

NET

NETWORK FOR THE EUROPEAN PRIVATE SECTOR IN TOURISM



PRESS RELEASE

Coordination of travel restrictions is good but does not go far enough

NET welcomes the agreement reached by Member States to coordinate the restrictions of free movement within Europe in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the measures are not nearly sufficient to restore travel confidence

Brussels, 13 October 2020: NET hails the efforts done by the Commission and Member States in reaching agreement over a more coordinated approach to travel restrictions within Europe. It welcomes the use of common data provided by the ECDC as well as criteria for mapping of risk areas, broken down into regions.

However, the Recommendation fails (a) to translate this common approach to risk identification into a common approach for travel restrictions; and (b) its main objective which is to avoid fragmentation and disruption, and to increase transparency and predictability for citizens and businesses. The instrument adopted by the Council today is very vague with regards to the application of travel restrictions and requirements.

NET has been a strong advocate of a common approach to travel restrictions. The current patchwork of quarantine requirements, supplemented by tests and other obligations, which are introduced at very short notice, are not helpful to restore travel confidence. NET also echoes the concerns raised by the air transport stakeholders.

We urgently call upon the EU Institutions to revisit the Recommendation in the coming weeks with a view to addressing the problematic areas by:

- a. defining clear rules on which travel restrictions and obligations apply going from one colour coded area to another;
- b. replacing quarantine requirements by testing for those travellers coming from risk areas;
- c. publishing information on new travel restrictions 5 days before they come into effect, as proposed by the Commission.

Said Eric Drésin, rotating Secretariat of NET: “This is a good start, but further work is required to safeguard the free movement within the EU. We urge the Council Presidency to make further progress and commend Member States to follow the recommendations to consider substitution of quarantine with testing and to continue development of testing.”

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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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