



POLICIES FOR RECOVERY OF THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM FROM COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Abstract: Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries and an important source of foreign exchange and employment for many developing countries. Due to the tremendous Covid-19 pandemic, the year 2020 has been extremely difficult for the travel and tourism industry, with the unpredictable circumstances resulting in countries being forced to close their borders to tourists. As a result, the pandemic has had a huge financial impact on tourism globally, affecting all countries around the world.

The aim of this paper is to analyse how the Covid-19 pandemic affected travel and tourism industry, how tourism disruption affected the economies of countries and about the impact on jobs losses. This paper will discuss the implemented measures so far and possible strategies for recovery of tourism industry, strategies for sustainable development, also the future measures and scenarios by the states and international organizations. At the end, recommendations are given for the priorities for renewal of tourism and protection of jobs, as recommendations for solidarity and promotion of multilateral cooperation.

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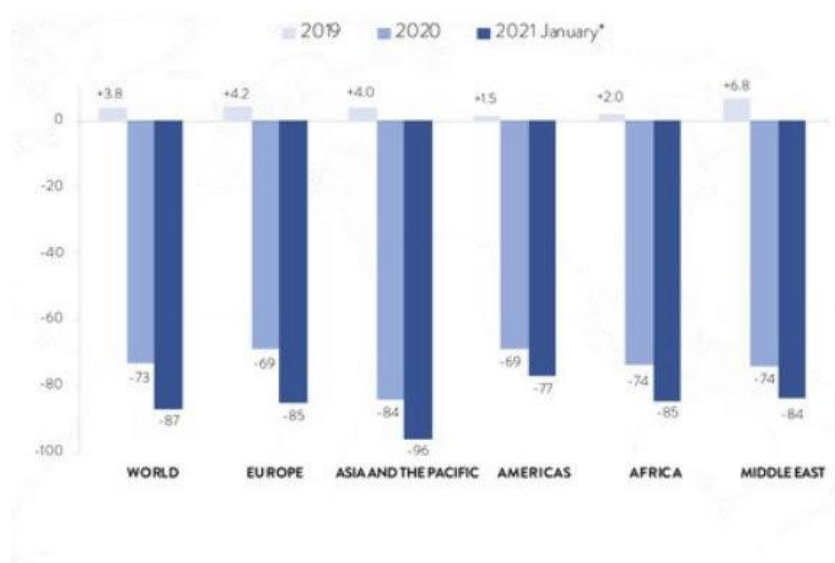
strategy; states; tourism; travel; pandemic;

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries and an important source of foreign exchange and employment for many developing countries (Stojanovska-Stefanova Aneta, Atanasoski Drasko, 2018:152-161).

The coronavirus pandemic will deeply affect the tourism and travel sector (Strielkowski, W. 2020). Travel restrictions and advisories have again revealed the vulnerability of the tourism and hospitality industry (Vikrant Kaushal, Sidharth Srivastava, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020; De Sausmarez, 2004). International arrivals have decreased globally in January 2021 to 96% in Asia and the Pacific, 85% in Africa, 85% in Europe, 84% in Middle East and 77% in The Americas (UNWTO, 2021).

Figure 1. International Tourist Arrivals (% Change)



Source: UNWTO

Within countries, the virus affected virtually all parts of the hospitality value chain. The impact of cancelled events, closed accommodations, and shut down attractions became immediately felt in other parts of the supply chain, such as catering and laundry services. Restaurants had to close as well, though in some countries, a switch to take-away delivery sales allowed some to continue operations (Stefan Gössling, et al, 2021).

The hotel industry is the one, which has confronted the unprecedented effect of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic to significant social and economic risks (Mihir P. Mehta, Gopal Kumar, M.Ramkumar, 2021).

Since travel is requisite for tourism activity, any factor that hinders traveling may have a profound impact on tourism industry. An international issue, such as the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, is particularly a typical example. The devastation of such event re-emphasizes the fragility of tourism industry (Jiang & Ritchie, 2017). Other noticeable traveling obstacles that could impact tourism industry include Tsunami (Ghaderi & Henderson, 2013), earthquake (Huan et al., 2004), terrorist activity (Bowen et al., 2014; Samitas et al., 2018), extreme climate (Becken, 2005), health and safety concerns (Fotiadis & Huan, 2014), and so on. There has been a study (Zenker et al., 2019), that examined the impact of refugees on tourist decisions (Shih-Shuo Yeh, 2020). Therefore, the health care quality innovation will play an important role in fighting this pandemic crisis (Zsifkovits et al., 2016).

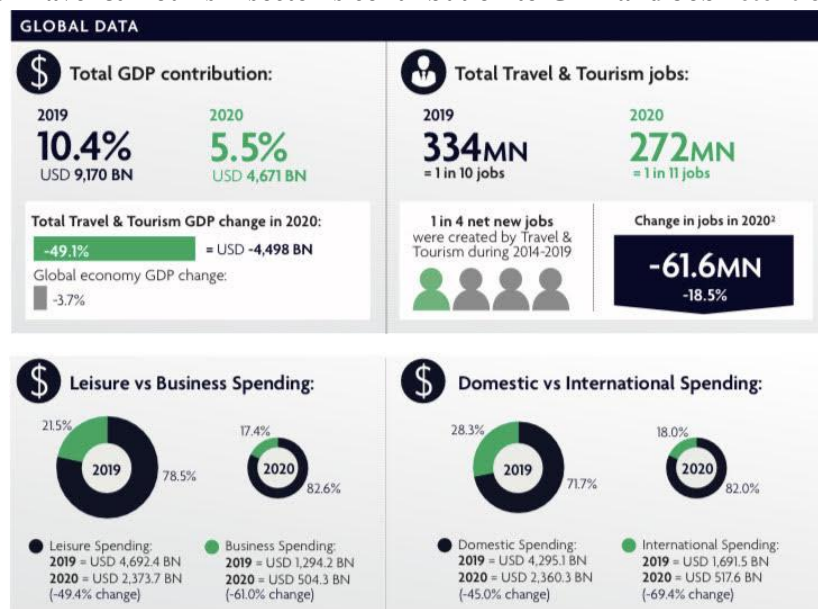
Covid-19 drives \$4.5T loss in travel, tourism in 2020. Pandemic caused loss of 62M jobs last year, leaving 272M employed across travel, tourism sector globally, says industry group.

The world travel and tourism sector last year suffered a massive loss of nearly \$4.5 trillion due to virus-related travel restrictions, border shutdowns, and drop in consumer demand, according to new research by an industry group.

According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the sector's contribution to global GDP plunged 49.1% year-on-year to \$4.7 trillion in 2020 (5.5% of the global economy). The previous year the figure was nearly \$9.2 trillion or 10.4% of the global economy, meaning the figure dropped

by about half. With the loss of 62 million sector jobs last year, the coronavirus pandemic left 272 million employed across the industry globally. And the threat persists, the report argued, as many of these jobs are currently supported by government retention schemes and reduced hours, and without a full recovery of travel and tourism they could be lost. The report also said international travel spending slipped 69.4% compared to the previous year, while domestic travel spending posted a lower decline of 45%.

Figure 1. Travel & Tourism sector's contribution to GDP and Job retention schemes



Source: World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), 2021

The Figure 1, shows Travel & Tourism sector's contribution to GDP plunged a staggering 49.1% in 2020, as well as job retention schemes look to have saved millions of jobs - but the threat remains. Swift action could see lost jobs and GDP contribution return by 2022.

2. Methodology

The main hypothesis of the authors for writing this paper is that "The Covid-19 pandemic hit hard travel, tourism industry, hospitality, jobs in sector tourism and left deep consequences in the countries" Auxiliary hypotheses are that "the Covid-19 pandemic has endangered the airlines, travel operators and other hospitality providers in the sector", "the tourism is at a crossroads and the measures put in place today will shape the tourism of tomorrow", "the governments need to consider the longer-term implications of the crisis" and "coordinated action across governments at all levels and the private sector is essential". The authors will try to prove the basic and auxiliary research hypothesis through a process of analysis and synthesis, abstraction and concretization.

The hypotheses are tested and discussed by the authors through the available data, analysis of the knowledge and proposed measures by the governments and the international organizations such as United Nations and its agencies.

3. Literature review

Some authors explore the relationships between tourism and sustainable development through the lens of the COVID-19 crisis (W Leal Filho et al, 2020; Jones, Peter and Comfort, Daphne, 2020). Other scholars (Mistilis & Sheldon, 2006) aim to categorize crisis and disasters so that one can better understand them by grouping various events into understandable types. Also authors emphasizes the fragility of tourism industry in the face of disasters and the difficulties of organizing recovery effort (Shih-Shuo Yeh , 2020). Certain research direction focuses on the effectiveness of crisis and disaster management strategies (Shih-Shuo Yeh , 2020; Jiang & Ritchie, 2017; Jin et al., 2019; Ritchie, 2004). Some studies (e.g. Gurtner, 2016) even conduct a longitudinal case study because the subject faces

crises frequently. One can even be preemptive to strengthen the tourism industry's resilience to crises and disasters (Jiang, Ritchie, & Verreyne, 2019). The impact of COVID-19 on the travel tourism industry will be incomparable to the consequence of the previous pandemic episodes (Marinko Škare, et al., 2021). The situation is unprecedented. Within the space of months, the framing of the global tourism system moved from overtourism (e.g. Dodds & Butler, 2019; Seraphin et al., 2018) to non-tourism, vividly illustrated by blogs and newspaper articles depicting popular tourism sites in 'before' and 'after' photographs (Condé Nast Traveller, 2020). Demographic patterns in Europe and the rest of the world make population more vulnerable to future epidemic outbreaks (Skirbekk et al., 2015). The impact of pandemic is significant and requires an interdisciplinary research tackle (Wen et al., 2020). Government plays a major role in the fight against the Covid-19 on many levels, such as the recovery of the economy, which includes tourism industry (Shih-Shuo Yeh, 2020).

4. Tourism policy responses to the coronavirus (COVID-19)

The outbreak of Covid-19 has impacted countries at different times, in different ways and in varying degrees. Yet, around the world, response to curb the pandemic has translated into national lockdowns and a wide implementation of travel restrictions and shutdown of borders making tourism one of the hardest-hit sectors. The extensive and deep impact of Covid-19 on tourism coupled with the relevance of the sector to the economy and jobs requires a strong support at national and international level through the relevant institutions.

Tourism is one of the most directly affected sectors in this current crisis and this calls for immediate and long term responses. With international aviation at a virtual standstill since March, the closure of tourism sites and attractions, the cancellation or postponement of major festivals and events, and restrictions on public gatherings (indoor and outdoor) in many countries, the impact of Covid-19 on global tourism has been overwhelming and immediate (IATA, 2021). Furthermore, despite the sector's proven resilience in response to previous crises, the sheer depth and breadth of Covid-19-related impacts on tourism and the wider economy means a quick recovery is unlikely (OECD, 2021).

According to UNWTO, in 2019, international tourist arrivals reached 1.5 billion, a 4 per cent increase over 2018, consolidating a ten-year record where tourism grew faster than the world economy as a whole. Domestic tourism added a further 8.8 billion arrivals. The sector generated \$1.5 trillion in exports and employed one in ten people directly or indirectly (UNWTO, 2020).

Figure 2. International tourist arrivals, Jan-May 2020



Source: UNWTO, July 2020

Tourism came to a standstill in mid-March 2020. International tourist arrivals decreased by 56 per cent in the first months of the year, with numbers in May down by 98 per cent.

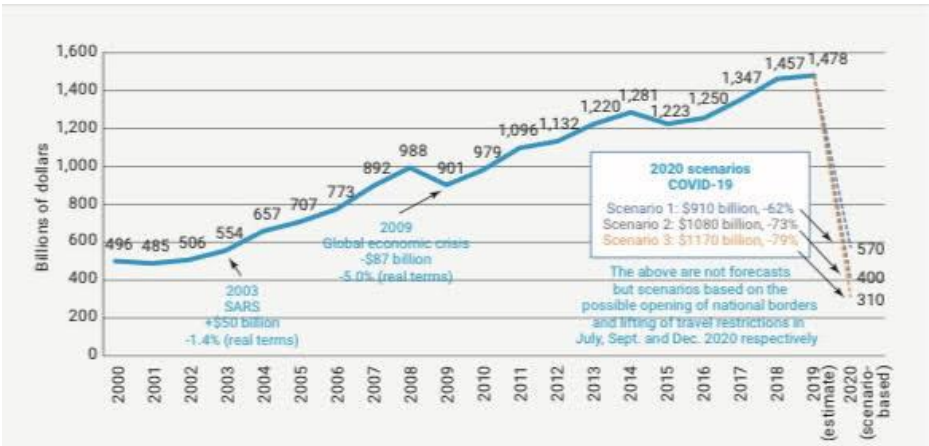
This translates into a loss of nearly \$320 billion in exports – over three times what was lost during the whole of the 2009 global economic crisis.

Forward-looking scenarios point to possible declines in arrivals and receipts from international tourism of 58 per cent to 78 per cent for the whole year depending on the speed of containment of the pandemic, the duration of travel restrictions and the gradual re-opening of borders that has now begun but remains uncertain.

This immense shock could translate into a drop of 850 million to 1.1 billion international tourists and a loss of \$910 billion to \$1.2 trillion in export revenues from tourism, putting 100 to 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk.

As travel restarts in some parts of the world, limited connectivity and weak consumer confidence, the unknown evolution of the pandemic and the impact of the economic downturn present unprecedented challenges to the tourism sector. Supporting the millions of livelihoods that depend upon a sector affected by months of inactivity, and building a sustainable and responsible travel experience that is safe for host communities, workers and travelers are key to accelerating recovery (UN, Policy brief, 2020).

Figure 3. International tourism receipts (exports) 2000-2019 and 2020 scenarios

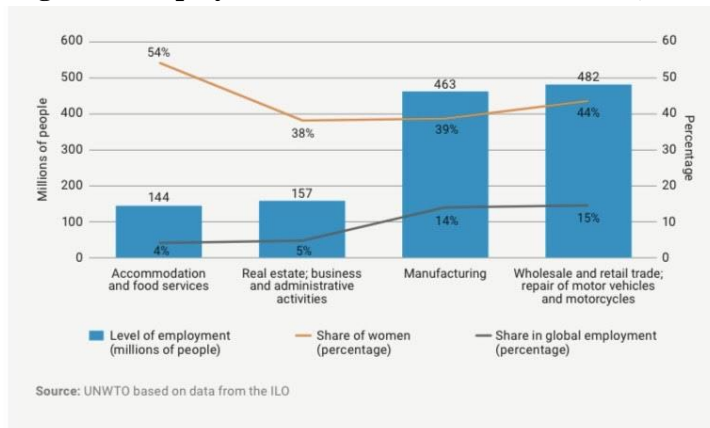


Source: UNWTO

The crisis is putting millions of jobs in the tourism sector at risk. Tourism is highly labour intensive and provides a high volume of jobs for low skilled workers, together with higher skilled jobs. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the accommodation and food services subsectors alone globally provides employment for 144 million workers, about 30% of whom are employed in small tourism businesses with 2–9 employees (ILO, 2020).

According to International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020), women, who make up 54 per cent of the tourism workforce, 32 youth, and migrant workers with limited or no access to social protection, are among the most vulnerable to the impact of Covid-19 on tourism.

Figure 3. Employment in the most affected sectors, 2018



Source: UNWTO based on data from the ILO

Using data from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) and The World Bank, visa waiver processing firm Official ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization) recently revealed the countries with the biggest tourism revenue loss due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The top ten countries rank in terms of the total number of tourism dollars lost over the first ten months of 2020 are: United States, Spain, France, Thailand, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong.

The United States has reported more Covid-19 cases and deaths than any other country in the world as of January 2021. What's more, the U.S. has experienced the biggest tourism revenue loss due to the pandemic, missing out on a remarkable \$147.245 billion in the first ten months of 2020. Spain hosted fewer than 20 million foreign visitors in 2020 and saw the largest tourism revenue loss of any European country at \$46,707 million, Official ESTA determined. The country reopened to travelers from other EU and Schengen-area countries this past summer (2020) but is still off-limits to many travelers, including Americans. France, as the world's most visited country, typically hosts more than 89 million tourists each year. However, the Covid-19 crisis caused that figure to decline dramatically in 2020, resulting in a total tourism revenue loss of \$42.036 billion over the first 10 months of the year 2020.

Thailand has begun safely and slowly reopening to international travelers and that's welcome news for the country's economy as the Asian hotspot has seen a \$37.504 billion loss in tourism revenue due to the ongoing pandemic. The figure is the highest among any country in Asia, according to Official ESTA's latest report.

Germany's \$34.641 billion in total tourism revenue losses from January 2020 to October 2020 is the fifth-most in the world and trails only Spain and France in Europe. The country lifted restrictions on travel from nearby nations back in June but remains closed to many travelers, including those visiting from the U.S. and U.K., which will be paramount to the country's tourism recovery. Italy emerged as a Covid-19 hotspot in the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic and, unsurprisingly, hasn't been able to put a stop to the dramatic tourism revenue losses in the months since, reporting a total loss of \$29.664 billion over the first 10 months of 2020 as the country remains closed to travelers from the U.S. and other key markets.

While the United Kingdom continues to be impacted by a new variant of coronavirus that experts say appears to spread more easily than others, the country's tourism revenue losses keep piling up, reaching \$27.889 billion based on the latest figures taken into consideration by Official ESTA. Australia narrowly trails the U.K. in terms of tourism revenue loss, missing out on \$27.206 billion over the first 10 months of 2020. The country was praised for its swift response to the pandemic and has remained vigilant as it continues to keep its borders closed to travel. Japan's tourism industry has

been equally hurt by the Covid-19 pandemic, which forced officials to postpone the Summer Olympics in Tokyo to 2021. Japan's total tourism revenue loss of \$26.027 billion over the first 10 months of 2020 ranks as the ninth-most of any country in the world.

Elsewhere in Asia, Hong Kong has also been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on travel, experiencing a revenue loss of \$24.069 billion, according to Official ESTA. The Special Administrative Region of China has charted a path to recovery, however, with the Hong Kong Tourism Board recently launching a standardized list of hygiene protocols to help prepare for the resumption of inbound travel.

Figure 4. How the Coronavirus Affected Tourism around the World

RANK	COUNTRY	REVENUE LOSS \$M	RANK	COUNTRY	REVENUE LOSS \$M
1	United States	\$147,245M	11	China	\$23,216M
2	Spain	\$46,707M	12	Macao	\$23,200M
3	France	\$42,036M	13	Turkey	\$21,350M
4	Thailand	\$37,504M	14	India	\$16,753M
5	Germany	\$34,641M	15	Netherlands	\$14,860M
6	Italy	\$29,664M	16	Austria	\$14,608M
7	United Kingdom	\$27,889M	17	Portugal	\$13,857M
8	Australia	\$27,206M	18	Mexico	\$13,683M
9	Japan	\$26,027M	19	Canada	\$12,634M
10	Hong Kong	\$24,069M	20	Malaysia	\$12,517M

Source: Official ESTA

The other states in the top 20 list by ESTA are: China, Macao, Turkey, India, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Mexico, Canada, Malaysia.

5. Strategies for recovery

During any crisis, governance is key and in some countries public-private partnership models have been reinforced and the role of committees and task forces enhanced with participation of stakeholders across different levels of administration and private sector.

Analysis of public policymaking shows that it was extremely hard for the authorities to take decisions on drastic measures imposing limitations to individual freedom or economic activity. Leaders decisions might have serious effects, because it is the moment when available data and information meet decision-makers' responsibility. In some cases, a clash between the information and responsibility of the decision-makers might appear (Runcheva-Tasev H, Stojanovska-Stefanova A, 2021).

Private and public policy support must be coordinated to assure capacity building and operational sustainability of the travel tourism sector during 2020–2021. Covid-19 proves that pandemic outbreaks have a much larger destructive impact on the travel and tourism industry than previous studies indicate. Tourism managers must carefully assess the effects of epidemics on business and develop new risk management methods to deal with the crisis. Furthermore, during 2020–2021, private and public policy support must be coordinated to sustain pre-Covid-19 operational levels of the tourism and travel sector (Marinko Škare, et al, 2021).

Tourism is at a crossroads and the measures put in place today will shape the tourism of tomorrow. Governments need to consider the longer-term implications of the crisis, while capitalising on digitalisation, supporting the low carbon transition, and promoting the structural transformation needed to build a stronger, more sustainable and resilient tourism economy (OECD, 2020).

The OECD in 2020 announced that survival of businesses throughout the tourism ecosystem is at risk without continued government support and although governments have taken impressive action to cushion the blow to tourism, to minimise job losses and to build recovery in 2021 and beyond, more needs to be done, and in a more co-ordinated way. Key policy priorities according to OECD include:

- Restoring traveler confidence;
- Supporting tourism businesses to adapt and survive;
- Promoting domestic tourism and supporting safe return of international tourism;
- Providing clear information to travellers and businesses, and limiting uncertainty (to the extent possible);
- Evolving response measures to maintain capacity in the sector and address gaps in supports;
- Strengthening co-operation within and between countries;
- Building more resilient and sustainable tourism;

While flexible policy solutions are needed to enable the tourism economy to live alongside the virus in the short to medium term, it is important to look beyond this and take steps to learn from the crisis, which has revealed gaps in government and industry preparedness and response capacity.

As part of the wider UN response to Covid-19, the UN Secretary-General Mr. Guterres said: that “It is imperative that we rebuild the tourism sector” in a “safe, equitable and climate friendly” manner and so “ensure tourism regains its position as a provider of decent jobs, stable incomes and the protection of our cultural and natural heritage”. The UN Secretary-General further underscored that tourism is one of the world’s most important economic sectors, providing “livelihoods to hundreds of millions more”, while it “boosts economies and enables countries to thrive”, and at the same time allowing “people to experience some of the world’s cultural and natural riches and brings people closer to each other, highlighting our common humanity” (UNWTO, 2020).

According to UNESCO, prior to the Covid-19 crisis, the cultural and creative industries generated annual global revenues of \$2,250 billion and exports of over \$250 billion.

While 2020 and the winter of 2021 have been ruinous for travel and tourism, with millions around the world in lockdown, WTTC research shows that if international mobility and travel is resumed by June this year, it will significantly boost global and country level GDPs - and jobs (WTTC, 2021).

According to the research, the sector’s contribution to global GDP could rise sharply this year, up 48.5% year-on-year. The research also shows that its contribution could almost reach the same levels of 2019 in 2022, with a further year-on-year rise of 25.3%.

WTTC also predicts that if the global vaccine rollout continues at pace, and travel restrictions are relaxed just before the busy summer season, the 62m jobs lost in 2020 could return by 2022. WTTC strongly advocates the resumption of safe international travel in June this year, if governments follow its four principles of recovery, which includes a comprehensive coordinated international testing regime upon departure for all non-vaccinated travellers, to eliminate quarantines.

It also includes enhanced health and hygiene protocols and mandatory mask wearing; shifting to individual traveller risk assessments instead of country risk assessments; and continued support for the sector, including fiscal, liquidity and worker protection.

WTTC says the introduction of digital health passes, such as the recently announced ‘Digital Green Certificate’, will support the sector’s recovery.

The global tourism body also urges governments around the world to provide a clear and decisive roadmap, allowing businesses time to ramp up their operations in order to recover from the ravages of the pandemic (WTTC, 2021).

The UN Policy Brief, 2020, highlighted that as an immediate response to the crisis, it is critical that governments, with the support of development partners, consider focusing on the impact of the tourism sector on the livelihoods and employment opportunities of millions of people around the world.

In addition, that the workers' rights must be protected and all efforts must be made to preserve their jobs. Solutions and responses will have to be implemented gradually and in a coordinated manner to:

1. Protect jobs, income and enterprises
 - a. Build confidence through health and safety protocols in all tourism operations
 - b. Strengthen coordination, partnerships and solidarity for socio-economic recovery
2. Boosting competitiveness and building resilience
3. Advancing innovation and the digitalization of the tourism ecosystem
4. Fostering sustainability and inclusive green growth
5. Strengthening coordination and partnerships to transform tourism and achieve the SDGs.

According to Geir Moulson and Elaine Kurtenbach, historically, tourism has shown a strong ability to adapt, innovate and recover from adversity. However, this unprecedented situation requires new approaches and strong multi-level response and partnerships. Recent trends in Europe show that the re-opening of borders and tourism activities is not without risks as it led in some places to rising infections, leading to new localised restrictions by governments (AP News, 2020).

While addressing the immediate socio-economic impacts of Covid-19 on tourism and accelerating recovery to protect millions of livelihoods, this crisis is an opportunity for the sector to transform and become more resilient, inclusive and sustainable.

The OECD underlined that crisis is a once in a lifetime opportunity to move toward fairer, more sustainable and resilient models of tourism development. The pandemic has once again exposed structural shortcomings in the tourism system and the vulnerability to external shocks. There is an urgent need to diversify and strengthen the resilience of the tourism economy, to better prepare for future shocks, to address long standing structural weaknesses, and encourage the digital, low carbon transformations that will be essential to shift to stronger, fairer and more sustainable models of tourism development.

According to UN Policy brief "Covid-19 and transforming tourism" a roadmap to transform tourism needs to address five priority areas:

- Manage the crisis and mitigate the socio-economic impacts on livelihoods, particularly on women's employment and economic security;
- Boost competitiveness and build resilience;
- Advance innovation and the digitalization of the tourism ecosystem;
- Foster sustainability and inclusive green growth;
- Coordination and partnership to transform tourism and achieve the SDG's;

Continued government support should already start to build toward more sustainable and resilient tourism economy. Destinations and tourism businesses need help to be ready to provide tourism services to meet demand when the recovery comes. It will be important to work with tourism businesses so they are sustainable beyond the end of the supports, and already starting to address the long-term implications of the crisis. Measures should condition increasingly on broader environmental, economic and social objectives (OECD, 2020).

5.1. Tourism and sustainable development in pandemic times

The crisis is also an opportunity to rethink the tourism sector and its contribution to the SDGs, nature, and the Paris Agreement on climate change; an opportunity to work towards a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient tourism.

During the quarantine period, traffic has almost disappeared in many cities around the world. Multiple sources indicate that the Earth and the states overall is now living through an unrivalled drop in carbon output. It was almost impossible to believe that governments around the world, when faced with a health emergency, would put humanity ahead of the economy, but they did it.

According to estimates by the International Energy Agency, the pandemic is a cataclysmic event so big and disruptive that it can be measured in the planetary metrics of climate change. According to the analyses, no war, no recession, no previous pandemic has had such a dramatic impact on emissions of CO₂ over the past century as Covid-19 has in a few short months. But even though we will see a massive fall this year, the concentrations of CO₂ that are in the atmosphere and warming our planet won't stabilise until the world reaches net-zero. Also, the big challenge for the governments in the future is to ensure the recovery has a green focus. Many climate researchers are optimistic that this deadly pandemic has taught governments some critical lessons that they can apply to the problem of rising temperatures (Stojanovska-Stefanova A, Runcheva-Tasev H, 2021).

Tourism has the potential to contribute, directly or indirectly, to all of the SDGs. In particular, it has been included as targets in SD Goals 8, 12 and 14 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources, respectively. Sustainable tourism is firmly positioned in the 2030 Agenda (Stojanovska-Stefanova A et al, 2019).

Climate change is not only a modern term that is constantly used in international politics to show awareness about this significant issue in the world media, or as a subject that states have to consider as important in the future when the world will be politically and economically more stable. Climate change has become a global political and environmental challenge for humanity over the last decades. Therefore, coordinate approach of the countries and international strategy for disaster risk reduction and multiple actions on climate change is more than needed. At the same time, climate change policies cannot be developed in isolation from the overall development context (Stojanovska-Stefanova A, Vckova N, 2016).

Only through collective action and international cooperation will we be able to transform tourism, advance its contribution to the 2030 Agenda and its shift towards an inclusive and carbon neutral sector that harnesses innovation and digitalization, embraces local values and communities and creates decent job opportunities for all, leaving no one behind (UN Policy Brief, 2020).

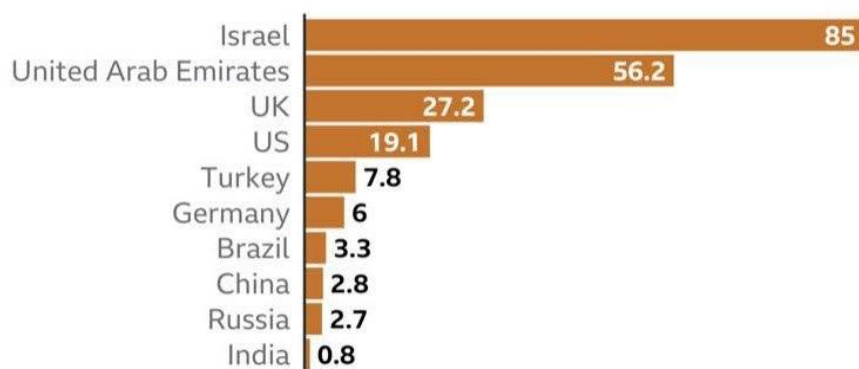
5.2. Immunisation as light for the future of tourism development in pandemic times

The worst global crisis since the Second World War, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to severely affect public health and cause unprecedented disruptions to economies and labour markets (ILO,2021).

The unprecedented shock to the tourism economy is being compounded by the evolving sanitary situation. While positive news on vaccines has boosted the hopes of tourism businesses and travellers alike, challenges remain. Vaccine roll out will take some time, and the sector is potentially facing stop/start cycles for some time. This will further damage business and traveller confidence, and business survival prospects. Despite the proven resilience of the tourism economy to previous shocks, the sheer scale and combined economic and health nature of this crisis means that the road to recovery is highly uncertain. While there has been some resumption of international tourism activity, this remains very limited. Domestic tourism has restarted in many countries, but can only partially compensate for the loss of inbound tourism (OECD, 2021).

Encouraging news on vaccines has boosted hopes for recovery but challenges remain.

Figure 5. Vaccine doses per 100 people in countries with highest total vaccinations



Note: Total vaccinations refers to the number of doses given, not necessarily the number of people vaccinated

Source: Our World in Data, 1030 GMT published on BBC (on 22 Feb 2021 with latest available data)

Public health officials and civil liberty organizations are urging policymakers to resist calls for coronavirus vaccine passports, at a time when many countries are in the process of reviewing whether to introduce digital passes.

The U.S., U.K. and European Union are among those considering whether to introduce a digital passport that will allow citizens to show they have been vaccinated against Covid-19. The certificate system could be used for traveling abroad, as well as to grant access to venues such as restaurants and bars.

It is thought a digital passport could help stimulate an economic recovery as countries prepare to relax public health measures over the coming weeks. The ailing airline industry, hit particularly hard by the spread of the virus last year, is among those calling for governments to usher in legislation that supports Covid vaccine passports. Physicians and rights groups, however, are deeply concerned (CNBC, 2021).

WTTC says the introduction of digital health passes, such as the recently announced 'Digital Green Certificate', will support the sector's recovery (WTTC, 2021).

„Iceland and Poland started issuing Covid-19 vaccine certificates. Denmark, Sweden and Estonia are hot on their heels and Israel's "green pass" will allow its bearers to visit gyms and bars. The European race to come up with a credible vaccine passport is heating up, led by Greece“ (Forbes, 2021).

„A senior World Health Organisation official said that so-called “vaccine passports" for Covid-19 should not be used for international travel because of numerous concerns, including ethical considerations that coronavirus vaccines are not easily available globally.” WHO emergencies chief Dr. Michael Ryan said that vaccination is just not available enough around the world and is not available certainly on an equitable basis". WHO has previously noted that it's still unknown how long immunity lasts from the numerous licensed Covid-19 vaccines and that data are still being collected.

There are also concerns that enabling a vaccinated minority to enjoy foreign travel while others, such as young people who are not seen as a priority for inoculation, continue to face restrictions would be discriminatory. A further complication is the rapid spread of more contagious Covid variants - the English, South African and Brazilian forms - and the possibility of future mutations. So it is more likely that people will need booster jabs to remain protected (BBC, 2021). The delta variant is now present in more than 80 countries. More transmissible than the alpha variant, it is sparking concerns of further loss of lives and lockdowns (DW, 2021).

Therefore rules like keeping a distance of 1.5 meters, washing hands, wearing masks and ventilation protect against all known variants of the coronavirus including delta.

The European Union is set to make available its COVID-19 passport for all EU citizens and residents, as well as for specific categories of travellers from third countries, by July 1. The procedures for the launch of the certificate are completed on the side of the EU Commission, while it now remains up to the Member States to implement it within the next weeks. SchengenVisaInfo.com announced on June 1 that seven EU countries had already started to issue EU Covid-19 passports – Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Croatia and Poland. On June 4, Iceland also started to implement the pilot system for the issuance of Covid certificates (Schengen Visa Info News, 2021).

A vaccine passport, experts note for „Washington post“, is not an “immunity passport.” According experts is still unclear how long immunity lasts after recovering from the virus or after receiving a vaccine, and it is also unclear whether recipients of vaccines can carry and spread the virus without experiencing symptoms themselves.

Conclusions

As the world is facing an unprecedented global health, social and economic emergency with the Covid-19 pandemic, travel and tourism is among the most affected sectors with airplanes on the ground, hotels closed and travel restrictions put in place in virtually all countries around the world. Millions of livelihoods are at stake and need to be supported, so the states have responded quickly and strongly with the level and coverage of measures stepping up over time. Most countries have adopted economy-wide stimulus packages (fiscal and monetary measures) along with job support measures. Governments need to consider the longer-term implications of the crisis, while capitalising on digitalisation, supporting the low carbon transition, and promoting the structural transformation needed to build a stronger, more sustainable and resilient tourism economy. The international organizations send a message that crisis is a once in a lifetime opportunity to move toward fairer, more sustainable and resilient models of tourism development. The pandemic has once again exposed structural shortcomings in the tourism system and the vulnerability to external shocks. There is an urgent need to diversify and strengthen the resilience of the tourism economy, to better prepare for future shocks, to address long standing structural weaknesses, and encourage the digital, low carbon transformations that will be essential to shift to stronger, fairer and more sustainable models of tourism development. Therefore, the authors have confirmed the hypothesis frame set at the beginning of the paper.

Today, the pandemic is far from over. The delta variant is now present in more than 80 countries. The states need to have coordinated policy decisions across borders to face up a challenge which does not care about any borders of the state. According to cases across the world, the international community have to be ready to act fast to save lives. It is also clear that there is necessity of multilateral decisive action to protect jobs and safeguard the many benefits tourism delivers, both for people and planet. The Covid-19 vaccine maybe is the light at the end of the tunnel after a year of lockdowns and restricted travel. The argument for a vaccine passport came up early on in the pandemic and now, it's becoming a reality for travelers. Public health officials and civil liberty organizations are urging policymakers to resist calls for coronavirus vaccine passports, at a time when many countries are in the process of reviewing whether to introduce digital passes. Israel is the leading state in vaccination so they started with events across country. Encouraging news on vaccines has boosted hopes for recovery but challenges remain.

We may conclude that the pandemic is an opportunity for multilateral cooperation. All governments and international organizations have a stake in supporting tourism. The crisis is also chance to rethink the tourism sector and its contribution to the SDGs, nature, and the Paris Agreement

on climate change, an opportunity to work towards a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient tourism in the near future.

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