EUROPEAN TOURISM PROFESSIONALS DEMAND UNIFIED RULES FOR TRAVELERS

Twelve leading associations and organizations of the European tourism industry have once again raised their voices against governments, so that they evaluate the proposal of the European Commission to start lifting travel restrictions in the EU in a coordinated manner.

The organizations, which include travel agencies, airlines and cruise lines, assure that "in view of the rapid advance of the vaccination programs and the improvement of epidemiological perspectives in Europe, it is possible to travel safely this summer".

"The European Commission has done its part," they add, and **"the industry is prepared to ensure safe and responsible travel. Now we need the member states to act quickly."**

The organizations have signed a statement demanding that fully vaccinated people are allowed to travel without a negative COVID-19 test or the 14-day quarantine requirement after receiving the complete guideline, as well as those who have recovered from COVID-19 to be able to travel without restrictions for the next 180 days after they are no longer infected.

This measure should also apply to tourists who come from destinations with a low number of cases, while those from orange or red countries can only travel by showing a negative COVID-19 test.

Regarding the Covid traffic light systems, the associations call for an increase of the thresholds of the map of the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). The statement also demands consistent standards for children, requesting that "minors accompanied by parents should not undergo tests or quarantines when their parents are not obliged to do so". In addition, they ask that minors under 6 should be exempt from taking a COVID-19 test.

The EU Digital COVID Certificate, which should be implemented on July 1, will be the end of travel restrictions for the member states that comply with the requirements. In order for the so-called 'Covid passport' to be effective**, the organizations advise that it is necessary to "guarantee the full implementation of the Certificate while traveling**, for example, through official websites, in order to reduce waiting times and queues at arrival and departure". The European tourism organizations also believe that "the passenger location form and the verification of this tool should be integrated into a single platform with unique security controls to avoid duplication."

Lastly, in the statement, the organizations insist on ensuring the deployment of adequate personnel by the public authorities for border control and other manual verifications of documents at airports, ports, stations, etc. "There is a huge pent-up demand for travel," they say, "and all sectors of aviation, travel and tourism are working on detailed plans to welcome travelers. The governments should play their role to ensure that once our industry reopens, it will not close again."

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