

Brussels, 15 December 2020

To the attention of the Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) Dr Andrea Ammon and the Executive Director of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Mr Patrick Ky

The European Travel Commission (ETC), the European Tourism Manifesto alliance, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) welcome the latest *Guidelines for COVID-19 testing and quarantine of air travellers* published by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) on December 2nd.

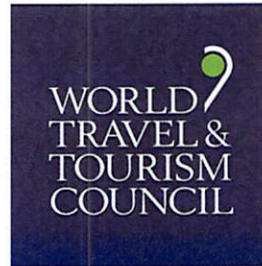
We congratulate ECDC and EASA on the publication of these comprehensive guidelines which provide a clear basis for EU governments to make evidence-based decisions on travel measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, considering the following key points:

- Imported cases account for a very small proportion of all detected cases and are **unlikely to significantly increase the rate of transmission.**
- The **prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 in travellers is estimated likely to be lower** than the prevalence in the general population or among contacts of confirmed cases.
- **Travellers should not be considered as a high-risk population.**
- **Travellers should be subject to the same regulations or recommendations as applied to the local population.**
- Member States should always admit their own nationals and EU citizens and their family members residing in their territory and **should facilitate swift transit through their territories.**

The undersigned organisations have consistently called for a common and risk-based approach to resuming mobility in a safe manner, given the vital role of travel and tourism for European and global economic and social development and the importance of addressing the challenges of the pandemic.

The tourism sector accounts for 9.5% of the EU's GDP¹, provides jobs to 22.6 million people and has a multiplier impact on the wider economy. The global health pandemic left the tourism sector in Europe

¹ WTTC, EU 2020 Annual Research: Key Highlights (2019 Data) - <https://wttc.Org/Research/Economic-Impact>



facing a crisis like no other. Europe saw a 68% decline² in tourist arrivals in the first eight months of 2020 with 11.5 million travel and tourism jobs³ already impacted in the EU.

Millions of livelihoods depending on the sector are on the brink of collapse with travel restrictions as the main factor affecting traveller's confidence. The ECDC-EASA guidelines provide a much-needed **clarity** and **solid basis** for EU Member States to step up the implementation of coordinated measures to facilitate safe travel. **Most notably, the ECDC-EASA recommendation against quarantine or systematic testing for SARS-CoV-2 of air travellers is a pivotal step.**

International coordination will be essential for the resumption of mobility across the world and the recovery of travel and tourism. It is thus critical for the European Union, the United Nations and their Members to work together to achieve consensus and alignment on a science-based approach to travel restrictions in relation to COVID-19, namely on quarantine.

These guidelines create a basis for a **global benchmark** of safety measures for air travel. **Therefore, we urge ECDC and EASA to work with its international partners and specifically the World Health Organization (WHO) to adopt similar guidelines on a global scale.**

We take this opportunity to reaffirm our full availability and commitment to:

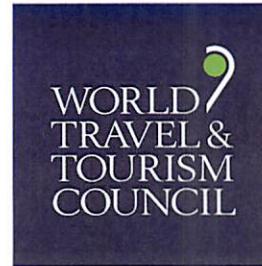
1. Implement the necessary protocols for a seamless and safe travel experience on a coordinated and global scale;
2. Cooperate in defining and implementing the relevant data systems that allow for an effective and updated risk assessment and risk management procedures;
3. Support national health organisations in their clear and committed role in risk management and efforts of controlling the spread of the virus.

We would like to request a meeting with you to discuss these pressing issues and the public health aspect of resumption of travel and tourism at your earliest convenience.

We remain at your disposal to select a suitable date for our meeting and look forward to working together in promoting the safe restart of international travel.

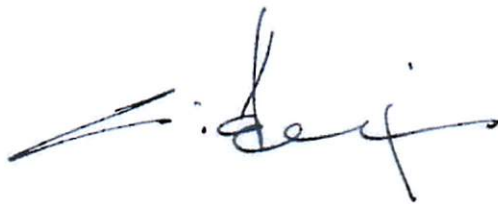
² UNWTO, World Tourism Barometer, October 2020 - <https://www.unwto.org/news/international-tourism-down-70-as-travel-restrictionsimpact-all-regions>

³ <https://wtcc.org/Research/Economic-Impact/Recovery-Scenarios>

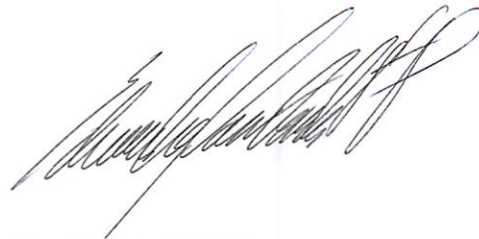


Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



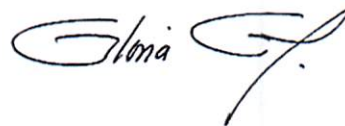
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