

Relaunching transport and tourism in the EU after COVID-19



See the full study

The **COVID-19 pandemic** had a severe impact on the EU's transport and tourism sectors in 2020, both directly influencing the industries' income and indirectly by changing mobility and tourism patterns. While the EU's economy has suffered, the impact on the income of countries and regions reliant on tourism have been worse, leading in some areas to 40% job losses.

Main observations

Commuting and shopping patterns in urban areas have changed with increased walking, cycling, car travel, and online shopping, at the expense of public transport use. **Long distance travel declined** drastically, leading to revenue and job losses in the transport and tourism sectors and those dependent on them (e.g. industrial and retail sectors).

The transport and tourism industry has been able to ensure the health of personnel and passengers, while securing an adequate supply of services.



The EU provides **crucial assistance to citizens** and governments as well as to the transport and tourism industries so that they can emerge better placed to achieve on-going sustainability and resilience following the present crisis.

- The EU has provided **guidelines, legislation and financial support** to mitigate the spread of the virus and to maintain essential cross-border services while protecting the single market.
- The **industries' recovery** relies both on the vaccination campaign's successful roll-out, and on financial support.

The **EU's aim** is to **repair the short-term damage caused by the pandemic** and to **invest in the European Green Deal targets, resilience in the transport system** and the **adoption of 'smart' technology**.

The research

The overview briefing summarises the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on the EU transport and tourism sectors and suggests policy recommendations to address the challenges emerging from the crisis. It will be followed by 5 thematic briefings, focusing on specific issues relating to transport/tourism and COVID-19.

- The impact on freight transport has been modest but depends on which future direction the economy will take.
- Investing **in sustainability** could be an opportunity for the transport and tourism sectors as the crisis recedes.

Freight could shift towards efficient modes of transport, e.g. rail and shipping, moving towards the use of clean fuels. Environmentally-friendly and niche tourism could replace mass tourism, which would be more locally acceptable and profitable, as well as preserving good working conditions.



Access this note

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Conclusions and policy recommendations

- **Recommendations** include facilitating active modes of transport, for example: walking and cycling, in urban planning, flexible working, data-driven monitoring of mobility patterns and transport planning, reducing cross-border administrative burdens, promoting contactless solutions and digitalisation of the industry.
- The EU could also **promote coordinated health and safety protocols** in the transport and tourism sectors. Harmonization of the protocols would help to improve traveller perception and promote alliances and cooperation. Identifying what the vaccine will do and how it can be integrated into travel protocols, e.g. with a digital vaccine passport, will be vital in the short-term, as vaccination has already begun.

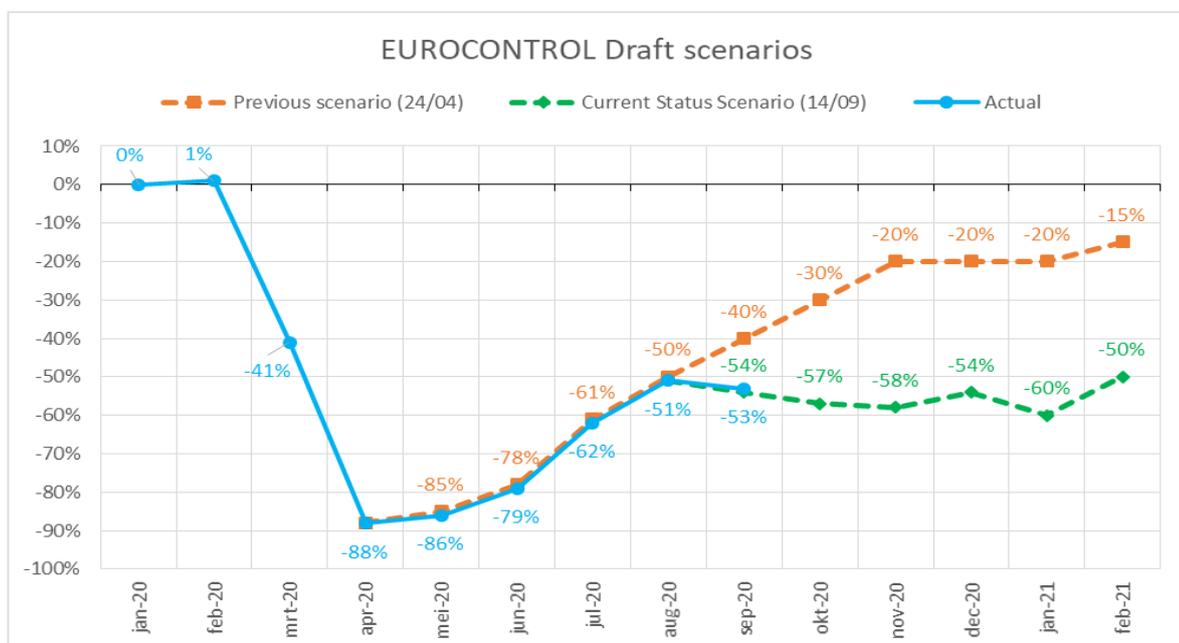
- **Financial measures, especially for SMEs, could support workers, protect jobs and maintain services in the short-term.**

Finally, the EU should take advantage of the crisis to stimulate sustainable development with an EU Green Scheme for destinations and businesses, and to provide investment in knowledge on sustainable practices.

Key areas for EU action

1. Facilitate active modes of transport, reducing cross-border administrative burdens, promoting contactless solutions and digitalisation of the industry.
2. Promote coordinated health and safety protocols in transport and tourism sectors.
3. Financial measures, especially for SMEs to support workers, protect jobs and to maintain services in the short term.

Figure 3: EUROCONTROL Draft Traffic Scenarios - 14 September 2020 (base year 2019/2020)



Source: study's authors' own elaboration with data from [Eurocontrol](https://www.eurocontrol.eu).

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