



14 May 2020

## WEEKLY BULLETIN

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The European Commission issued its latest [guidance and recommendations](#) to its Member States for the gradual return of tourism this summer, starting with domestic and regional travel. The recognition of the sector's significance is welcome, as is the need for investment. Sustainability and digitalisation will be the basis of a long-term strategic plan to make tourism 'more resilient and sustainable, learning from the crisis and anticipating new trends and consumer patterns.' Where national competence prevails, particularly in relation to practical arrangements, the situation remains fragmented. The overall picture is one of good intentions and real ambition, but also of a gulf between prescription and practicality as the first moves towards 'new normal' are taken.

For relaxation of **border controls**, while economic and social considerations are important, as is the principle of non-discrimination, the governing criteria the Commission recommends are epidemiological, and the capacity both of health systems and appropriate monitoring: 'member States, with the support of the Commission, have agreed on [guidelines](#) for interoperability of mobile apps that support contact tracing and alerts to individuals who may have been exposed to the virus, so that citizens can be warned of a potential infection with coronavirus also when they travel in the EU.'

The use of **vouchers** for future travel has received more support from the Commission, providing they are themselves financially protected, and that consumers may request a cash refund instead no later than 12 months after the original booking, irrespective of the validity of the voucher.

For **transport** the 'availability of safe collective transport options should be ramped up' though the Commission also recommends 'appropriate measures, distinguishing regional and long-distance services.' No explanation is given for this distinction in terms of public safety, and no recommendations are given for load factors, though the forthcoming Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy will incorporate learnings from the COVID-19 crisis.

For **accommodation**, the EC recommends a reduced capacity is set for hotels but does not suggest criteria for such a limit. It recommends the provision of pre-arrival advice to guests about measures in place in destination and social distancing protocols if people will be near each other for 15 minutes or more, and discourages 'sharing the elevator among persons not sharing a room as much as possible to ensure physical distancing.' A high degree of compliance with such recommendations will be impossible for much of the supply chain. The guidelines for increased hygiene measures for clients, premises and transport systems are a much more practical and proportionate response to risk.

However, in a clear demonstration that it recognises the difficulty presented by so many different sources of information and guidelines, the Commission plans 'a dedicated website with an interactive map combining information from Member States and [the] tourist and travel industry, including information on national or sectoral protocols and compliance schemes.' This will be welcome.



The [COVID-19 resources page](#) is reviewed and updated regularly with notifications on which sections updated at the top of the page. Recent updates include:

- [European Commission Tourism and Transport package](#) published (as referred to above). This includes guidance on issuing travel vouchers, the lifting of border controls between EU member states, operation of transport services and developing health protocols for hospitality establishments.
- [UNWTO section](#) updated adding the Tourism Recovery Technical Assistance Package, Third report analysing travel restrictions as of 27 April and World Tourism Barometer May 2020.
- For businesses located in [United Kingdom](#), content on Job retention 'furlough' scheme updated and guidance from UK Government published on operating safely in a range of workplaces.

# ETOA Webinar

ETOA's previous webinars can be reviewed [here](#). Future events will include: destination and regional product development - how public and private sectors can collaborate to stimulate and support recovery; origin markets – what are operators and recent research telling us about travel intentions?

## **Upcoming webinar:**

- 'Crisis and recovery - UK Employment' webinar - May 15, 2020 2 PM BST. Register [here](#).
- 'Crisis and recovery - the Japanese outbound market' webinar - May 21, 2020 10 AM BST. Register [here](#).

## **ETOA's current lobbying priorities remain:**

- Access to liquidity, especially for SMEs
- Resolution to cancellation and refund policies
- Better practical information to enable future planning
- Coordination in standards for food, accommodation, transport systems under any new public health guidelines

## **City Fair 2020: our B2B workshop is moving online**



We have been hard at work to respond to the changing circumstances and finding a solution to best serve the needs of the industry and our members. We are excited to announce that **we will now deliver our tried-and-tested B2B networking workshop online** to make it easier for attendees from across the world to participate at this year's City Fair and lay together the foundations for recovery. [Find out more.](#)

## Members' Features

We have launched our new [Members' Features page](#). On this page is free-of-charge ETOA Member content to support business and encourage stuck-at-home travellers to keep destinations in mind, offering virtual visits, free online events and inspiration for future holidays. Current content from 25+ members ranges from **Vienna's** virtual museum visits, over **Faroe Islands'** opportunity to control a Faroese islander exploring the islands via a joystick, to **Historic Royal Palaces'** live Curator talk tonight at 7pm BST about iconic royal photographs from Queen Victoria to present day.

Keep the ideas coming!

**Members' Features**  
Tackling the Impact of COVID-19 Together

[Contact us to be featured](#)