

## TOURISM OF TOMORROW: EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS AND EURAIL JOIN FORCES TOWARDS A SHARED VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

**Brussels, 4 June 2020:** The European Travel Commission (ETC), representing National Tourism Organisations, has joined forces with Eurail to present a [White Paper on Rail Transport for International Tourism in Europe](#) defining sustainable growth models that accelerate the transformation to a sustainable, digital and innovative tourism sector in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis.

The coronavirus outbreak continues to have a major impact on mobility and connectivity across the European Union. Measures to contain the outbreak have resulted in a dramatic reduction in international passengers for both the transport and tourism sectors. Tourism is facing the worst crisis since records began, effectively coming to a standstill in Europe for the last two months.

The scale of this crisis will be unprecedented and felt in all regions and countries across Europe. The latest OECD forecast<sup>1</sup> indicates that the implied shock could amount to a 60-80% decline in the international tourism economy in 2020, depending on the duration of the crisis and the speed with which travel and tourism rebounds. The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates that in 2020, some 13 million tourism jobs<sup>2</sup> in Europe are in jeopardy due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Recovery is predicted to be slow, with Europe as a whole not seeing a return to 2019 levels until 2023<sup>3</sup>.

As one of the most labour-intensive sectors of the economy, support to establish a fast-track recovery for the European tourism sector is needed to prevent the loss of millions of jobs. As the importance of climate challenges has not waned, the European tourism sector must also take global lead and set new standards that secure future growth along sustainable patterns.

This white paper presents possible growth models where rail transport becomes pivotal for international travel in Europe, reducing the environmental footprint of tourism and preventing a return to situations of overcrowded destinations. For this vision to become reality, national tourism boards and Eurail call on European Institutions to take action in the following areas:

- Strong political and financial support to promote the benefits of rail travel for leisure purposes among travellers from Europe and overseas, through dedicated educational and promotional campaigns.
- Promote and support sector-wide initiatives led by railways and national tourism boards to engage all relevant actors across the industry and secure support for joint action.
- Commitment to invest and support railways to enable carriers provide quality transport services that meet the specific needs of leisure travellers at an adequate price that leaves no one behind.
- Promote smart mobility models with railways as integrators for a seamless, sustainable, affordable and accessible mobility for residents and visitors alike.

Speaking of the collaboration, Eduardo Santander, Executive Director of ETC, stated that “The current crisis presents an opportunity for change, for a new beginning in tourism across Europe. We must re-think tourism and

<sup>1</sup> OECD, [Tourism Policy Responses to the coronavirus](#)

<sup>2</sup> The World Travel & Tourism Council, Scale of the crisis - [WTTC analysis](#)

<sup>3</sup> European Travel Commission, [European Tourism 2020 – Trends & Prospects Q1/2020](#)

redirect the sector towards a truly sustainable development path, which might establish European tourism, over time, as a role model for an inclusive and sustainable growth”.

Carlo Boselli, General Manager of Eurail, added “Before the COVID-19 crisis, travellers were re-thinking the way they travel, considering less crowded destinations and sustainable transport modes as a way to respond to climate change. These trends are even more visible today, as this combination seems to respond also to the needs of health-conscious travellers. Working together, we can develop market-driven, long-lasting solutions that re-build confidence in travel across every corner of Europe”.

ENDS

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[Note to editors](#)

The **European Travel Commission** is an association of National Tourism Organisations (NTOs). It was created in 1948 to promote Europe as a tourist destination to the long-haul markets outside of Europe, originally in the USA and later in Canada, Latin America and Asia. It currently has 33 member NTOs, including 7 from outside the European Union. For more information, please visit [www.etc-corporate.org](http://www.etc-corporate.org).

**Eurail B.V.** manages the Interrail pass on behalf of 35 European railway and shipping companies. The Interrail pass gives travellers from Europe the opportunity to experience flexible and borderless travel across Europe. The idea of a European rail pass was introduced by European railways in 1959 and quickly became a symbol of European unification and strongly identified with European values. Since its introduction in 1972, the Interrail pass allowed generations of European to travel preceding, anticipating, and enabling the development of a shared European travel culture.