

TRAVELLERS ARE NOT A HIGH-RISK: EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION URGES EU GOVERNMENTS TO FOLLOW EASA & ECDC GUIDELINES, LIFT QUARANTINES AND RESTORE MOBILITY INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE EU

- Travellers should not be considered as a high-risk population for spreading COVID-19, according to EASA and ECDC latest guidelines
- EU expert bodies recommend against systematic quarantine of air travellers and for more harmonisation among Member States
- ETC calls on European governments to swiftly implement these recommendations, calling for a coordinated approach ahead of the holiday season

Brussels, 7 December 2020: The European Travel Commission (ETC) has today welcomed the new [Guidelines for COVID-19 testing and quarantine of air travellers](#) from the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which provide a clear pathway for EU governments to make informed decisions on travel measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the latest scientific evidence and information, the report indicates that the prevalence of COVID-19 among travellers is estimated to be lower than is the case for the general population. Most notably, quarantine or systematic testing for SARS-CoV-2 of air travellers is not recommended in the current epidemiological situation.

The guidelines state clearly that people travelling should not automatically be considered as high-risk for spreading infection but should rather be treated in the same way as members of the local population who have not had any direct contact to a person infected with COVID-19. Key conclusions also include:

- The document confirms that air travellers account for less than 1% of all detected COVID-19 cases and do not increase the rate of COVID-19 transmission.
- ECDC and EASA recommend harmonisation among Member States based on the specific measures presented in the guidelines.
- Member States should always admit their own nationals and EU citizens and their family members resident in their territory and should facilitate swift transit through their territories.

A welcome message for European tourism

ETC has consistently called for a common and risk-based approach to restarting European tourism in a safe manner, given the vital importance of travel and tourism on the path to economic recovery in the region. The European tourism sector is at a precipice and cannot survive another round of uncoordinated ineffective restrictions. These new recommendations provide a solid basis for European governments to begin implementing coordinated safety measures to facilitate travel before the vaccine is available.

Embracing the publication, ETC President Luís Araújo stated: *“The importance of restarting mobility in Europe cannot be understated in terms of the role it will play in the recovery of tourism and the wider European economy over the coming months. Millions of livelihoods depending on the tourism sector are on the brink of collapse now and we simply cannot afford wasting more time on these unjustified restrictions. This advice has to be swiftly taken on board by governments as we head into the holiday season and begin the path to recovery.”*

According to ETC’s latest report [“Monitoring Sentiment for Domestic and Intra-European Travel: Wave 2”](#), Europeans maintain a robust desire to travel with 54% of respondents indicated that they will take a trip in the next six months. However, concerns over quarantine restrictions persist as a major deterrent for travel in Europe and cause postponing more trips to 2021.

With these guidelines considering 14-day quarantines to be effective only in the “exceptional situation”, ETC calls on European governments to immediately abolish current blanket restrictions and replace them with comprehensive cost-efficient measures such as a common Passenger Locator Form, rapid testing upon departure and coordinated tracing systems.

ENDS

[Note to editors - About the European Travel Commission](#)

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 32 member NTOs, including 7 from outside the European Union. Europe is the world’s no. 1 tourist destination with 744 million international arrivals in 2019 and more than 50% of the market share of worldwide tourism.

For further information: ETC’s corporate website <http://www.etc-corporate.org> is aimed at industry, government and educational personnel interested in tourism to Europe. Tourists seeking travel-specific information and ideas are directed to ETC’s consumer portal <http://www.visiteurope.com>.

Media contact

Shane Bradley

Hume Brophy Communications

etc@humbrophy.com

Ph: +32 (0)2 234 6860