



**Written statement from Nikolina Brnjac Minister of Tourism and Sports of  
the Republic of Croatia on the occasion of the European Tourism  
Convention (2020, October 12th)**

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, tourism accounted for more than 10% of EU GDP and almost 12% of the total labor force.

As tourism is among sectors most affected by the crisis, close cooperation between the Member States, the EU institutions and relevant stakeholders should be at the heart of the policies to initiate a recovery and a long-term sustainable future.

Our immediate priorities are measures designed to minimize the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the liquidity in the sector and a coordinated approach to facilitation of the free movement, but it is equally important not to lose sight of the long-term perspective for the sector.

***The main challenges for European tourism in the next 10-20 years***

**Sustainability, digitalisation and security:** It is expected that tourism will dramatically change in the next 10-20 years – owing to climate change and its impacts, as well as to consequences of the political instabilities. All this, combined with the digital revolution, will seriously affect behavioral models of future travelers, their demands and aspirations.



Thus, management of different types of crises at EU level becomes one of the key challenges to be expected, taking into account a number and variety of possible threats.

**Supporting education and skills:** Education and availability of skilled workers in the sector is extremely important. Continuous education and development of skills for workers in tourism, increasing job attractiveness, as well as development of hybrid skills and COVID-proofing procedures is a priority.

**Appropriate funding:** The contribution of tourist sector to European economy should be recognized and adequately reflected in the availability of European funding. Furthermore, the absorption capacity of less developed regions across Europe should be strengthened as to allow for investment in integrated sustainable and green management of destinations, including smart infrastructural support to changing tourism conditions.

***Investment priorities for the sustainable recovery and resilience of the EU tourism ecosystems***

Tourism is one of the most complex economic ecosystems. Hospitality, tourism travel operators, transport and accommodation are affected differently by the crisis and will require specially tailored support.

Immediate liquidity support, primarily for SMEs but also for larger companies in tourism, should be provided to reduce the impact of losses suffered during the spring and summer season. Specific funds and tools should be made available for this purpose as companies in tourism are currently seen as high risk by the financial institutions.



As a horizontal priority, the EU's ambition of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 55% by 2030 will require significant additional investments in the coming decade. Investments in green tourist infrastructure, especially in less developed regions of the EU, should be supported by adequate EU funding.

Tourism stakeholders continue to be faced with multiple challenges and need to be better prepared, in order to secure the resilience of the sector. In this sense development of soft-skills and education should be supported on a European level.

Funding should also be provided for development of digital tools which can deliver dependable and timely information for travellers.

Overall, support for projects in the tourist and related sectors, such as transport, should enable the twin green and digital transitions, which are essential for building a stronger, safer, more sustainable, responsible and resilient tourism ecosystems.

**MINISTER**  
**Nikolina Brnjac, Ph.D.**