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NETWORK FOR THE EUROPEAN PRIVATE SECTOR IN TOURISM



ETOA



PRESS RELEASE

Industry survival depends on common testing protocol in Europe

NET welcomes the announcement of the Commission of a European testing protocol for travellers and a common approach to quarantines. If correctly implemented, it will restore travel confidence and allow the travel and tourism industry to lift off again.

Brussels, 29 October 2020. Yesterday the Commission urged Member States again to fully implement the Council Recommendation for a common and coordinated approach to restrictions to free movement, stressing that citizens and businesses need clarity and predictability. Any remaining COVID-19 related internal border control measures should be lifted.

NET is looking forward to the adoption of a European testing protocol for travellers as well as a common approach to quarantine practices to all modes of transport. The travel and tourism industry needs reliable and efficient testing to replace quarantine requirements and other travel restrictions in order to restore consumer confidence in travelling.

But for such testing to be effective it is important to include the following:

- Sufficient testing capacity in airports, bus/coach terminals and other stations to prevent bottlenecks;
- Deployment of rapid and cheap testing methods, such as antigen tests, for asymptomatic travellers;
- Lifting of quarantine and movement restrictions in case of negative test results;
- Mutual recognition of test results between Member States to avoid a second test at arrival;
- Lifting of quarantine requirements for persons, who have a low risk profile, notably:
 - Transport crew and staff — who are trained to reduce risk, are following specific hygiene schemes and are under close supervision of European operators.
 - Business travellers — when they stay in a risk area less than 72h, as they are risk-aware and have minimal contact with the local population.

- Package travellers — package holidays are organised end-to-end with strict health and safety protocols in place and there is minimal contact with the local population whilst in resort.
- Passengers in transit.
- Digital solutions, such as a common digital platform where Passenger Locator Forms and test results are uploaded for each traveller.

Said Eric Drésin of ECTAA, current Secretariat of NET: “The travel and tourism industry has made tremendous efforts to adopt and implement in a very short time health and safety protocols to guarantee the safety of its customers. But all this is in vain, if travellers can't travel due to different and rapidly changing travel restrictions, such as quarantine requirements and movement restrictions. Rapid and cheap testing of travellers using any mode of transport is key for the survival of our industry.”

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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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