



Addressing the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak

Policy paper

The boating industry fully supports the measures taken to protect citizens' health from the COVID-19 outbreak. We are united in our solidarity and support for the relief efforts. The boating sector is donating Personal Protective Equipment and shifting production from marine supplies to masks.

Impact of the COVID-19 outbreak is felt across the industry from current restrictions, as well as demand reduction. Charter companies and marinas are already feeling the effect of cancellations. Manufacturers and dealers are impacted by supply chain obstacles and demand reductions.

The industry is made up of 32,000 companies supporting 280,000 jobs directly. Most companies are SMEs at over 95% of the industry. For them the impact will be critical due to large investments being made at the start of the year in anticipation of the summer season, as well as low liquidity. About 48 million EU citizens regularly participate in water sports, out of which 36 million participate in boating. The value chain and indirect economic impact from this activity is crucial for other industries and the regions in which they are located that are primarily peripheral, coastal and along inland waterways.

1. Short-term responses: Weathering the crisis

Support is urgently needed in the short-term to ensure that companies survive the crisis and can secure jobs. This should focus on immediately impacted sectors, such as tourism. This requires:

- Broad support programmes: direct transfers, loans, delays of payment deadlines for taxes and social security, wage support for lowered working time, reduced concession fees
- Cooperation between banks, governments and industry to postpone loan repayments
- Coordinated EU support for companies whose main activities take place outside their country or even the EU (e.g. German charter companies with their main activity in the Mediterranean)
- Introduction of a voucher scheme for tourism trips rather than reimbursement with support of government funds and insolvency insurance
- EU pressure on Member States to ensure open borders for transport of goods to keep supply chains open and ensure possibility of boat deliveries and supplies
- European guidelines for a risk-based return to production and reopening of tourism activities (e.g. for marinas, charter companies, industrial sites)
- Permit return of boats into national waters from outside the EU to anticipate summer season

2. Mid- to long-term responses: Navigating the future and re-building consumer confidence

Once the current restrictions have been partially or fully lifted, it is important to support companies and sectors to regain consumer confidence. This requires:

- Public-private marketing campaign with EU support to promote tourism in 2020/2021 (focusing on charter, marinas, water sports, opportunities of boating)
- Support from regions, countries and EU funding programmes for marketing activities (destination marketing, trade fair participation for B2B and B2C marketing)
- Strong communication from the European Commission and national governments to inspire consumer confidence in the safety and attractiveness of maritime tourism

EBI is a member of the [Tourism Manifesto Coalition](#), the voice of the tourism industry, that demands urgent supportive measures to reduce the potentially devastating impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

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