



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ursula von der Leyen  
The President

Brussels, 26 AVR. 2021  
Ares (2021) 1353143

*Dear Director General,*

*I would like to thank you and the co-signatories for your letter and for the hospitality sector's good cooperation and patience throughout this crisis. The pandemic has caused an unprecedented crisis for our society and the economy.*

*As you rightly point out in your letter, the hospitality industry plays a vital role for the local economy in our regions, cities, villages and tourist areas. Its contribution not only to the economy but also to our social and cultural fabric cannot be underestimated. The European Commission has done its utmost to protect businesses and jobs on the ground and provide the best possible basis for re-opening hospitality as well as travel and tourism services. In addition to the horizontal support measures<sup>1</sup>, last May we adopted a comprehensive package on travel and tourism to prepare for the 2020 summer season. This package pulled together into a coordinated framework aspects linked with travel restrictions, consumer protection, health and safety protocols in passenger transport and hospitality. It also sketched out the investment needs of the tourism ecosystem and the roadmap towards a European Agenda for Tourism, to shape tourism of the future, based on shared priorities and milestones.*

*We are working together with Member States to improve coordination of the measures they take to contain the virus, to improve transparency and predictability. The epidemiological situation remaining volatile, our efforts are ongoing, also with a view to ensuring conditions for safe travel and tourism and restoring free movement in the single market.*

*./..*

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response_en)

*Ms Marie Audren  
Director General  
HOTREC – Hospitality Europe  
E-mail: [marie.audren@hotrec.eu](mailto:marie.audren@hotrec.eu)*

*The EU Strategy for COVID-19 vaccines<sup>2</sup> has allowed the Commission and Member States to facilitate a broad portfolio of vaccines and promising vaccine candidates, and the vaccination efforts are underway. This will gradually help alleviate the impacts of the ongoing pandemic. On 17 March, together with the Communication on safe re-opening<sup>3</sup>, the Commission adopted a legislative proposal establishing a common framework for a Digital Green Certificate<sup>4</sup> covering vaccination, testing and recovery. This will put in place an EU level approach to issuing, verifying and accepting such certificates, to help holders to exercise their right to free movement within the EU, as well as making it easier to wind down COVID-19 restrictions. Together with the legislative proposal, the Communication introduced a new package of measures to facilitate safe travel, as well as criteria for safe re-opening of the economy. This responds to the requests in your letter about a safe re-opening of the hospitality sector. Our ambition is to prepare for summer 2021, when Europeans will want to travel, and, beyond that, prepare for a safe and sustainable re-opening of businesses in different sectors.*

*Helping to build trust is key for a sector like hospitality, driven by consumer trust. For this purpose, we set up Re-openEU, a website and application serving as a one-stop-shop providing information on the epidemiological situation, travel and tourism. On 17 March, Re-openEU received a new, 'travel path' functionality to even better assist citizens when planning their travel. We are encouraged that more than 8 million citizens consulted Re-openEU to date. Moreover, we requested the European Standardisation organisations to prepare a deliverable for a health protocol in the hospitality sector, as a flexible tool to restore consumer confidence and ensure a level playing field in the single market. This will build on the Guidance for hygiene protocols in the hospitality sector we issued last May and on the many good examples in Member States and the industry. I count on your cooperation in this area.*

*We share your sense of urgency concerning the need to find a way to re-open as swiftly and safely as possible. I closely follow the epidemiological situation in the different Member States, which is evolving in different ways. This is why we are currently working extremely hard to roll out the vaccines on a large scale and to continue working in coordination with EU Member States.*

*We are grateful for your continued cooperation in this crisis and share your hope that it will be possible to re-open soon in a manner that is safe for all Europeans.*

*Yours faithfully,*



Ursula von der Leyen

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1597339415327&uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0245>

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_1184](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1184)

<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/en\\_green\\_certif\\_just\\_reg130\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/en_green_certif_just_reg130_final.pdf)