



Plenary sitting

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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

on transport and tourism
(2020/2649(RSP))

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on behalf of the S&D Group

**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 the transport and tourism sector has suffered the greatest negative effects of the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and have virtually come to a standstill;
- B. whereas many companies in the transport and tourism sector are on the brink of financial and economic collapse, thousands of workers have lost their jobs with no foreseeable means of income, and millions of passengers and consumers are in uncertainty as to whether they will be reimbursed for cancelled travel plans and holidays, and when and whether they will be able to go on holiday or visit their friends and family;
- C. whereas the tourism and travel industry has a significant ecological footprint worldwide, and aviation emissions were growing rapidly before the crisis; whereas the sector has an important role to play in ensuring the success of the EU's transition towards climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest and reversing biodiversity loss and degradation of the environment;
- D. whereas the job market in the sector is often atypical, with seasonal work, part-time contracts, precarious working conditions and unusual working hours being common, and solo-self-employment, family run businesses and micro enterprises being a characteristic of the sector;
- E. whereas by adopting the communication on tourism and transport in 2020 and beyond (COM(2020)0550) 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 the Commission's measures do not go far enough; whereas an EU vision and a comprehensive strategy for the tourism sector are urgently needed, not solely for the recovery of the different branches of the industry, but to provide a vision for the future of the tourism and travel sector as a whole;
- 1. Believes that both swift, short-term support and long-term support to the transport and tourism sectors are necessary to ensure their survival, while implementing measures which give tourists the confidence to travel to and within Europe again is imperative for minimising additional losses in the sector, as well as for its longer-term sustainability; stresses that the current crisis also represents a historic opportunity to make tourism in the EU more sustainable and accessible, and to modernise it, taking into account the objectives of the European Green Deal;
- 2. Welcomes the communication entitled 'COVID-19 - Towards a phased and coordinated

approach for restoring freedom of movement and lifting internal border controls' (C(2020)3250), adopted by the Commission as part of the Tourism and Transport Package, and the proposal for a phased and coordinated approach with the aim of returning to the unrestricted free movement of persons, but believes that the measures proposed by the Commission are not enough to truly relaunch the sector; calls on the Commission to develop, along with the Member States, a better and common solution to relaunch the tourism and transport sector, taking into account specific regional conditions, for example those in the outermost regions, and rural and coastal areas;

3. Calls on the Commission to establish a European framework for workers, respecting the autonomy of the social partners and covering the whole value chain of the tourism industry, to be prepared in close dialogue with the social partners and to cover all types of workers, including seasonal workers whose country of residence and country of work might differ, ensuring decent working condition and access to social protection, and ensuring the health and safety of workers, not only at the place of work but also during their journeys to and from the place of work, which may include cross-border travel; 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 and calls on the Member States to swiftly and correctly implement the initiative;
4. Calls on the Commission to develop a crisis management mechanism (CMM) for the tourism and travel sector, with concrete short- and medium-term measures to answer to the needs of the tourism industry, particularly SMEs, workers, consumers and passengers, to help Member States to implement pre-emptive policies and facilitate an EU-wide response to different possible future crises in the sector; believes that the CMM should focus in particular on SMEs as they account for 90 % of all businesses in the European tourism and travel sector; highlights, furthermore, the importance of involving regional and local authorities, with special attention and assistance going to regions and cities that are heavily dependent on tourism and with particular consideration for remote and rural areas, outermost regions and islands, and underlines that the CMM should be built on well-structured institutional cooperation with all interested regional and local actors; considers that the CMM should have permanent offices and an online platform, which could be integrated into existing structures geared towards assisting enterprises doing cross-border business within the EU, in order to ensure easy access to finance for SMEs in case of future crises, and to help business owners navigate the complexities of EU bureaucracy and avoid unnecessary administrative burdens;
5. Welcomes the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) initiated by the Commission, especially the way it rethinks regional and cohesion funds; calls, however, for further flexibility in the management of EU funds so that they can be efficiently used under the CRII mechanism, for example for businesses to access grants or loans (at a marginal interest rate) and to allow them enough net working capital to navigate the crisis; believes, moreover, that the recently adopted European Recovery Plan, coupled with the European Investment Bank's COVID-19 support measures (through the EFSI), seem to be promising a mixture of temporary loans and grants to help the sector; underlines that financial support for the sector should be used in a way that enables it to transition towards climate neutrality, sustainability and digitalisation; considers that

these mechanisms should also be aimed at and accessible to cultural and cultural heritage activities, operators and sites;

6. Insists on the creation and introduction of a specific allocation for sustainable tourism, as clearly stated in its position on the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 and reiterates that several significant steps have to be taken in order to prepare the third-largest branch of the EU's economy to meet the conditions of the European Green Deal;
7. Welcomes the recommendations of the Commission concerning consumer and passenger rights in the current COVID-19 crisis and urges the Member States to swiftly implement them; expects the Commission to take an active role in this implementation, as consumers are currently facing a patchwork of national solutions that negatively affect their trust in consumer rights, and to pay special attention to consumers in vulnerable situations; welcomes the Commission's clarification of the voluntary nature of vouchers; believes that vouchers, as an alternative to monetary reimbursements, should be user-friendly and attractive, offering a longer duration, portability and flexibility in changing the destination, as well as the possibility of being cashed-in at a later date; calls on the Commission to launch a European communication campaign for tourism after the crisis, with the aim of facilitating consumers' awareness of their rights and the instruments available to them, and re-establishing consumer trust in the sector;
8. Proposes the creation of a European travel guarantee fund, which would, in the short term, secure the financial liquidity of the tourism and travel sector and guarantee the payment of consumers' reimbursement claims, while functioning, in the long term, as part of the CMM, to protect consumers and passengers from the potential bankruptcy of businesses in the sector; underlines that the fund should co-exist with and supplement existing schemes in Member States and not undermine any such measures; believes that the fund should be financed by a yearly fee to be paid by all European travel companies based on their revenue, but also considers that during the establishment phase and owing to the COVID-19 crisis, it will be necessary to subsidise the fund with public money;
9. Underlines that restoring citizens' trust in tourism and travel will be key to a successful re-launch of the sector, with people's health as a first priority; welcomes in this respect the initiatives presented by the Commission; calls for the establishment of a European tourism certification in consultation with relevant stakeholders, taking into account the EU Ecolabel, to set Europe-wide minimum health and hygiene standards; calls for this certification to be developed in close consultation with experts, scientists and public health authorities at Member State level and to decide what health precautions are needed in particular regions; calls, furthermore, for the development of an EU single access point for all parties (businesses, citizens, public authorities), presenting data on the epidemiological status of states and providing information about precautionary measures and restrictions that Member States and their regions have taken; believes, moreover, that tourists should have access to a contact point, for example in the form of a public website, smartphone app or information desk, that gives up-to-date information in several European languages on the sanitary situation in the area and the precautionary measures taken;
10. Highlights the fact that while contact tracing could be part of a broader strategy to

prevent the further spread of COVID-19, data protection and citizens' privacy must be at the heart of any development of contact tracing apps; underlines that fundamental rights have to be respected even in a health crisis situation, including the principles of data protection and privacy by design, data minimisation and the prohibition of general surveillance; believes that the uptake of any solutions, including tracing apps that are made available directly for use by individuals, must be truly voluntary and insists that, where possible, only anonymous data should be gathered, any data gathered and used should be kept decentralised on the device itself ('on the edge') and not in a centralised database, apps must have no commercial application and none of the data must be allowed to be used for either commercial or law enforcement purposes;

11. Underlines that it is crucial to restore the Schengen Area without internal border controls as swiftly as possible, respecting the principle of non-discrimination, to allow for a return to normal travel conditions between all Member States and regions, while fully respecting public health concerns and protecting the safety of citizens and tourists as a first priority; believes that coordinating the reopening of borders at EU level, in line with the Commission's guidelines aimed at avoiding unilateral actions by Member States and bilateral agreements of any sort is essential, as unilateral or bilateral measures would create discrimination between workers, citizens and enterprises and also exclude and isolate countries, potentially resulting in a deterioration of the economic, social and cultural potential of the tourism sector in Europe as a whole; highlights also the importance of international travellers to the European tourism sector, with Europe being the number one travel destination worldwide;
12. Welcomes the governance initiative taken by the Commission that calls for official and regular dialogue with tourism stakeholders also beyond the COVID-19 crisis; calls for Parliament's relevant bodies to be officially involved in the stakeholder dialogue and encourages the EU institutions to continue to foster dialogue and cooperation with the UNWTO;
13. Believes that the current COVID-19 crisis offers a unique opportunity to transform the sector to make it more inclusive, resilient, social and sustainable, taking into account the digitalisation of travel and tourism; considers that such a change is indispensable if Europe is to reach its climate and biodiversity goals and to accomplish the European Green Deal; invites the Commission to swiftly develop a road map for sustainable tourism containing innovative measures for reducing the environmental footprint of the sector and to further encourage investments in sustainable tourism and travel schemes; believes that these measures could also be embedded in the EU's biodiversity conservation efforts, thus promoting synergies between human activities and the preservation of nature;
14. Stresses that the correct implementation of digital solutions in EU tourism holds enormous potential to boost the sector's economic, sustainable, and secure growth; calls on the Commission to develop a digital strategy for tourism as part of the sustainable tourism road map; notes the increasing role played by digital platforms in influencing the dynamics of European tourism from reservations to travel, hospitality, and restaurants; urges all businesses to be socially responsible in favouring tourism sustainability in their business models;

15. Is of the opinion that the non-toxic circular economy plays a crucial role in this respect and encourages national, regional and local authorities to integrate circularity into their tourism operations, transitioning to more resource efficient and low carbon tourism practices, while also enhancing the competitiveness and resilience of the sector as a whole; call on the Commission to further develop eco-labelling schemes for sustainable tourism;
16. Underlines the importance of promoting a shift from mass tourism to other forms of cultural and sustainable tourism, as poorly managed, unsustainable tourism flows and uncontrolled development can have a huge impact on nature and cultural heritage sites; welcomes the initiatives already taken at Member State and local levels, such as directing tourism flows to lesser-known destinations, and using sustainable modes of transport or virtual visits to increase the accessibility of sites while preserving their cultural and historical heritage; calls on the Commission to support these efforts and assist local authorities, for example through the exchange of best practices or by offering help in applying for relevant EU funds; believes that the continuation of the European Capital of Smart Tourism programme is crucial;
17. Recalls that ensuring safe, accessible and seamless multimodal, sustainable public transport is a core element in the objective of restoring confidence in public and active mobility, particularly in view of the urgent need to encourage sustainable mobility in urban and rural areas and free and unrestricted movement during the summer season; calls on the Commission, therefore, to envisage an appropriate budget in the recovery plan for the safeguarding and rescue of the regional public transport services most impacted by the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 crisis;
18. Believes that equal participation in quality tourism and travel should be available to everyone, regardless of their economic situation or potential vulnerabilities, such as age, reduced mobility or other functional limitations; underlines that reliable information about whether and to what extent tourism and travel facilities, transport modes and locations are accessible is vitally important for people with disabilities or functional limitations; call on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to ensure that such information is provided in an accessible format and further calls on the Commission and the Member States to actively drive the ongoing development of the International Organisation for Standardisation's standard on accessible tourism services and to ensure that it is swiftly and correctly implemented once adopted, as well as that service providers respect the relevant accessibility standards that are already in place or are in the process of being implemented; calls on the Commission, moreover, to make efforts towards the implementation and recognition across the EU of the EU disability card, which is an important tool to support tourism for persons with disabilities, and to raise awareness about accessible tourism, while cooperating with relevant stakeholders and organisations in this respect.
19. Highlights the fact that seniors play a specific role in the tourism and travel sector, as they are key customers in low season tourism and are a group of citizens that travel actively and potentially gain substantial health benefits from, for example, spending the winter in warmer climates; believes therefore that strengthening European health tourism programmes can be an important element in making tourism and travel more attractive for this group; considers that as one of the most vulnerable groups affected by

the coronavirus sanitary crisis, restoring the trust of travelling seniors and ensuring that their health is a central concern is essential for allowing this group to travel again;

20. Draws attention to the important role of educational tourism as a niche market in the tourism sectors of some Member States and its immense contribution even during the low season; calls for the development of a safe return strategy for educational tourism, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the industry while prioritising the health and safety of students and staff;
21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and the Council.