU and international travel; stresses, moreover, that the implementation of containment measures, as well as their easing, must at no time lead to a reduction of the high levels of EU safety and security standards in transport;
14. Welcomes the Commission communication entitled ‘COVID-19: EU Guidance for the progressive resumption of tourism services and for health protocols in hospitality establishments’ and urges Member States to share this guidance with competent authorities at regional and local level; calls on the Commission and the Member States, in this regard, to support the travel and tourism sector financially in the implementation of these measures, in full cooperation with the tourism and travel industry;
15. Calls on the Commission to propose common EU rules on the terms and conditions of the vouchers issued due to COVID-19, always conditional on their voluntary acceptance by consumers, and without affecting the obligation for companies to reimburse travellers as currently provided for by EU law, in order to make vouchers more attractive and viable, and to prevent another patchwork implementation resulting in different treatment of consumers and in distortions of competition in the transport and tourism market; urges, moreover, the Commission to use all the means at its disposal to ensure proper enforcement and uniform application of EU law, and to promote the use of harmonised rules on voluntary vouchers;
16. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to verify online travel agencies’ compliance with the national regulations in force with regard to the cancellation and refund of the reservations, in order to guarantee full customer protection and economic sustainability for the SMEs;
17. Calls on the Commission, Member State public authorities and stakeholders to cooperate in order to establish appropriate and common preparedness plans for a potential second wave of COVID-19 infections as soon as possible, addressing infection prevention and control measures for the travel and tourism sector;
18. Calls on the Commission to launch a dedicated EU communication campaign on travel and tourism, aiming at promoting intra-EU travel, re-establishing citizens’ confidence in travel and tourism during COVID-19, educating tourists on the health and safety measures in place and building sustainable and cohesion values through an ‘EU Tourism Brand’; calls for the concept of ‘safe and smart destination’ to be central to ensuring the development of sustainable, responsible and accessible tourism;

#### **Enhanced solidarity and coordination in the EU tourism sector**

19. Recalls that tourism is of considerable importance as a source of economic growth, regional development and employment, that since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 the EU has supporting competences, aiming at coordinating and complementing action in this domain by the Member States<sup>1</sup>;
20. Welcomes the Commission proposal to organise a European tourism summit involving the EU institutions, the industry, regions, cities and stakeholders, in order to reflect on tomorrow's European tourism, and supports the development of a 2050 roadmap towards a sustainable, innovative and resilient European tourism ecosystem ('European Agenda for Tourism 2050'); calls on the Commission, therefore, to adopt a new strategy and action plan for EU tourism in 2021 based on the outcome of this dialogue, in order to maintain Europe's standing as a leading destination through an 'EU Tourism Brand';
21. Welcomes the Commission's initiative providing for flexibility under the State aid rules; insists, however, on clear and sector-specific guidance in the transport and tourism sectors to allow effective coordination between all Member States, and to ensure that national compensation schemes are used in a uniform manner and are put in place for limited duration, in a timely and proportionate manner, aiming to tackle the losses caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, without unduly distorting competition;
22. Welcomes the proposal for an EU Recovery Plan presented by the Commission on 27 May 2020, which includes an increased long-term EU budget (MFF 2021-2027) and a new EUR 750 billion recovery instrument, Next Generation EU, as well as the recognition that tourism was as one of the most important economic activities severely affected by the COVID-19 crisis, and that the tourism ecosystem will need investment of EUR 161 billion;
23. Calls on the Commission to give due importance to the tourism sector in the recovery package, and to issue guidance to ensure swift access to funding under ongoing and upcoming programmes in a way that is not hindered by disproportionate administrative burdens;
24. Calls on the Commission and Member States to urgently support businesses, especially SMEs, in managing their liquidity to help them to maintain jobs, and to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens; welcomes in this respect the Commission's new SURE initiative aiming at covering the costs of national short-term work schemes, allowing companies to safeguard jobs and maintain cash reserves;
25. Calls for a European horizontal strategy for SME recovery to support them by reducing red tape, costs for access to finance, and by fostering investments in strategic value chains in line with the Green Deal; recalls the need for making the necessary adjustments in order to comply with new health and safety measures, providing substantial investments to ensure the safety of consumers and the respect of social distancing, and other relevant precautionary measures;
26. Highlights the importance of enhanced cooperation between EU, national, regional and

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<sup>1</sup> Article 195 (1), TFEU: 'the Union shall complement the actions of the Member States in the tourism sector, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings in that sector'.

local authorities and all relevant stakeholders, with a view to addressing crosscutting tourism-related issues; calls on the Commission, in this regard, to establish an EU Tourism Strategy including a clear action plan with short-, medium- and long-term objectives, which proposes that Member States set clear, strategic, operational and results-oriented objectives;

27. Recalls the importance of reducing gold plating in legislation on the single market for tourism services, with the objective of removing and preventing regulatory contradictions and duplications, by ensuring better coordination of policies and legislation affecting the tourism sector;
28. Calls on the Commission to issue guidelines based on best practice in the tourism sector in the event of a pandemic crisis, ensure proper financial support, and facilitate the development and coordination of adequate online platforms where stakeholders can exchange best practice and share information; stresses that all kinds of exchange of best practice should be encouraged and supported by the Commission;
29. Welcomes the efforts of the Commission in helping Member States to coordinate assistance and consular repatriation operations of EU citizens throughout the world; asks, further, the Commission to assess how existing EU legislation and laws in the Member States responded to these repatriation operations, and to examine further possibilities for swift and effective participation if similar situations arise in the future;

#### **Towards a future-proof EU tourism sector:**

30. Stresses that the tourism sector is highly dependent on the transport sector, and that therefore improving the accessibility and connectivity of all modes of transport, while maintaining the highest level of safety in all transport sectors (road, rail, aviation, maritime and inland waterways), would certainly have a significant impact on enhancing the EU tourism sector;
31. Highlights the necessity for all Member States to have a network of developed, modern and safe infrastructure, in order to facilitate travel across the EU, and to make the peripheral Member States more accessible for intra-European and international tourism; calls on the Commission, therefore, to carry out fitness checks of the existing infrastructure network, and to propose immediate additional measures in the least advanced areas, to ensure that Member States have appropriate planning to complete the entire TEN-T core by 2030 and comprehensive networks by 2050, indicating the schedule and budgetary availability, and to focus particularly on cross-border sections, especially in Member States which are not progressing in these areas;
32. Calls on the Commission to set a monitoring framework including intermediate targets for assessing progress made by Member States, to follow a systematic and uniform approach with fixed deadlines for Member States to provide feedback data on completed segments, and to take appropriate measures in the revision of the TEN-T Regulation to enhance long-term maintenance planning by Member States;
33. Calls on the Commission to explore the feasibility and potential benefits of a crisis-management mechanism for the EU tourism sector, in order to respond adequately and swiftly not only to the current COVID-19 outbreak, but also in order to prepare for

future challenges of the same or similar nature and magnitude; stresses the importance of including funding solutions for short-term financial shortages, and also providing for a medium- and long-term frameworks and strategies to be activated;

34. Suggests the inclusion of a full range of ‘tested and approved’ measures, and a package of future-proof solutions to be applied swiftly in response to crisis situations, including a set of guidelines strictly dedicated to the tourism and transport sectors; recalls the importance of further developing the capacity to support and complement Member State action in times of crisis, in order to protect workers, help out companies and ensure passenger safety; underscores, furthermore, the necessity to work in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, in order to address all the specificities and characteristics of relevant transport and tourism sectors;
35. Points out the importance of a common EU approach on safeguarding the competitiveness of the sector by improving its communication strategy towards citizens; further emphasises the EU’s coordination role for the tourism sector, which should be improved by taking EU added-value initiatives, and further facilitating the exchange of best practice among Member States; calls for reductions in administrative and fiscal burdens, support for the creation of businesses, and the promotion of cross-border sales and services;
36. Considers that the emergence of new technologies and further digitalisation would considerably boost the attractiveness of the travel and tourism sector, and that user-friendly platforms and new business models would enhance growth, competitiveness and prosperity of the sector; believes, therefore, that regular training and reskilling of the existing workforce in the sector seem to be of the utmost importance, with a specific focus on digital skills and innovative technologies;
37. Points out the importance of promoting sustainable tourism, contributing to job creation, protection and restoration of natural ecosystems, and growth and competitiveness, by building on new business models; calls on the Commission to facilitate access to smart and sustainable EU funding for tourism stakeholders; affirms that such funding should support the development of innovative high-quality tourism products and services, and further contribute to sustainability, out of season travel and geographical dispersion of tourism flows; believes that support and coordination at Union level must be provided to improve tourism administration on the national, regional and local levels, inter alia by introducing tourism sustainability certification;
38. Highlights the importance of tourism for some EU countries and geographical areas, where tourism-related services are often a prominent in employment, and are one of the main sources of income for the local population; calls on the Commission to elaborate tailor-made measures when restoring the freedom of movement and transport connections between outermost territories and islands and the EU mainland; points out that specific connection lanes, and additional financial and administrative support are of utmost importance for these regions; stresses the importance of developing a coastal and maritime focus in EU tourism strategy and initiatives, including financing opportunities and promotional and communication tools, as well as strengthening the functioning of relevant markets, by establishing custom-made policies in cooperation with destination stakeholders and authorities;

39. Recalls that cultural tourism accounts for 40 % of all European tourism; calls on the Commission, therefore, to propose to the Member States clear, strategic, operational and results-oriented objectives in the next Work Plan for Culture, and to improve the current strategic framework for culture; stresses that investments in cultural sites should be seen and treated as a resource to improve competitiveness and growth at local level, without forgetting their intrinsic value as part of our cultural heritage that needs to be protected, especially from climate change and mass tourism;
40. Highlights the benefits of rural tourism and calls on the Commission to further promote and support initiatives which would generate additional income source to rural areas, job opportunities, prevent depopulation and increase the social benefits; stresses the role that the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) can play, especially the LEADER programme, in supporting local and rural tourism initiatives, and calls for this programme to be adequately funded for the 2021-2027 programming period;
41. Points out the importance of the health tourism, comprising medical, wellness and spa tourism; calls on the Commission to promote, when appropriate, European health prevention, balneology, sustainable, mountain and medical tourism; highlights the need for further investments for improving sustainable tourism infrastructure, and the importance of enhanced visibility for European resorts for spa and wellness tourism; calls on the Commission to plan further science-based funding opportunities, as medical tourism may help to reduce health costs through prevention measures, and to decrease pharmaceutical consumption, and would further improve sustainability and labour quality;
42. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the Commission, the President of the European Council and the Presidency in Office of the Council.