



Live from Brussels Newsletter

Issue n°104 – 14 July 2021

A message from **Mr. Jens Zimmer Christensen**, President of HOTREC, and **Ms. Marie Audren**, Director General of HOTREC



Dear readers,

We publish this issue at a crucial time for the industry. This year's summer season has officially started, and European hospitality's hopes of recovery strongly rely on the outcome of the upcoming months.

There is no denying it: now more than ever, establishments need to remain open to remain viable. The rapid rollout of vaccination programmes across Europe and **the launch of the EU Digital**

Certificate are grounds for optimism. As always, we believe that enhanced coordination on all fronts at the EU level will translate into a stronger response to the health crisis.

The last few weeks showed us that a 'new normal' is within reach: establishments are gradually and safely reopening; Europe continues to **open its doors to more third countries**, and we at HOTREC had the pleasure to **attend our first in-person conferences** since over one year. 'Ecofin' adopted yesterday 12 national Recovery plans and we hope that more proposals will follow and prioritise hospitality.

Current trends however remain worrying, and the surge of new variants across Europe must not be underestimated. The truth is, we are not out of the woods yet, and respecting the existing national health and safety protocols will be crucial to define the next steps towards recovery. But this is not all.

On 1 July, we welcomed the Slovenian Presidency of the EU Council, and we were delighted to hear that their **number one priority** will be laying the foundation for a stronger and more resilient Europe. In this issue, we had the pleasure to **interview Deputy Ambassador Tamara Weingerl-Požar**, whom we warmly thank for her insight. HOTREC believes that joining forces with the Presidency will be key to achieving our shared goal of a swift and sustainable recovery.

In other news, Europe's efforts towards a digital, fairer, and greener Union are steadily progressing. Parliamentary talks around the **Digital Services and Markets Acts** are ongoing, with rapporteurs sharing their proposals with committee members. The transition to a more sustainable Europe also seems on its way: we recently replied to a consultation on the Renovation Wave for Europe and published **our position** on the initiative.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our members and our readers for their ever-growing support.

We wish you all a safe, and well-deserved summer!

Discussing the priorities of the Slovenian Presidency of the EU Council with Ambassador Tamara Weingerl-Požar



Ambassador Tamara Weingerl-Požar is the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia to the EU.

Born in Koper, Slovenia, she started working in diplomacy after obtaining her Master's degree at the University of

Cambridge.

She has 22 years of professional experience, with a focus on EU and international energy affairs.

1. On 1st July, Slovenia will take over the Presidency of the EU Council at a time of great challenges for European hospitality. Could you detail to our readers what the main priorities of the Slovenian Presidency will be to keep establishments open and favour the long-term recovery?

Tourism remains high on the agenda also during the Slovenian Presidency. The recovery and revitalization of the tourism and travel industry, which was hit hard by the pandemic, will be at the heart of our work. The Slovenian Presidency intends to focus on building the sector's resilience to future crises. We intend to advocate innovative and smart solutions for the free movement of people, for safe cross-border mobility and for the security of tourism services across the single market.

In addition, the Slovenian Presidency will seek to promote the green and digital transition of tourism SMEs and destinations to make the necessary adjustments to new, innovative business and management models and to provide the necessary skills in this context. Our aim is to pay special attention to the goals of sustainable, climate-neutral and green tourism destinations in connection with sustainable transport mobility and decarbonisation. The Slovenian Presidency also intends to highlight the importance of harmonious regional and local tourism and the importance of cultural and creative industries for the promotion and preservation of European identity and the visibility of tourism.

2. Earlier in June, we at HOTREC welcomed the approval of the EU Digital COVID Certificate and the European Council's recommendation on free movement restrictions. We firmly believe that coordinating travel and quarantine measures across the Union will be the first step towards increased traveller and consumer confidence. What other aspects do you deem as key to make the recovery possible?

The epidemiological situation in Europe and the wider world urges us to realize that the pandemic is not yet over. With the spread of variants of concern, it will be important to continue with vaccination efforts domestically and to ensure more equitable access to vaccination globally. But we also need to continue to be vigilant and coordinated with regard to current developments and prudent when easing public health measures that aim to contain the spread of COVID-19 infections. The EU Digital COVID Certificate was successfully rolled out at the beginning of the month and the system facilitates free and safe travel within the EU by summer holidays. We need to accelerate ongoing work with third countries to ensure mutual recognition of digital COVID certificates. Slovenian Presidency will also take work forward to enhance our collective preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises.

3. A message to the European hospitality sector.

Firstly, we are very aware that the hospitality sector needs urgent and adequate economic support that can be channelled notably from the Recovery and Resilience plans. The sector requires special attention because it is one of the fourteen key industrial ecosystems that has been most severely hit by the Covid-19 crisis. In particular, SMEs have been severely affected. The revival of tourism from the crisis should be accompanied by a long-term vision to transform the sector based on sustainable principles. Therefore, the Council will work to support this forward-looking and integrated vision in the form of a "European Agenda for Tourism 2030/2050" in order to render tourism sustainable, resilient, green and digital. But at the same time, we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that the virus is still among us, and that currently, the delta version of the Covid-19 virus is spreading quite quickly, which causes concern. I would thus like to underline the importance of continuing to follow all safety measures, including in the hospitality sector, in order to ensure a safe return to normality.

Travelling safe: EU Digital Certificate and Council Recommendations pave the way to restored freedom of movement

Tags: #Tourism #EUCovidCertificate #Covid19



On 1 July 2021, the **EU Digital Covid Certificate** entered into force. The certificate is accessible to everyone free of charge in all EU languages and covers Covid-19 vaccination, test and recovery. Available in both digital and paper format, the certificate is secure and includes a digitally signed QR code.

HOTREC believes this to be the first step towards fully restoring freedom of movement in Europe. **The Council Recommendations on lifting travel restrictions** within the EU will also play a crucial role. Approved on 14 June 2021, these Recommendations include shared criteria and a coloured map monitoring the vaccination roll-out and the prevalence of Covid-19 variants of concern or interest.

Holders of vaccination certificates issued in line with the EU digital COVID certificate Regulation **should not be subject to testing or quarantine/self-isolation if fully vaccinated** – with an EMA-approved vaccine and for at least 14 days.

We now urge Member States to apply the EU Covid certificate Regulation and follow the Council Recommendations to reach a coordinated approach at the EU level.

Together, resilient, Europe: Slovenian Presidency of the EU Council begins

Tags: #Tourism #EURecovery #EU2021SI @EU2021SI #hospitality #Covid19

On 1 July 2021, **Slovenia took over the Presidency of the EU Council** – set to continue until the end of December 2021.

The **new Presidency** published its programme under the slogan *Together. Resilient. Europe*, and based it on the following priorities:

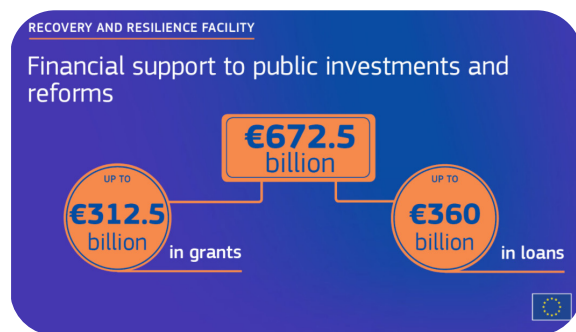
- **Facilitate the EU recovery and reinforcing its resilience**, with a strong focus on the green and digital transition (e.g., the **EU Digital Services Act (DSA)** and **Digital Markets Act (DMA)**).
- **Implement the Next Generation EU and the Recovery and Resilience Facility** to facilitate the adoption of national recovery plans as soon as possible and accelerate the green and digital transition.
- **Transpose the set of sustainability objectives into binding European legislation** (becoming climate-neutral by 2050 and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels).
- **Reflect on lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic.**
- **Strengthen the rule of law and European values** to promote a rule of law culture in the EU and allow the Member States to learn from each other's experiences.
- **Increase European security and stability.** An EU-Western Balkans Summit will be held in the fall with the aim to, among others, build a promising future for young people.



HOTREC hopes that the Slovenian Presidency will follow the Portuguese steps in prioritising the recovery of tourism and hospitality at these challenging times. Now more than ever, **the full support of the EU Institutions** – with regards to funding, coordination, policy and more – **is crucial** for our sector to remain open and finally start planning for the long-term.

The long journey towards recovery: European hospitality and national recovery plans

Tags: #Tourism #hospitality #NextGenerationEU #EUBudget #Covid19



During the first 'Ecofin' Council meeting under the Slovenian Presidency on 13 July 2021, EU finance ministers finally adopted 12 national recovery plans under the Next Generation EU.

The Commission had approved this first set of proposals in mid-June after governments had **submitted national recovery plans in the Spring**.

HOTREC has frequently **called on Member States to put hospitality and tourism at the heart of national recovery plans**. However, taking a closer look, today only a few of them include support for companies and SMEs or specific measures for our industry.

We still believe that the priorities of the European hospitality sector need better representation within national recovery plans, and we urge governments to allocate funding to develop adequate infrastructures for the digital and green challenges ahead.

White list updated: Europe steadily reopens its doors to more third countries

Tags: #Tourism #EURecovery #RestartTourism #Covid19

On 30 June 2021, Member States' Ambassadors adopted an **updated list of third countries whose residents** – vaccinated, tested negative or recovered from Covid-19 – **can now travel to the EU for non-essential reasons**.

The **current list includes 27 countries**: the United States, North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Lebanon, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Rwanda, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei, Canada, Jordan, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and China, subject to reciprocity.

HOTREC welcomes this extension, as it **promotes safe travel and helps the EU economic recovery**.

EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices launched

Tags: #Food #EUFarm2Fork #EUGreenDeal @Food_EU @EUAagri @EU_Health

On 5 July 2021, the European Commission officially launched the **EU Code of Conduct** on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices as part of the **EU Farm to Fork Strategy**.

The Code aims at increasing the availability and affordability of healthy and sustainable food options to help reduce our environmental footprint.

EU associations and companies – as well as international organizations, NGOs, trade unions and trade associations – participated in the discussions and contributed to this initiative with their input and expertise. HOTREC also joined in the preparatory phase and regularly provided feedback to the Commission and EU stakeholders.

Associations and companies in the food sector that sign the code will commit to accelerating their contribution to a sustainable transition.



So far, the scheme includes to levels of commitment:

- EU associations have to put forward objectives – together with related targets and indicative actions towards healthier and more sustainable consumptions.
- On the other hand, **companies** must provide a framework for ambitious sustainability-related commitments and report their progress annually by submitting a summary of their sustainability report.

European Parliament rapporteurs issue draft reports on Digital Services and Markets Acts

Tags: [#Digital](#) [#Competition](#) [#STR](#)

Six months after the European Commission put forward its proposals for a **Digital Services Act (DSA)** and a **Digital Markets Act (DMA)**, Members of the European Parliament appointed as rapporteurs have unveiled their draft proposals to fellow committee members.

A key talking point in upcoming European Parliament discussions will be the scope of the DMA and the criteria used to assess whether platforms are effective gatekeepers – whereby they would be covered by the Regulation's 'do's' and 'don'ts'. Rapporteur Andreas Schwab's **draft report for the IMCO Committee** (Internal Market) aims to narrow down this scope, focusing only on the largest platforms in Europe while many other MEPs have issued proposals to expand the scope of application of the rules. HOTREC considered that the scope of the DMA should address the major role played by dominant digital market players, including Booking.com which has a market share of almost 70% when it comes to intermediated online hotel bookings.

On the DSA, MEP Christel Schaldemose's **draft report in the IMCO Committee** tends to strengthen requirements towards platforms to ensure that "what is illegal offline should also be illegal online", proposing a new article laying down stricter conditions for the exemptions of liability specifically targeting online marketplaces, and by strengthening the obligation on the traceability of traders. HOTREC welcomes progress on the DSA made so far and sees it as a crucial instrument to support better regulation of the short-term rental sector.

European Commission publishes first statistics on short-stay accommodation

Tags: [#Statistics](#) [#Digital](#) [#STR](#)

Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, has **published key data on short-stay accommodation booked via four private platforms** active in the tourism sector. This is a result of the March 2020 agreement between the Commission and Airbnb, Booking, Expedia Group and Tripadvisor, which began collaboration between these platforms and Eurostat.

The data was gathered in 2018 and 2019 for more than 200 European cities and all regions, and also analyses the country of origin of the guest and the seasonality of the number of bookings and guest nights. HOTREC hopes that data gathering can be enhanced to improve insights based on non-aggregated data.

In 2019, guests spent more than 554 million nights in an accommodation booked via the four major platforms. This means that, on an average day, around 1.5 million guests slept in a bed booked through one of these four platforms. The number of nights spent in short-term accommodation booked via the four platforms grew by 14 % between 2018 and 2019.

The top city destinations for bookings through one of the four platforms were: (i) the urban areas of Paris (15.1 million guest nights), Barcelona (11.3 m), Rome (10.4 m), Lisbon (10.5 m), and Madrid (8.3 m). In the three most popular regions, guests booked more than 20 million nights in 2019: Andalusia (26 million), Adriatic Croatia (25 million) and Catalonia (21 million). In 2019, these three regions accounted for 13% of the total guest nights spent in the EU that were booked via the four platforms.

EU rules on single-use plastics: Commission guidance approved

Tags: #Sustainability #EUGreenDeal



On 31 May 2021, the European Commission presented its **guidance** on the **EU rules on single-use plastics**. These rules aim to reduce marine litter from single-use plastic products and fishing gear and promote the transition to a circular economy.

Beginning on 3 July 2021, Member States must ensure that **single-use plastic products for which affordable plastic-free alternatives exist are no longer available on the EU market**.

Different rules will apply to other plastic products (e.g., **single-use plastic bags**, beverage and food containers for immediate consumption, and more) such as limiting their use, reducing their

consumption and preventing littering.

HOTREC continues to share best practices with its members on ways to reduce consumption of plastic food containers.

A renovation wave for Europe: towards greener buildings, creating jobs and improving lives

Tags: #Sustainability #EUGreenDeal @EU_ENV

In October 2020, HOTREC warmly welcomed the **European Commission Communication on the Renovation Wave initiative** and the related **Council conclusions**. Reaching carbon neutrality in Europe by 2050 will require ambitious energy-efficient buildings and therefore revising the existing legislation. We recently summed up our views on the matter on our **position on a renovation wave for Europe**.

Buildings are responsible for 40% of total energy consumption and 36% of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions in the EU. At the same time, the current building standards rate 75% of buildings in the EU as energy-inefficient.

HOTREC considers the following principles and actions key to boosting building renovation for greener hospitality:

- Defend the principle of “**energy efficiency first**”.
- Universal standards **should not be a one-size-fits-all solution**, and it is necessary to consider national circumstances.
- Favour a **holistic approach** to attain the circular economy, improve digitalization, and promote the decarbonisation of heating and cooling supplies.
- **Affordability and incentives** are needed, in particular for SMEs.
- Promote the **transparency principle** without increasing red tape and **awareness-raising campaigns**.
- **Develop skills and attracting new talents**.

Council issues conclusions on sustainable development

Tags: #Sustainability #EUGreenDeal #SDGs @UNWTO @EU_Council

On 22 June 2021, the Council approved **conclusions** reaffirming the EU's strong commitment towards the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and its **Sustainable development Goals (SDGs)**.

The Council recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic is threatening progress towards the SDGs and therefore called for **enhanced dialogue and concrete operational actions** to accelerate their implementation.

The Commission was invited to engage in regular dialogue with the Council to further promote a strategic approach towards the SDGs implementation.

The conclusions also called on the Commission and EU Member States to carry out communications and awareness-raising campaigns on the 2030 Agenda to increase shared ownership by the citizens, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders.

The Council will review progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and will step up efforts to mainstream the SDGs in its work across policy sectors.

HOTREC welcomes the conclusions but it highlights the need for the sector to receive incentives and appropriate funding to meet the sustainability goals and accompany the digital age.



HotelStars Union (HSU) reaches next level

Tags: #Quality #Industry #Tourism



The success story of the **Hotelstars Union (HSU)**, a platform of member countries striving for a harmonised hotel star rating, has taken another consistent step. On 25 March 2021, almost 12 years after its foundation, **HSU was transformed into an international non-profit organisation under Belgian law (AISBL)** with its statutory seat in Brussels. The aim of this platform is to **harmonise the criteria for hotel classification and to act together**.

What started as a joint initiative of the countries Austria, Germany and Switzerland led to the formal founding of the Hotelstars Union in 2009 by the hotel associations from Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland under

the patronage of HOTREC Hospitality Europe. The initiative quickly gained momentum and underwent extensive expansion with the accession of Estonia (2010), Latvia (2010), Lithuania (2010), Luxembourg (2011), Malta (2012), Belgium (2013), Denmark (2013), Greece (2013), Liechtenstein (2015), Slovenia (2017) and Azerbaijan (2020).

On 31 May 2021, Georgia was granted associate member status and Romania and Ukraine observer status. The HSU members warmly welcomed both countries and assured all support in the implementation of the HSU system.

France, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Spain remain observers, as national circumstances currently prevent full membership.

43rd Cyprus hotel Summit & Exhibition

Tags: @pasyxe @HarisLoizides #LiveFromTheNetwork #HotelCySummit



From left to right: Ms. Rita Marques (on screen), Mr. Jens Zimmer Christensen, Ms. Sofia Zacharakis, Mr. Haris Loizides, Mr. Savvas Perdios, Mr. Yannis Karousos and Mr. Philippos C. Soseilos

On 29 June 2021, Mr. Jens Zimmer Christensen, President of HOTREC, joined the annual summit of the **Cyprus Hotel Association**: a key event for the the Cypriot hospitality sector and a great opportunity to discuss the latest local and international trends.

This year, the summit focused on actions and factors hospitality professionals and governments should take into consideration **to stay relevant and recover**.

CEOs and Ministers from across Europe joined the discussion and contributed to the relevant debate.

"We hope crucial policy measures such as the EU Digital Covid Certificate will help hospitality make up for some lost ground.

Enhanced coordination of travel restrictions remains essential", stated Mr. Zimmer Christensen over the Ministerial Panel discussion.

Mr. Alexandros Vassilikos, President of our member, the **Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (HCH)**, and Member of HOTREC's Executive Committee, also joined the discussion and commented that *"getting EU hospitality out of the crisis will take time, pragmatism & boldness. Stepping out of our comfort zone and innovating will pave the way to rebuilding & to a new normal."*

We look forward to other opportunities to collaborate with the Cyprus Hotel Association and we thank them for the invitation.

The full agenda of the summit is available [here](#).

Bringing back safe conviviality: HOTREC, Responsible Party and ESN sign declaration

Tags: #LiveFromTheNetwork #ResponsibleParty #Health @eaHealthEU @ESN_Int #eaDebate



On 24 June 2021, HOTREC joined the conference **"Being young and responsible in times of crisis"** in Brussels to discuss the reopening of venues and how to bring back conviviality responsibly and safely. The event was organised by **Responsible Party** – a Manifesto aiming at promoting responsible alcohol consumption among young adults – in collaboration with **Euractiv**.

On this occasion, HOTREC joined Responsible Party and the **Erasmus Students Network (ESN)** in signing a **Declaration** to empower young adults and support hospitality by promoting safe, responsible behaviour and lifestyles across Europe.

"As representatives of bars, hotels, and restaurants in Europe, spending time together in a safe environment, welcoming our young generations better – both as clients, but also as workers – is a priority for us. At HOTREC, we especially feel a close connection with young adults where hospitality could be their career of choice moving forward, making support and solidarity paramount to our sector's reopening throughout Europe." **Stated Marie Audren**, Director General of HOTREC.

The partnership encourages safe reopening and hopes at bringing conviviality back in a responsible way. Individual organisations are invited to join and sign this Declaration and become part of this movement to enjoy convivial moments in Europe safely and responsibly.

Glass value chain and hospitality: supporting each other for a faster recovery

Tags: @theglassloop #Sustainability #LiveFromTheNetwork

Close the Glass Loop is a bottom-up, collaborative, public-private partnership that aims to boost glass collection rates to 90%, as well as the quality of collected glass, by 2030.

On 30 June 2021, a devoting session discussed the topic: ***“How can the glass value chain best support the HORECA sector’s sustainable recovery”?*** As the sector is a major consumption channel for products packed in glass, **the event assessed the overall impact of the crisis** for brands, HORECA operators, and the glass packaging collection & recycling value chain, and **identified what measures need to be put in place to ensure the sustainable recovery** of the HORECA sector.

Ms. Marie Audren, Director General of HOTREC, joined the panel as keynote speaker, together with other panellists Alessandro Pasquale, Luis Medina-Montoya Hellgren and João Letras.

HOTREC fully supports this initiative and hopes to continue promoting partnerships and exchanges of best practices between the glass value chain and the HORECA sector while looking for solutions to help to improve the glass collection & recycling rates.

What's next

In the HOTREC Team's and membership's agenda

2 September 2021 – Bled Strategic Forum | Future of Europe – #BSF2021

16 September 2021 – Platform seminar on 'Tackling undeclared work in the HORECA sector'

27 September 2021 – HOTREC Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee meeting



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