

Declaration Common Position EU Tourism Ministers

We, the Ministers of Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Malta, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Spain, highlight that tourism is one of the main industries of the European economy, as it represents more than 10% of the EU's GDP and employs almost 12% of the total labor force. The European Union is the world's leading tourist destination, with more than a 40% share of the world's tourism market in 2018 and 562 million international arrivals after nine consecutive years of sustained growth.

In our countries, tourism constitutes a strategic industry. We would like the EU Recovery Plan to include strong support for tourism and to recognize the existence of certain territories with specificities that must be met. We also agree in expressing the need to establish homogeneous rules for both air and sea or land mobility to guarantee a "safe and seamless travel" in the European area.

For all of the above, we propose a European recovery plan for the tourism industry that integrates coordinated and differentiated measures in the short and medium term aimed at economic support for the industry. This plan would also meet the specific needs of certain territories including outermost regions and islands and ensure intra-European mobility by supporting airlines and establishing common safety standards.

The first set of measures must be those directed at supporting the most affected sectors. In order to limit the destruction of tourist productive activity and employment and ensure a rapid recovery, we must put in place economic measures to maintain and ensure the survival of the business fabric and employment, thus preventing a liquidity crisis from becoming one of solvency.

It is urgent that the European Union supports, through the SURE program launched by the European Commission and the pan-European guarantee fund created by the European Investment Bank, the strategy of maintaining productive structures and employment in the tourism industry, during the entire duration of the crisis.

In addition, the EU needs to set up funds to help companies in the tourism industry learn to stay competitive in a new, dynamic and changing environment. As Commissioner Breton advanced, these funds should make up a very significant amount of the future European Recovery Program.

Secondly, we must jointly support our regions most affected by the crisis. The recovery of these territories must be consistent with the principle of sustainability:

- Economic and social sustainability, promoting innovation and digitalization in tourist destinations.
- Environmental sustainability, promoting the efficient use of resources by moving to a clean and circular economy, ensuring GHG emissions reduction and

protecting biodiversity particularly in oceanic areas, as is specified in the European Green Deal.

Within the framework of this strategy and with the aim of ensuring its survival, we must also consider direct aid to tourist destinations that are part of a strategy of tourism product diversification, such as mountains, inland and rural areas and villages.

Finally, the recovery of transit and mobility is essential, first between the Member States and then with the rest of the world. Air transport is key for tourism and for our economies, for its contribution to economic activity and employment. Therefore, we must facilitate access to liquidity to airlines.

Mobility must guarantee safety and generate confidence in travelers. Therefore, it is necessary that there are homogeneous measures at the European level, so that they are implemented in all Member States. By implementing these measures evenly throughout the EU territory, we will achieve the same “safe and seamless travel” for everyone.

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