

ETC JOINS UNPRECEDENTED INDUSTRY APPEAL TO EUROPEAN COMMISSION PRESIDENT TO END QUARANTINES AND DEVELOP COMMON EU TESTING PROTOCOL

- *Over 20 EU Travel and Tourism Associations issue open letter to President von der Leyen following further dramatic decreases in air passenger traffic*

Brussels, 18 September 2020: The European Travel Commission (ETC) together with over 20 travel and tourism bodies as well as unions across Europe united today in an unprecedented call for European Commission leadership to replace quarantine restrictions with an EU Testing Protocol for Travel in a bid to save the livelihoods of more than 27 million Europeans who work in the sector.

In an [open letter to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen](#), the groups, who represent over 5,000 member companies and their workers, point to a continued lack of co-ordination and diverging travel restrictions as crippling their business. The letter is signed by representatives from across the tourism and travel sector and their workers, including airlines, airports, railways, ground handlers, caterers, travel retailers, air navigation service providers, tour operators, hotels, restaurants, cafes, travel agents, road transport operators and logistics services, camp sites, holiday parks, taxi operators, tourism boards and authorities and all their associated supply chains.

“European travel and tourism has suffered a devastating blow from the coronavirus crisis due to insufficiently coordinated border restrictions, declining traveller confidence and reduced consumer demand. The industry simply cannot afford to have a similar fragmented picture with inconsistent and constantly changing national approaches for the upcoming autumn and winter seasons. The freedom of movement and millions of livelihoods in Europe are at stake today and the European Commission has to lead the way to restore travel in the EU”, said Luís Araújo, President of the European Travel Commission.

The letter comes as the latest data from airport body ACI EUROPE shows a continued decline in passenger traffic at Europe’s airports during the first two weeks of September – now standing at a loss of -73%; down from sluggish ‘peak recovery level’ of -65% mid-August.

“This chaotic situation requires your immediate personal involvement” states the letter to Mrs. von der Leyen. *“We are thus urging you to make this issue a top priority and calling on you to address this issue directly with Heads of State and Government”*.

“We are therefore also urging you to ensure that the Commission takes the lead in the development of an EU Testing Protocol for travel and its implementation to avoid quarantines and re-open borders”.

The sectors which have united in this call for immediate action point to the fact that the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) formally advises states against extreme travel restrictions, which are neither risk-based nor proven effective where community transmission is already present – which is the case across Europe.

The letter concludes by highlighting the core pillars and essential purpose of the European goals. The reduction and removal of quarantines is, state the signatories, *“instrumental in re-establishing the free movement of people, ending current discriminations and restoring the essential functionality of the Single Market”*.

"We hope the EU will not let us down".

**** ENDS ****

Signatories to the letter are:

- Airline Catering Associations (ACA)
- Airports Council International Europe (ACI EUROPE)
- Airlines International Representation in Europe (AIRE)
- Alliance of Rail New Entrants (ALLRAIL)
- Airport Services Association (ASA)
- AeroSpace and Defence Industries Association of Europe (ASD)
- Airlines for Europe (A4E)
- Civil Air Navigation Services Organization (CANSO)
- European Business Aviation Association (EBAA)
- European Cockpit Association (ECA)
- European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations (ECTAA)
- European Federation of Campingsite Organisations & Holiday Park Associations (EFCO&HPA)
- European Regions Airline Association (ERA)
- European Travel Commission (ETC)
- European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)
- European Tourism Association (ETOA)
- European Travel Retail Confederation (ETRC)
- EU Travel Tech (ETT)
- EuroGites (eurogites)
- General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA)
- Hotels, Restaurants & Cafés in Europe (HOTREC)
- International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)
- International Air Transport Association (IATA)
- International Road Transport Union (IRU)
- Taxi Europe Alliance (TEA)

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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. Europe is the world's no. 1 tourist destination with 742 million international arrivals in 2019 and more than 50% of the market share of worldwide tourism. For more information, please visit www.etc-corporate.org.