

Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission

Cc:

Thierry Breton, European Commissioner for Internal Market Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs Adina-Ioana Vălean, European Commissioner for Transport

12 August 2020

A call for personal engagement and leadership to recover global Travel & Tourism

Dear President.

On behalf of the global Travel & Tourism private sector, we thank you for the measures taken by the European Commission to help to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus and to support our sector during the worst crisis of our generation.

Europe has a proud history of showing leadership when the world needed it the most. We are now requesting your urgent personal engagement and leadership to ensure international collaboration and alignment that is desperately needed for the recovery of the Travel & Tourism sector. As you will be aware, Travel & Tourism has been a critical catalyst for economic growth, and is responsible for 330 million jobs, or one in ten jobs globally, and 10.3% of global GDP (USD 8.9 trillion).

The restart and recovery of Travel & Tourism, and its associated economic and social benefits, is highly dependent on rebuilding traveller confidence and consistent alignment amongst countries.

According to medical experts we can protect lives and recover the economy by supporting travelling and the application of the following four measures in a global consistent way:

- 1. Wearing a mask: This should be mandatory on all modes of transport throughout the entire traveller journey, as well as when visiting any interior venue and in locations where there is restricted movement which results in close personal contact and required physical distancing cannot be maintained. According to medical evidence, such measures can reduce the risk of the spread by up to 92%¹.
- **2. Testing and contact tracing** We need extensive, rapid and reliable testing before departure and/ or after arrival (symptomatic *and* asymptomatic

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¹ Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health



would-be travellers), supported by effective contact tracing tools. The application of multiple tests will help to isolate infected people.

- 3. Quarantine for positive tests only: Quarantine for healthy travellers should not be necessary and damage the economy if testing and effective containment measures are in place before departure and/ or after arrival. This can replace blanket quarantine in a more targeted and effective way significantly reducing the negative impact on jobs and the economy.
- 4. Reinforcing global protocols and standardise measures: The adoption of global health and safety protocols will help rebuild traveller confidence and ensure a consistent, coordinated and aligned approach of the travel experience in addition to significantly reducing the risk of infection. We also support the Public Health Corridor Concept which promotes a clean and safe end-to-end journey.

We are convinced that our leaders can rescue the world from this unprecedented crisis by acting in an effective and coordinated way that will allow us to bring back more than 120m jobs and livelihoods affected. We are calling on the leaders of the G7, plus Australia, The Republic of Korea and Spain (as ten of the top global tourism source markets) to work together to commit to and deliver the measures needed.

You have understandably focused on your important priorities within Europe during the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic but now the hope and the future of the world is in your expert hands as one of the most important global leaders we have. With power comes the responsibility of global leadership and now is the time to act.

Can we count on your leadership?

We intend to make public tomorrow our proposals and requests to the ten governments. We therefore respectfully request your urgent response to this letter so that we can confirm your personal engagement and the commitment and support of the European Commission.

We have asked each Head of State of the ten countries to nominate a senior foreign affairs Minister to work closely with the Minister for Tourism on the international collaboration that is needed to deliver the unquestionable benefits of the measures we have proposed. We similarly request that the European Commission nominates a senior representative for this purpose.

We urge that selected ministers of the ten countries and the European Commission representative to hold an urgent COVID-19 global summit on restarting Travel & Tourism to deliver a coordinated action plan with immediate impact.

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WTTC, its Members and the entire Travel & Tourism industry, are fully committed to support you and your colleagues in this endeavour of resolving the worst crisis of our generation.

Thank you in advance and with our highest respects,

Nassetta

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President & CEO,

Chairman, WTTC

Gloria Guevara Manzo

President & CEO WTTC

Trita framm Christopher J

Friedrich Joussen CEO

TUI Group

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CEO Accor

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Emaar Hospitality

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Approved by

Ted J Balestreri Chairman & Chief **Executive Officer** Cannery Row Company

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