



August 2020

NEWSLETTER

ETOA crisis-related lobbying is focused in three areas:

- Continued support so the sector can survive 'three winters'
- Better coordination of public policy on borders and public health measures
- Reform of financial protection frameworks

Some of the financial support promised in March has yet to materialise and has often been hard for Europe's micro/SME-dominated industry to access. Some categories of business feel ignored, from coach companies to DMCs, yet they are essential parts of the tourism ecosystem. For more information on ETOA's policy activity, [click here](#).



There are positive signs

ETOA's members report strong interest in European travel among affluent North American clients. Domestic and intra-European tourism in Europe is coming back, especially away from larger cities.

But, while travel restrictions to the Schengen zone remain, Europe risks being seen as 'anti-American' especially, with reports of hostility to US citizens in places which, previously, would have been delighted to see them (and their dollars). If this perception persists it will negatively impact business from the Europe's most

important long-haul market. While people may understand that border restrictions are driven by epidemiological conditions, a clear message must still be sent meanwhile: US visitors are missed and will be made very welcome once they return. The same goes for clients from around the world. Plans for 2021 and beyond are in progress, and we are seeing strong interest in [B2B networking](#).

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

[Global European Marketplace \(GEM\)](#), our member-only event, has always been the most important workshop in the ETOA calendar.

In 2020 we are giving our members the opportunity to [attend either in person or online via our dedicated platform](#) on the 30th October. GEM is THE platform for our members to connect, do business and launch their recovery from the damage done by COVID-19.



Register by Friday 31st July and save £100 with our exclusive Early Bird Rate. Not an ETOA Member yet? [Email us](#) and find out more about our membership offers.



During the autumn ETOA is also delivering online workshops focused on [Catalonia](#), **Switzerland** and **Paris** - please [get in touch](#) for more information.

MORE OR LESS EUROPE?

For anyone of the view that Brussels is an all-powerful bureaucracy capable of imposing its will throughout member states, the past few months may have given pause for thought. Diversity in its tourism offer is a great strength: divergence in crisis response is not. The Package Travel Directive failed both consumers and business, giving rise to a mosaic of improvised solutions, which, together with loss of cashflow, caused great difficulty with cancellations and refunds within the supply chain. Marked disagreement about the size and nature of an EU financial rescue package caused delay and ill-feeling. National and even regional competence over borders, public health and transport adds complexity.

Fragmentation at EU, national and regional levels continues to harm the prospects for recovery

Whether in the variation in social distancing recommendations, load factors on coaches or financial compensation arrangements, there has been lack of coordination and poor communication. The EU can only make recommendations where member states have competence, but it is startling how little national and regional policy-makers have sought to collaborate with their counterparts cross-border to evolve a more rational response to reassure the travelling public as well as industry.

What is true for government is echoed operationally, from complexities in managing entrance to attractions to securing prices in such an uncertain environment. Supplier costs are going up and clients from origin markets worldwide are looking for good rates to stimulate demand: intermediaries subject to those opposing pressures are operating in an increasingly challenging environment. We will provide a more in-depth review of current business conditions in our next members only [Destination and Policy Update](#) on 13th August.

Without coordination mechanisms in place, the risks from unilateral action increase

Variations in local epidemiological conditions will continue: it is therefore essential that a more predictable response is provided otherwise confidence in travel planning will further deteriorate. As the UNWTO's Marcelo Risi said on 28th July following the UK's unilateral decision to impose quarantine on those returning from all parts of Spain: *"we recognise government's duty to put the health of citizens first, but one of the lessons [of the crisis], and it transcends tourism, is really about coordination. We're not sure that going it alone is really the way to do it."* The UNWTO's push for maximum harmonisation is welcome and should be heeded.

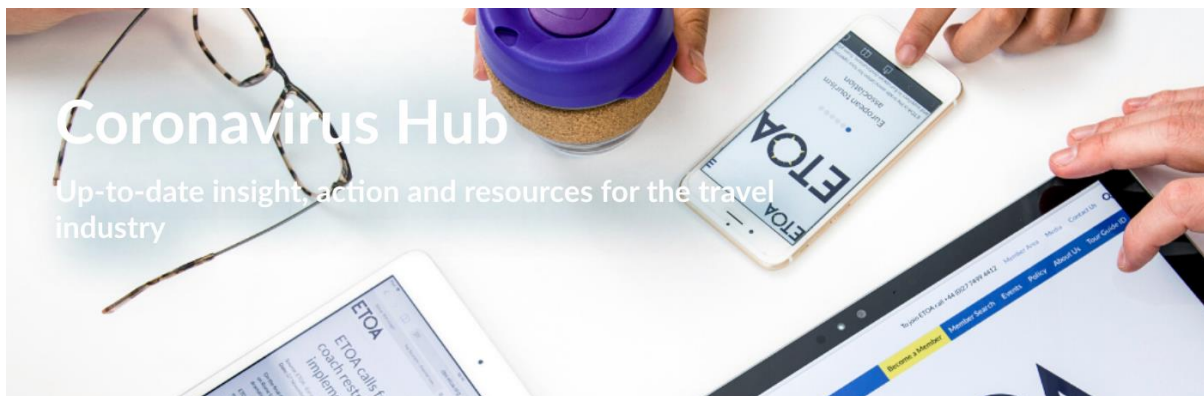
We are all going to have to live with uncertainty related to Covid-19 but, for the most part, it is manageable. Test and trace capability will improve, and vaccines will be developed. The European supply chain has adapted. Insurance policies can evolve, and individuals will take more control over their own management of risk; facemasks are in widespread use, required or not.

But living with poor policy coordination and confusing communication is harder: they cause avoidable harm, loss of confidence and public frustration. ETOA, together with its partners, will continue to make the case for more coordinated, proportionate and rational approach to borders and public health management: the risk of irrecoverable damage to jobs and communities is too high.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is preparing an opinion on the European Commission's communication Tourism and Transport in 2020 and beyond (COM(2020) 550 final). There is clear recognition that the pandemic has put the EU tourism ecosystem under unprecedented pressure, and **direct feedback from EU businesses is requested** to inform the EESC's work. Closing date is 30th August.



Complete the questionnaire



BORDER AND POLICY TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

The un-coordinated and hastily introduced border restrictions in Europe since February have been a challenge for all to follow. Final decision on entry remains a matter of national competence. The EU recognised the need for a common approach in lifting border restrictions in the [Commission's Tourism and Transport package](#) in May. Following calls from ETOA and other industry associations within the Tourism Manifesto and NET, the Commission published the [Re-Open EU map](#) showing real time official information on border restrictions for all EU countries plus Schengen countries

Norway and Switzerland. The UK is not included on the map: Visit Britain's [Know Before You Go](#) page contains information for travellers and links to UK government pages.

In an attempt to save the summer tourism season the EU spearheaded the removal of internal border controls within the Schengen area (although some remain at time of writing in the Nordic countries) and recommended the re-opening of the Schengen external border for some non-EU countries from July once conditions were met. However, adoption of the recommendation has not been universal by member states and quarantine measures and national governments issuing formal advice against non-essential travel for their nationals has further damaged consumer confidence, particularly for cross-border travel. While it is encouraging to see national governments resisting border closures as outbreaks are reported, quarantine measures either on arrival or on return are a deterrent for many travellers.

The scientific basis and effectiveness of quarantine measures is an issue we have highlighted to governments and in the media. Firstly, we have noted different governments have their own definition of what is an acceptable infection rate for travellers arriving (e.g. in Baltic states). Secondly, quarantine measures applicable to a country's national boundary rather than a regional area where an outbreak has occurred damages regional economies unnecessarily, particularly those so dependent on tourism such as the Portuguese and Spanish islands.



Coronavirus (COVID-19)
ETOA - Insight, Action and Resources

More

We will continue to provide actionable information to help members plan operations and navigate the lifting of travel restrictions across Europe. Members are welcome to [contact us](#) with specific questions. [The COVID-19 resources page](#) will continue to contain information on the lifting of border restrictions including travel corridors and link to government sources for the latest on border entry and passenger locator forms that may be required to be completed.



Members' Features
Tackling the Impact of COVID-19 Together

Contact us to be featured

On our [Members' Features page](#) we continue to showcase innovation and free-of-charge content from ETOA's members. New content include a free online access

to **Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum**'s Rembrandt exhibition as well as a link to our new member **Dromedary Industries**' Make Travel Safe Again campaign.

Passolution

[Passolution](#) provides visa, entry and health information via its database, including what border entry criteria a traveller must meet because of COVID-19.

Curious? [Register for a free webinar](#) on 13th August 10 am – or contact Passolution to test it immediately for six months, free of charge for other ETOA members!

www.etoa.org

