

ETC PREDICTS A GOOD YEAR FOR EU TOURISM IN 2022



The European Travel Commission estimates that by the end of 2022, EU tourism should reach 80% of the 2019 figures.

The European Travel Commission (ETC) regularly analyzes market developments and trends. Its latest, recently published report is very optimistic. ETC revealed that in 2021, the high vaccination coverage in Europe, the EU's Covid-19 digital certificate and the easing of travel restrictions have already helped EU tourism to recover. Admittedly, **Europe has recorded a 62% drop in tourist arrivals in 2021 compared to 2019.** Croatia (-37%), France (-39%) and Monaco (-40%) were exceptions, however. The three countries recorded the smallest declines among European states.

2022 Will Largely Erase the Decline of Previous Years

However, the Omicron variant at the end of last year was a spoilsport. It has thwarted the accelerated recovery seen until the fall of 2021. The spread of the virus has resulted in a series of new travel restrictions. ETC estimates that the first quarter of 2022 will be heavily impacted.

The outlook for 2022 remains positive, however, according to ETC. ETC now estimates that travel demand in 2022 will be only 20% below the pre-pandemic levels. The recovery would be driven primarily by the demand for domestic and intra-European travel. Domestic travel is expected to exceed its pre-pandemic peaks in 2022 while intra-European travel is expected to be 35% lower in volume than in 2019. International travel as a whole (short- and long-haul) will only exceed its 2019 performance in 2024. A time perspective that would also apply to business travel.

In the long-haul markets, while ETC believes that EU tourism should benefit from the reopening of borders between North America and Europe, it estimates that travel volumes should very quickly return to pre-pandemic levels. However, Asia will still be missing out with the absence of major markets such as China and Japan. ETC expects long-haul travel to be 48% lower in 2022 than in 2019.

Council of Europe to Ease Restrictions by March 1

One positive development, however, is the Council of Europe's most recent recommendation to facilitate travel for non-Europeans. On February 22, the Council adopted an updated recommendation on the temporary restriction of non-essential travel to the EU. Covid-19 restrictions should be applied taking into account both the situation in the third country and the status of the individual.

EU member states should therefore allow non-essential travel for vaccinated persons. This would include people who have received an EU or WHO-approved vaccine. People who have recovered from Covid would also be able to travel to the EU. Some of these travelers, however, may be required to undergo a PCR test before departure. This would include those who do not have an EU-approved vaccine. They could also undergo a short quarantine.

The Council of Europe believes that the increase in vaccination rates and the number of people receiving a booster dose are now changing the game. As well as the increasing number of certificates issued by third countries recognized as equivalent to the EU digital certificate. This new recommendation will begin to apply on March 1, 2022. And give the travel industry a serious boost.

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