



Luxembourg, 8th October, 2020

Commissioner Thierry Breton
European Commission

European Tourism Convention

12 October 2020

Statement by Lex Delles, Minister for Tourism, Luxembourg

I would like to thank Commissioner Breton for convening the European Tourism Convention and for addressing the main challenges for the European tourism sector and investment priorities in the years to come. The latter are highly relevant in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic and with a view towards the future. As part of this, we need to move away from any internal borders within the Single Market. After the COVID-19 pandemic, tourists need confidence that their journey abroad can happen. Otherwise, they will not take up travelling again. Therefore, all governments have to take their responsibility in making sure travelling is safe and sustainable, including through a proper enforcement of health protocols.

In a long-term perspective, investments in **digitalization**, **infrastructure**, and a **qualified workforce** are key elements to build resilience and guarantee a sustainable development of the tourism sector. The **digitalization** of the touristic offer and innovative technologies play a major role in facilitating access to information and enhancing the visitor experience. As such, support programs that assist the uptake of digital technologies and strengthen the professionalization of associations, non-profit actors and businesses in the tourism field become increasingly important. Moreover, continuous investments in physical **infrastructure** are essential to ensure quality, accessibility and the well-functioning of the sector in the long run.

The tourism ecosystem should also be **sustainable** from a social and environmental point of view. A highly qualified and motivated **workforce** constitute the foundation of the sector. Therefore, a focus should be put on fair working conditions, skills development and ongoing professional trainings for stakeholders and actors in the field. Circular economy is also an integral component when it comes to developing the sector and building a roadmap towards the future.



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de l'Économie

Le Ministre des Classes moyennes
Le Ministre du Tourisme

In the coming years, our work should consist in enhancing **collaboration** and cross-sectorial coordination with all actors in the tourism field, while building on existing networks. Innovative approaches, new business models and synergies between actors and stakeholders from different fields can help to revitalize the sector, generate jobs and boost the economy.

In the same line of thought, we should aim for an EU-wide approach and the exchange of best practice, based on the freedom of movement between all Member States and mutual trust. Tourists need predictability and confidence to undertake their travel journeys across the EU. Hence, an increased **dialogue** at national and European level remains of utmost importance in order to address common challenges and develop pertinent solutions in a collaborative way.

With regard to investment priorities for the recovery of the tourism ecosystem, Government support over the past months has been key to keep the sector afloat. As such, it will be crucial to maximise the impact of the **EU recovery plan** by targeting those businesses that are most in need.

At the same time, we need to keep our flexibility to provide financial aid at **national level**. The Temporary Framework for State Aid has enabled us to put in place aid schemes that proved vital in supporting our economy. In this regard, we welcome the Commission's proposal to extend the provisions of the **Temporary Framework** in order to help the process of recovery in the tourism sector.

Yours sincerely,

Lex Delles
Minister for Tourism
Minister for Small and Medium-Sized
Enterprises