

RESEARCH: HOW TO ACHIEVE A COORDINATED TOURISM REOPENING WITHIN THE EU



To control the current pandemic and start tourism reopening, a coordinated effort among European regions is essential; but there is a dilemma in establishing the conditions for this collaboration. Resolving this puzzle is the goal of a group of researchers from the universities of Granada and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, who have analyzed how to reach agreements among European regions taking into account that some have a great dependence on tourism, while others do not.

The research, which studied 312 European regions, concludes that there are several conditions in which only minimal cooperation is required of the regions to avoid the pandemic risks from COVID-19.

Among its conclusions, the research highlights that the agreements should be closed among small numbers of regions, separately. In addition, it explains that **the differences in tourism dependence of the regions favors that higher levels of cooperation can be achieved compared to the possibility of having all regions with the same tourism dependence.**

It also confirms that, if highly tourism-dependent regions and non-dependent regions reach negotiations separately, higher levels of cooperation are possible than grouping them randomly.

The research, which uses social simulation models based on artificial intelligence and game theory, has been published in the international journal "Scientific Reports" by Nature, under the title "A collective risk dilemma for tourist restrictions in the context of COVID-19".

The analysis proposes a model highlighting the dilemma of the cooperation (or lack thereof) of regions, and analyzes the conditions to determine whom should they be negotiated with (if regions highly dependent on tourism should negotiate among themselves or not), so that a reasonable level of cooperation can be reached while avoiding coronavirus outbreaks and a subsequent economic collapse.

In the study, a region 'cooperates' when it closes tourism activities to lower the pandemic risks involved. On the contrary, a region 'does not cooperate' if it keeps its borders open and promotes activity without control.

In this context, the research explains that any region would be tempted 'to not cooperate' if all others 'cooperated'. This means that there would be no risk of an outbreak in that non-cooperative region when all others are keeping the pandemic under control. However, if all or most regions take that non-cooperation stance, the risk of health and economic collapse would be great and even inevitable.

For the authors, the decision on how to group regions before reaching agreements on tourism reopening is a relevant issue that those responsible should consider. "These findings can guide policymakers to facilitate agreements between regions to maximize the recovery of tourism," explain the authors in the published article.

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