

RESEARCH SHOWS STRENGTH OF TOURISM SECTOR'S SUPPORT FOR WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES

Madrid, Spain, 13 may 2020 – *Employers from across global tourism are taking the lead in supporting their workers and helping the communities in which they operate, research carried out into the sector's response to COVID-19 has found.*

As the sector faces up to an unprecedented challenge, the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (a subsidiary of the World Tourism Organization) has analysed the steps being taken by businesses and trade associations to **mitigate the impact of the pandemic**. Studying the actions taken by signatories of the Private Sector Commitment to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET) in 25 countries, the research revealed that, in spite of staff furloughs, employers across the sector are stepping up their support for workers and for communities.

Tourism 'going beyond its responsibilities'

Committee Chairman Pascal Lamy touched base with the GCET Signatories to learn about the mitigation actions being championed by tourism companies and trade associations. Mr Lamy said: "It is evident that the sector's engagement goes beyond symbolic CSR actions. The GCET signatories, although hit terribly hard by the crisis like their colleagues across the tourism sector, have shown that they indeed care for the societies they operate in while striving to keep their businesses afloat".

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili welcomed the initiative of the tourism sector while at the same time calling on governments to work with private employers to safeguard jobs and livelihoods. He said: "Governments should not abolish the resources already allocated to tourism in their budgets for 2020. Tourism administrations also need to communicate to the general public what the sector is doing for the society in these troublesome times."

Solidarity with Tourism Workers and Communities

The survey found that many companies are providing 24-hour psychological help for their employees, while also **maintaining medical insurance** and facilitating platforms with motivational videos, medical updates and training. Many are also offering **free lodging** and food for stranded international staff and their families.

Monetary donations have been given to city councils, underprivileged families and rural communities, and food and supplies have been sent to frontline workers and vulnerable groups. Some businesses chambers are working with public, real estate, financial and legal entities to **provide SMEs with funding** and identify guarantors for those unable to receive a loan. Associations have engaged in local pandemic committees to flag up the most pressing issues and better articulate their support.

Hotels have donated thousands of gift nights to medical staff for their holidays and remained open for them and COVID19 patients whenever necessary. Guides offered virtual tours for voluntary contributions donated to hospitals, and transportation companies offered their channels to bring critical emergency equipment to save lives. Volunteer platforms also have been set up to create youth loans. Virtual solidarity groups gathered hundreds of travel agents with multiple jobs to exchange goods and support their livelihoods.

Useful Links:

[The World Committee on Tourism Ethics](#)

[Private Sector Signatories of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism](#)

[UNWTO and COVID-19: Putting People First](#)