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NETWORK FOR THE EUROPEAN PRIVATE SECTOR IN TOURISM



PRESS RELEASE

Save the winter tourism season - Suspend ineffective quarantine measures!

In line with new guidelines published by EASA and ECDC on testing and quarantine measures, NET members urge European governments to immediately suspend blanket quarantine measures and travel restrictions. €80 billion of potential tourism spending is in jeopardy.

Brussels, 4 December 2020. This week the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) adopted Guidelines for COVID-19 testing and quarantine of air travellers. The aim is to support Member States in determining a coordinated approach to reduce the risks related to the movement of people within and between the EU/EEA countries and the UK in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This takes the form of recommendations on the use of testing and quarantine measures in different scenarios of travel between areas with different risk levels.

The guidance makes some very important points. In the current epidemiological situation in the EU/EEA countries and the UK, where there is a widespread transmission of COVID-19, the EASA and ECDC:

- Recommend against systematic testing for SARS-CoV-2 and/or quarantine of air travellers;
- Recommend exemption from quarantine and/or SARS-CoV-2 testing for passengers, who travel for a short period of time (i.e. expected return within 72 hours), considering the potentially reduced opportunity for infection and where contacts with local population are limited.

NET members call on Member States to follow the ECDC/EASA guidance and immediately suspend the quarantine requirements and lift restrictions for air travellers.

NET members also support the use of antigenic tests, which are affordable and quick for use before departure or arrival at destination and are still effective in detecting high risk spreading cases. Previous ECDC guidance of 29 October 2020 indicates that the use of rapid antigen tests can help

reduce further transmission through early detection of highly infectious cases, enabling a rapid start of contact tracing.

The travel and tourism industry needs a coordinated approach on travel restrictions. A move to more evidence-based proportionate restrictions regime could save the European winter tourism season, which is worth an estimated 80 billion euros in tourism-related spending.

Said Eric Drésin, rotating Secretariat of NET: “Our industry is urging European governments to ease up travel restrictions for the winter season, as long the epidemiological situation has not improved to justify testing and/or quarantine measures. Moreover, travel restrictions for short business trips should be lifted, recognising that they represent a lower risk of transmission. We would also advise to lift travel restrictions for package travellers, who like business travellers, have minimal contacts with the local population whilst in the resort.”

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NET is a network of representative trade associations from the private sector in European tourism. NET’s purpose is to develop common goals for industry and work with policy-makers and other partners to achieve them. Tourism is central to Europe’s economic prospects. It contributes more than 10% of EU GDP and provides about 12 million jobs, largely in small and medium sized enterprises. Between them, they make up the third largest socio-economic activity in the EU.

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