



CEU/65/DEC  
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**DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE UNWTO COMMISSION  
FOR EUROPE AT ITS SIXTY-FIFTH MEETING**

**Virtual Meeting – Hosted by the Republic of Uzbekistan**

**25 June 2020**

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## 1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Agenda of the 65<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe was presented to the Members by the Chairman of the Commission, H.E. Mr. Harry Theoharis, Minister of Tourism of Greece. The Members adopted the agenda as follows:

- 10:00 - 10:05     **Adoption of the Agenda – Welcome by the CEU Chair**  
*H.E. Mr. Harry Theoharis, Minister of Tourism, Greece*
- 10:05 – 10:15     **Communication of Uzbekistan, host country of the virtual 65<sup>th</sup> CEU**  
*H.E. Mr. Aziz Abdukhakimov, Deputy Prime-Minister –Chairman, State Committee for Tourism Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan*
- 10:15 - 10:25     **Communication of the CEU Chair (Greece)**  
*H.E. Mr. Harry Theoharis, Minister of Tourism, Greece*
- 10:25 - 10:40     **Introductory remarks: Report of the Secretary-General**  
*Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General*
- 10:40 – 10:50     **Current activities and initiatives carried out in Europe during the COVID-19**  
*Prof. Alessandra Priante, Regional Director for Europe*
- 10:50 – 11:00     **International Protection of Tourists: Rebuilding Consumers' Confidence**  
*Ms. Alicia Gomez, Legal Counsel, UNWTO*
- 11:00 – 12:20     **Ministerial discussion on policy issues in response to COVID-19**
- 12:20 – 12:25     **Address by the President of the Board of the UNWTO Affiliate Members**  
*Ms. Ana Larrañaga, Director, Exhibition Business Unit, IFEMA*
- 12:25 – 12:30     **Address by the representative of the European Commission**  
*Ms. Anna Athanasopoulou, Head, DG GROW–Tourism Unit, European Commission*
- 12:30 – 12:40     **Keynote: The future of jobs**  
*Mr. Juan Urdiales, Co-Founder & Co-CEO, Job and Talent*
- 12:40 – 12:50     **UNWTO-IFC Green Financing Instrument**  
*Ms. Natalia Bayona, Senior Expert on Innovation and Digital Transformation, UNWTO*
- 12:50– 12:55     **Place of the 66th Meeting of the Commission for Europe**
- 12:55 – 13:00     **Conclusions and closing of the Meeting of the Commission**  
*H.E. Mr. Harry Theoharis, Minister of Tourism, Greece*  
*Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General, UNWTO*

## 2. DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION

CEU/DEC/1(LXV)

### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA – WELCOME BY THE CEU CHAIR

Agenda item 1

The Commission,

Adopts the agenda of its sixty-fifth meeting, as shown on page 2 of the Decisions.

Thanks the Chair of the UNWTO Commission for Europe (Greece) for his welcome words,

Expresses its deep appreciation to the Republic of Uzbekistan for hosting the 65<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting, virtually, due to the extreme COVID-19-related measures, which prevented the meeting from being directly held in the splendorous city of Samarkand as it was foreseen.

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### COMMUNICATION OF UZBEKISTAN, HOST COUNTRY OF THE VIRTUAL 65<sup>TH</sup> CEU MEETING

Agenda item 2

The Commission,

Having heard the communication of the Deputy Prime-Minister –Chairman of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the Development of Tourism, regarding:

- The symbolism of holding the Commission meeting in Uzbekistan, situated in a region that has transformed the role of tourism drastically over the past 20 years, as an increasingly important element of international relations and global integration process;
- The President's fundamental support to this strategic sector through immediate strict measures taken to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, which have effectively prevented the further spread of the virus;
- The economic and social protection measures and benefits for the unemployed and for senior citizens and retirees in particular together with the opening of vast development opportunities;

- The additional measures taken by the Government of Uzbekistan for the development of the tourism sector aiming at creating a safe and secure environment for domestic and inbound tourism; These measures include (a) a new system of sanitary and health requirements called “Uzbekistan. Safe Travel Guaranteed” designed to become a kind of “airbag” for foreign tourists as well as (b) a Safe Tourism Fund, to compensate foreign tourists who may become infected with the covid-19.
- The importance of digital technologies in the tourism industry to stimulate tourism destinations;
- The need to develop high-level initiatives that attract international expertise, skilled human resources and a well-educated youth, the promotion of national heritage and specially to improve air connectivity, a top priority for Uzbekistan;
- The importance given by the Government of Uzbekistan to prolong the tourist season and diversify tourism products
- Wishes to take the opportunity of this meeting to convey to UNWTO its appreciation for its close cooperation and its interest in having a more active role in its activities through its membership in UNWTO’s Executive Council, the hosting of its General Assembly and of an international conference on tourism investment.

Thanks him for it;

Expresses its appreciation for Uzbekistan’s commitment to the objectives of the UNWTO Commission for Europe by hosting the Commission meeting in Samarkand through a virtual meeting, in view of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic;

Welcomes its significant efforts and various and targeted measures to support the tourism sector, to effectively respond to the current COVID-19 crisis;

Congratulates the Government of Uzbekistan for its commitment and swift response in transmitting the important health precautions and safety programmes to ensure the safety of tourists and other visitors.

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CEU/DEC/3(LXV)

**COMMUNICATION OF THE CEU CHAIR**

Agenda item 3

The Commission,

Having heard the communication of the Minister of Tourism of Greece, on:

- The severe impact of the pandemic on world and European economy, especially in countries -like Greece- where a substantial part of their GDP is based on tourism;
- The need to improve risk assessment in tourism and strengthen coordination mechanisms to shape global decision-making;

- The important support given by UNWTO through its European Task Force led by Greece and the UNWTO Global Tourism Crisis Committee, which provided an analysis of the pressures of the tourism industry and recommendations related to the support of travel and tourism, to accelerate economic recovery;
- The need to encourage measures that keep the tourism sector operational, ensure employment and boost demand;
- The need to adapt to the digital transformation, increasingly develop innovation ecosystems and partnerships in order to build a stronger and more resilient tourism sector in the future;
- The importance of ensuring health protocols and a safety system are in place and well monitored in order to restore confidence and safeguard visitors, workers and citizens' health;

Expresses its appreciation to UNWTO for its strong commitment and support to the Members.

Thanks him for it;

Welcomes and takes notes regarding the Chairperson's observations on the above-mentioned subjects;

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CEU/DEC/4(LXV)

### **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

Agenda item 4

The Commission,

Having heard the Remarks of the Secretary-General on the difficult situation of the tourism sector as a result of the devastating impact of the COVID-19, the initiatives taken by UNWTO in response to it, as well as the recommendations and guidelines that emerged from the meetings of the specifically created UNWTO Global Tourism Crisis Committee, integrated by UNWTO member States, some agencies of the United Nations system and representatives of the private tourism sector,

Commends UNWTO for its solidarity and support to all Members strongly affected by the pandemic and for the major awareness efforts made at the global level to alert global leaders on the heavy repercussions of the pandemic on the tourism sector;

Thanks the Organization for helping Members to strengthen institutions and multi-stakeholder collaboration mechanisms, marketing and promotion and providing economic assessment towards the recovery that ensures the inclusion of tourism;

Concurs that the full economic recovery of European economies will not happen without the tourism sector and that there is the need for Members to adopt key collective recovery measures for the sake of coherence and share best practices and strategies to increase the resilience capacity of the sector;

Encourages to continue its close cooperation and partnerships with regional and international institutions such as the European Union, the World Bank, EBRD, etc.

Appreciates the development of the first UNWTO Global Tourism Dashboard that provides the main indicators of tourism in member States including the policies and measures taken to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, to assist public and private sectors;

Commends the European Members for the health and safety protocols implemented in the tourism sector to help towards the recovery of the sector, whilst limiting to the maximum the negative impact of the crisis;

Commends UNWTO for the Healing Solutions for Tourism Challenge initiative to identify the most innovative and advanced technologies for mitigating and overcoming the COVID-19 crisis;

Appreciates the #TravelTomorrow global campaign, one of the key communications' initiatives of the Organization, to highlight UNWTO's key message on the bright future of tourism and for those for which tourism is the main livelihood;

Thanks the Organization for the development of the Tourism Recovery Technical Assistance Package, to assist Members and their private sector in designing their strategies towards the recovery of their tourism sector, including economic, promotional and institutional strategies;

Welcomes the fact that the current crisis is an opportunity to transform the tourism sector, in adapting to the new realities of the market, in anticipating the changes in the consumption and production of tourism consumers and moving concretely towards a real sustainable tourism.

Welcomes the necessity to re-create a trusting environment re-establish confidence for visitors coming to European destinations.

Encourages UNWTO to pursue its promotion of Gastronomy tourism, which is an important protector of cultural heritage and helps create job opportunities, among others;

Congratulates UNWTO for all the initiatives it is undertaking and expresses its satisfaction for the relentless efforts in working towards the sustainable recovery of the tourism sector.

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CEU/DEC/5(LXV)

**CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES CARRIED OUT IN EUROPE**  
**DURING THE COVID-19**

Agenda item 5

The Commission,

Having followed the presentation of the Regional Director for Europe informing the Members of the activities carried out by the Regional Department to support the European Members in coping with the challenges of their travel and tourism sector,

- Thanks for the update on the data on the impact of the COVID-19 on Tourist arrivals;
- Appreciates its efforts in mainstreaming tourism at the highest political levels, to stress the importance of tourism for the socio-economic recovery;
- Thanks the Regional Department for Europe for the survey carried out on Members' priorities to better respond to their needs as well as for the elaboration of specific infographics on each Member including tourism data and matching priorities between Members and the Organization;
- Expresses its appreciation for developing the Webinar series "Quo Vadis Tourism", to provide, intelligence and analysis, with international experts and professionals in areas such as communications, statistics, SDGs, Data, Consumer rights protection, MICE industry;
- Welcomes the creation of the online platform EuropeConnect, where Members directly communicate among them and the Regional Department for Europe, and where information on UNWTO activities, projects and initiatives is provided;
- Supports the enhanced cooperation with International Financial Institutions such as with EBRD with the objectives to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19;
- Supports the development of the "UNWTO Data Lab" that creates innovative data systems as well as of the "Jobs Factory" programme which aims at bringing together public and private sectors to improve the tourism workforce, and highlights the importance and crucial role of tourism in the implementation of the 17 SDGs;
- Welcomes the participation of the members of the Regional Department for Europe in various webinars and events organized virtually by its Members;
- Appreciates its outreach to academic institutions to open links to their free-of-charge courses and webinars, among others, and for the development of UNWTO Tourism Online Academy scholarships;
- Congratulates the strong efforts carried out to support the UNWTO European Members and private sector in their policies to effectively respond to the complex challenges of the COVID pandemic.

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 CEU/DEC/6 (LXV)

**INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION OF TOURISTS:**  
**REBUILDING CONSUMERS' CONFIDENCE**

Agenda item 6

The Commission,

Having heard the presentation made by UNWTO's Legal Counsel on the rights of international tourists during the COVID crisis,

Concurred with the importance of restoring confidence in order to move forward, including:

(a) the adoption of minimum standards on international assistance and the protection of the rights of tourists, as consumers, in emergency situations;

(b) the harmonization and development of international standards on the protection of tourists, as consumers, substantiated with a code for the protection of the rights of tourists.

Supports UNWTO in reminding the public and private sectors of the need to respect international minimum standards, of the responsibilities and obligations towards tourists and tourism professionals;

Appreciates the preliminary proposal for a draft convention already endorsed by the General Assembly.

Thanks the Organization for its relentless commitment and efforts to ensure a respectful and safe recovery of tourism.

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CEU/DEC/7 (XLV)

## **MINISTERIAL DISCUSSION ON POLICY ISSUES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

Agenda item 6

The Commission,

Having heard the overview made by Members' delegations on the unprecedented measures taken by Governments to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, including the following:

### **Health:**

- Preparation of mandatory health and safety guidelines and protocols; Development of specific measures for tourism services;
- Development of information and websites to prevent and react in case of infection.

### **Economic support measures**

Wide range of fiscal and economic measures aiming at maintaining liquidity of businesses, such as softening of loans, tax deferrals, concession payments to secure minimum wages, special subsidies, etc.) to protect employment and businesses;

**Legislation:** Improvement in the regulations to ensure medical and economic preparedness and a flexible response to emerging of new virus-related incidents;

**Consultation with the sector:** Intensive dialogues between the public and private sectors on the needs of the sector and the best approaches to help the tourism sector towards its recovery;



### **Supporting measures towards the recovery of the tourism sector**

- To give tourists the confidence and trust to travel to and within Europe, conveying the message of a trustworthy controlled implementation of health and strict safety protocols throughout the country;
- Increasing the country's internal potential such as improving infrastructure and facilities, product development and innovation, especially to revive firstly domestic tourism;
- Development of observatories to make tourism indicators, data and information in real time to be able to analyse and predict the different scenarios and, consequently, the public policies to be implemented;
- Creating recovery campaigns, first for domestic tourism and for the gradual opening of the borders, also major international marketing campaigns, both always reminding of the need to follow the safety protocols;
- Encouraging new outdoor activities and products such as eco and agro tourism, medical tourism, etc.

### **Conclusions from Members**

- The Coronavirus pandemic has dramatically redefined the concept of normality and modified the way we travel. We have become aware that to ensure a sustainable recovery of the tourism sector, a strong collaboration and coordination is fundamental;
- Every country looks forward to reopening the borders and work towards the restart of the tourism activity. However, it requires an intensive monitoring of the health situation and weighing up of the necessary measures, a primary concern in choosing to travel to a destination;
- A "new normal" has emerged out of the crisis based on principles of reduced numbers, slower growth rates, new travel intensity and behavior, and a greater emphasis on distancing and hygiene.
- But this crisis is also offering an opportunity for all stakeholders to address the negative effects of unrestrained growth, social and environmental impacts on tourism and to ensure that tourism has stronger foundations: more sustainable, inclusive accessible and innovative, all of which lead to reaching the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The Commission thanks the Members for the useful sharing of their valuable feedback and their responses to the coronavirus outbreak;

Concurs with all its conclusions to achieve a sustainable recovery of the hard-hit travel and tourism sector, and highlights especially the essential need to strengthen the collaboration and coordinated approaches among Members;

Thanks UNWTO for its very valuable work through the Global Tourism Crisis Committee, and through its European Task Force lead by Greece, the recommendations and analysis, the different initiatives, and activities to support the Members in these current circumstances.

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CEU/DEC/7 (LXV)

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AFFILIATE MEMBERS OF UNWTO**

Agenda item 7

The Commission,

Having heard the presentation made by the Chair of the Board of the UNWTO Affiliate Members and Director of the Exhibition Business Unit of IFEMA/FITUR.

Takes note with interest of the strong presence of Affiliate Members in Europe;

Appreciates the close collaboration between UNWTO and its Affiliate Members in particular in their efforts and initiatives to cope with the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the tourism sector;

Expresses its satisfaction for the active participation in the Global Tourism Crisis Committee;

Welcomes the sharing of activities, resources and best practices particularly through the AM Connected Platform;

Takes note with interest and appreciation of the re-opening protocols proposed by the Affiliate Members regarding air travel, the hotel industry, amusement parks and attractions;

Thanks the Affiliate Members for their contribution to UNWTO in the difficult recovery efforts, in rebuilding confidence, promoting public-private partnerships and being prepared for possible new outbreaks that may slow down the recovery effort.

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CEU/DEC/8 (LXV)

**ADDRESS BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Agenda item 8

The Commission,

Having heard the presentation of the Head of the DG GROW- Tourism Unit of the European Commission

Thanks her for it;

Concurs with its assessment of the severe impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the tourism sector has put millions jobs at stake, mostly among SMEs and family-run businesses;

Supports its views on the importance for public authorities and policy makers to make decisions balancing public health safety concerns while protecting businesses and jobs;

Congratulates the Commission for mobilising all the available tools at its disposal, namely flexible state aid framework including an EU loan guarantee for SMEs, a Coronavirus Response Instrument Initiative, the SURE initiative to protect jobs among others, all of which aiming to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the crisis;

Agrees of the need to proceed in a more coordinated manner, in transparency and solidarity in the phases of de-confinement, to restore the mobility of people and services and build confidence among tourists and safety;

Congratulates in this regard the EU coordinated framework proposal for recovery to restart travel and tourism in particular ahead of the summer season, including green and digital transition strategic orientations, as well as the launching of an online platform (“Re-open EU”) providing real-time practical information for travellers;

Welcomes its conviction in the importance of restarting tourism with a reflection and work on the roadmap of the European tourism of tomorrow and towards a “European Agenda for Tourism 2050”, which will be presented at the European Tourism Convention in autumn 2020.

Expresses its satisfaction for the very close cooperation between UNWTO and the European Institutions that will contribute to achieving a more coordinated approach among Members to achieve throughout Europe a sustainable recovery of the tourism sector.

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CEU/DEC/9 (LXV)

### **KEYNOTE: THE FUTURE OF JOBS**

Agenda item 9

The Commission,

Thanks the Co-Founder & Co-CEO of the company “Job and Talent” for presenting the platform application that it has created, which aims at matching workers on demand to global enterprises in the marketplace;

Notes with interest the opportunities that the APP can have to optimize the hiring processes;

Notes the workforce analysis that Job and Talent carries out including on productivity increase and how the process generates a healthy marketplace with high usability and user engagement;

Takes note with interest how this technology can improve labour market liquidity and decrease unemployment rate by making use of:

- the Labour tech Platform,
- specific training modules based on demand forecasting
- and adapting social security to the labour market reality by the use of Big Data and some social measures, to ensure that nobody is left behind.

Congratulates “Job and Talent” for the development of its innovative application, which will undoubtedly provide significant support to both the workforce and companies in facilitating employment, one of the highest concerns in the current devastating health and economic crisis.

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CEU/DEC/10 (XLIX)

**UNWTO-IFC GREEN FINANCING INSTRUMENT**

Agenda item 10

The Commission,

Having heard the explanation of the UNWTO Senior Expert on Innovation and Digital Transformation regarding the current collaboration between UNWTO and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to offer to the tourism sector technical training programs to promote green financing with a view to stimulate tourism recovery and to ensure the development of competitive and sustainable economic growth;

Takes note of the three objectives that have been set in this process, namely:

1. Identify "aggregators" across the hotel value chain to promote and implement sustainability measures (performance and efficiency);
2. Provide skills training related to the adoption of green building and transitions processes to promote sustainable investments (accreditations and certifications);
3. Facilitate sustainable investment mechanisms to access green financing opportunities (compliance and brand reputation).

Supports the project of facilitating green financing, providing advice in this regard and incentivising specific market creation;

Welcomes the initiative and requests UNWTO to update European Members on the developments of the project.

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CEU/DEC/11 (LXV)

**PLACE OF THE 66<sup>TH</sup> MEETING  
OF THE UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

Agenda item 11

Having heard the presentation by the Minister of Tourism of Greece, presenting the candidature of his country to host the next meeting of the Commission for Europe in Greece,

1. Decides by consensus to hold its 66<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Commission for Europe in Athens, Greece, in the spring of 2021;
  2. Entrusts the Secretariat with contacting the Government of Greece with a view to make the necessary arrangements for holding the Commission's 66<sup>th</sup> session.
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CEU/DEC/12 (LXV)

## **CONCLUSIONS AND CLOSING OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION**

Agenda item 12

The Commission,

Having heard the Chairperson's overview on the important contributions made by Members and the fruitful discussions on the ongoing crisis;

Concurs with the structural transformation that is taking place in the tourism sector to build a stronger and more resilient tourism economy in the future;

Agrees with the urgent need of ensuring a health system and the respect of protocols to enable a safe and sustainable restart of travel and tourism activities;

Supports to take this opportunity to place tourism and the UN Sustainable Development Goals at the heart of the recovery effort and thus raise the visibility of tourism in the global political agenda.

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## **VOTE OF THANKS TO THE HOST COUNTRY**

The Commission,

Addresses its warmest appreciation to H.E. Mr. Aziz Abdukhakimov, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the State Committee for Tourism Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for his exceptional support in the organization of the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission's meeting.

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### **3. PARTICIPANTS IN THE SIXTY-FIFTH MEETING**

1. The following Member States belonging to the European region:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

2. Associate Member: Flanders
3. Special Observer: Holy See
4. Affiliate Members: FITUR/IFEMA
5. European Institution: The European Commission
6. Special speakers: Company “Job and Talent” (Spain)
7. UNWTO: Secretary-General, Regional Director for Europe, Legal Counsel, Senior Expert on Innovation and Digital Transformation, Regional Department for Europe