Covid-19: EU support for the tourism industry

Tourism is one of the sectors most affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. Read more on how the EU is protecting businesses, workers and passengers.

Travel restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic have decimated the tourism industry, a major player in the EU’s economy. Revenue is expected to drop 50% for hotels and restaurants, 70% for tour operators and travel agencies and 90% for cruises and airlines. Europe accounts for half of the world’s tourist arrivals and the situation is particularly hard for European countries that are dependent on tourism, such as Spain, Italy, France and Greece.

On 19 June, Parliament voted on a resolution on transport and tourism in 2020 requesting further action to support small and medium-sized enterprises hit by the crisis and funding to help the sector. MEPs said that the crisis should be considered as an opportunity to modernise tourism in the EU by making it environmentally friendly and socially responsible.

Many travellers have struggled to return home, while tourism businesses are facing severe liquidity issues, as there are very few new bookings and a large number of claims for refunds following cancellations. Air carriers particularly are under unprecedented pressure.
Check out what the EU is doing to help Europe’s economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic

The EU’s tourism sector (2019)
• Accounts for 9.5% of the EU’s gross domestic products
• Provides 11.2% of employment in the EU
• Is composed of nearly three million businesses, 90% of which are small and medium-sized enterprises

Find out more
Briefing: Covid-19 and the tourism sector
Transport: more support and better coordination vital to overcome Covid-19 crisis (28 April 2020)
Press release: save European culture and values, MEPs tell Commission (4 May 2020)
Meeting of ministers of tourism (20 May 2020)
Travel advice and border measures
European Commission page on the tourism sector
Tourism statistics for 2020
Fact sheet: tourism
Interactive website with information on EU borders re-opening
UN World Tourism Organization

22.6 million

Number of people working directly or indirectly in the EU’s tourism sector (2019)