

Zuhal Demir

Minister for Justice and Enforcement, Environment, Energy and Tourism (Flemish region)

Valérie De Bue

Minister for Civil Service, Tourism, Heritage and Road Safety (Walloon region)

Rudi Vervoort

Minister-President of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region, responsible for Urban Development and Urban Renewal, Tourism, the Promotion of the Image of Brussels and Bicultural Issues of regional Importance (Brussels-Capital region)

Isabelle Weykmans

Minister for Culture and Sport, Employment and the Media (German-speaking community)

**Written declaration on the occasion of the European Tourism Convention
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The COVID-19 pandemic has had a strong impact on the tourism sector. Overnight, the sector proved vulnerable, heralding the abrupt end of a period of unbridled growth.

This disruption has left its mark on the policy context. Before the coronacrisis, the measures taken focussed on protecting and safeguarding the resilience of tourist destinations. In the coming years, however, we will again have to concentrate on the growth of tourism, while continuing to pay attention to the resilience of destinations.

This crisis offers a unique opportunity to re-examine the development of tourism, in which tourism is no longer a goal in itself but a means to benefit the community and the destination to the full. Hence, we fully invest in growth, in which we privilege quality over quantity. Technology-driven innovative solutions may be harnessed to better manage and control the tourist flows at the destinations, to encourage the development of tourism in lesser known and green destinations and to spread tourists in space and time.

The impact of the crisis is tangible in the whole of the tourism ecosystem. A joint approach will be called for if we want to reopen and redevelop the affected destinations. It will be a matter of finding the correct balance between the various stakeholders, which will in turn require a new measuring framework and a state-of-the-art monitoring and evaluation system.

This crisis offers new opportunities and challenges for the future, with a likely increase in the demand for virtual experiences, close-to-home and less densely populated, green destinations and cultural tourism. Responsive measures and recovery plans in support of the development of sustainable tourism have to take centre stage in the recovery efforts. A future-oriented policy is more than ever called for to shore up recovery and to rebuild a tourism economy which is more sustainable and more resilient.

In our capacity as policy makers we will also have to reflect on the long-term consequences of the crisis for the sector and on the structural transformation which will be needed. We will have to find a way of integrating tourism in the circular economy (ecodesign, sustainable and local consumption, ...). Even after the immediate response to the crisis, green transition and digital transformation will stay relevant and policymakers' decisions will continue to play an important role in shaping the tourism sector in the post-COVID-19 era.

It will be essential to reconcile short-term and long-term actions, since today's measures will define tomorrow's tourism. The best way to do this, is to draw up a tourism policy jointly with a vast group of stakeholders; residents, entrepreneurs, visitors, policymakers, experts in diverse fields, other policy areas such as heritage, sports, nature, ... The private sector, and the SMEs in particular, plays an important part in this coordinated approach. We will adopt co-creation, in which each participant commits himself and takes responsibility from a shared frame of reference.

We will have to guarantee that the perspectives of the travel and tourism sector are reflected in policy actions which will affect journeys to and within countries. The successful development of a tourist destination will depend on a strong cooperation between national, regional and local actors who are responsible for security, health and transport and with all players who have an impact on tourism development in general. Reinforcing the feeling of security among tourists (via digital developments) and supplying real-time information and adequate assistance are essential in this. Alternative travel modes and investments in multimodal transportation need to be promoted.

The tourism policy also has to face the societal challenges of poverty, integration, social exclusion, loneliness, inclusion, ageing and health care. Although a restorative holiday or a carefree family outing is no miracle solution to break out of poverty or social exclusion, it may be a step in the right direction and part of the answer.

Tourism should evolve from a vulnerable to a resilient sector.

Hence the importance for authorities to support investments which are aimed at a more resilient, more inclusive and greener sector. It is necessary to invest in the development of sustainable and high-quality tourism infrastructure in order to facilitate the development of local SMEs (e.g. events and congress infrastructure to the benefit of cultural actors). All businesses involved in the tourism ecosystem (accommodation sector, transportation, ...) need to be encouraged to invest in green and low-carbon applications. Particular attention will have to be granted to the revival of city tourism, including event, congress and seminar tourism.

The recovery of tourist destinations and tourist businesses will largely depend on their capacity to make the most of technological developments, understand travellers' needs, monitor trends and the extent to which they offer and market innovative experiences.

The competitiveness and resilience of the tourism industry need to be strengthened through support for the digital and innovative development of SMEs. Recovery packages will need to focus on maximising the use of technology, encouraging digitalisation and investment in digital skills, for workers and the self-employed in particular. We will therefore have to invest in high-quality training and job creation.

Lastly, a coordinated and harmonised approach in the whole of the EU is essential for the recovery of the tourism ecosystem, both in the field of public health and that of formalities and authorisations required for travel and journeys abroad.