



Live from Brussels Newsletter

Issue n°107 – 19 January 2022

A message Ms Marie Audren, Director General of HOTREC



Dear readers,

Happy new year, and welcome to the first issue of 'Live from Brussels' in 2022. I hope you could spend quality time with your loved ones and enjoy days of well-deserved rest.

This festive season has been again challenging for tourism and hospitality. **The Omicron variant took Europe by storm**, and most countries had to cope with record-high new cases and **winter travel chaos**. Hospitality venues experienced the full impact of the pandemic and faced closures, dramatic lack of guests or cancellations, and ever-changing health and safety guidelines.

2022 is already shaping up to be another busy year for HOTREC and our members. One thing is for sure: the next twelve months will see us prioritising the survival of the millions of businesses and workers that make up our industry. The recovery will require strong cooperation and increased coordination at the EU level. Hospitality businesses – especially SMEs – will need the European Institutions and the Member States to continue deploying concrete support and guidance. But I fear that these actions alone will not be enough to create a real turning point for European hospitality. As vaccines are giving the global population a tool to protect themselves, start travelling again, and get back to a normal life, **saving our sector might need us to learn how to live with Covid-19 into the future.**

Hospitality might be facing its worst crisis yet, but **I firmly believe in its intrinsic resilience and, most importantly, in our sector's potential to drive the recovery of the entire European economy.** The French presidency of the Council of the EU, **which kicked off on January 1st**, will undoubtedly play a determinant role in shaping the next steps in the EU coordinated response to the virus. We trust them to help us bring hope and stability to the industry. In this issue, we were honoured to discuss the priorities of the French government and Presidency with regards to tourism with **Mr Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne**, French Minister delegate for tourism, French national abroad, francophonie and for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, whom I thank for his precious insight.

In other news, we expect some relevant developments to take place in the EU in the upcoming weeks. Trialogue negotiations on the Digital Markets Act will follow the crucial **European Parliament vote**, which approved critical proposals to improve future legislations and decided on specific criteria to identify so-called gatekeepers platforms. At the beginning of this year, the European Parliament EMPL and FEMM Committees are set to vote on an **EU Directive on Pay Transparency**. Trialogue negotiations are also set to get underway on the **EU minimum wage**.

To conclude, I want to congratulate MEP Roberta Metsola, who was elected President of the European Parliament yesterday. We had the honour to **interview her** for this newsletter in 2020, and she showed great support for our sector. We can't wait to continue our excellent collaboration.

HOTREC is looking forward to another year of challenges, partnerships, achievements, and to continue informing you on the latest policy developments in European tourism and hospitality. **We wish you a wonderful 2022!**

I hope you will enjoy our newsletter.

Interview with French Minister delegate Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne

Tags: @JBLemoyne @Europe2022FR #EU2022FR #PFUE2022



Mr Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne

is the French Minister delegate for tourism, French national abroad, francophonie and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises since July 2020. First appointed Minister of State in 2017, he was previously elected as Senator of the Yonne department in 2014 and 2020. In 2014, he also served as the mayor of the city of Vallery. He is a graduate of the Strasbourg Institute of Political Science and ESSEC Business School in Paris.

1. On 1st January 2022, France took over the Presidency of the Council of the EU. This comes at a time of great fragility for European tourism and hospitality. A new variant of Covid-19 is quickly spreading around the world, and businesses and workers in our sector are once again facing a dire situation. How is the French government planning to address this issue over the next six months, and what will be the priorities of the French EU Presidency as regards tourism?

The French Presidency of the Council of the EU is taking place in what has been a difficult period for the tourism sector for almost two years. After a short period of recovery last summer due to vaccination and the harmonization and mutual recognition of European practices in terms of health policy, the Omicron variant has once again disrupted the

sector. In France, we have chosen not to adopt excessive restrictions, allowing vaccinated French people to live almost normal lives, like going to the cinema and restaurants. However, we have focused on preventive measures, particularly because of the variant's contagiousness and the speed at which it is spreading. New health protocols have been put in place in order to protect both public health and economic activity, at a time when two waves linked to the Delta variant and the Omicron variant are hitting us hard. The government will continue to support sector professionals, as it has done since the outset of the crisis.

As for our priorities during the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, we want to shift the focus beyond the pandemic. We now want to promote and expand the European tourism base in order to make our tourism sector more attractive and resilient. We also want to focus on the issue of sustainable tourism. As Europe is the continent which has done the most for the sustainability of world tourism, I think it is important to promote this aspect, which is appreciated by citizens and consumers.

Our priority is also to achieve better regulation and accountability of platforms; these are the objectives of the two regulations which we want to pass: the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and the Digital Services Act (DSA). This is also an important issue for our hoteliers, who sometimes suffer from unfair competition.

2. We at HOTREC firmly believe that coordinating travel restrictions across the EU as much as possible is a key step towards granting some degree of stability to businesses and workers in our sector, and increasing consumer confidence. What other aspects do you believe are essential to the recovery?

As you mentioned, the issue of traveller confidence is the basis for a sustainable recovery. This confidence depends on the ability of Member States to find effective policies to deal with the epidemic and to show coordination. But there can be no recovery unless everyone takes responsibility: vaccination is the key to maintaining tourism. In the longer term, the recovery of the tourism economy depends on the ability of companies to promote responsible tourism that fully meets consumer expectations. To that end, quality and sustainability labels have been introduced and any company that meets the requirements can apply for a label.

3. Looking to the future, what are your key messages for the European hospitality industry?

The pandemic has exacerbated underlying trends: tourism, particularly the hospitality industry, is a fragile ecosystem, but also a way of life for consumers and a passion for professionals.

In the face of these challenges, I believe that focusing on staff training will help improve the quality of the hotel and restaurant offer and address recruitment difficulties. Also, to be more attractive, careers in the hotel business must be promoted. This is why we have chosen to develop a promotional campaign to attract and promote tourism professions.

Finally, I would like to send a message of pride and hope for the European hospitality industry: on our continent, as in the rest of the world, the pandemic has taken its toll, and this is being felt in our sector. However, we remain the most visited continent in the world, thanks in particular to our heritage, but also and above all because our European expertise in tourism and our sense of hospitality attracts visitors from all over the world.

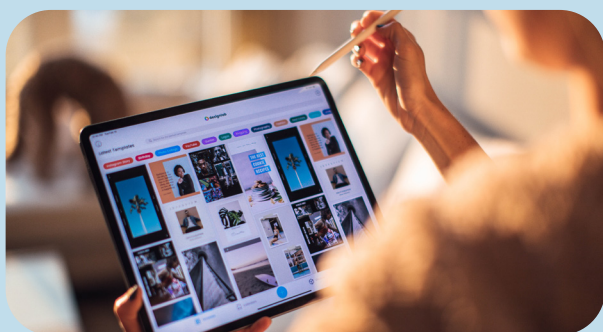
HOTREC welcomes European Parliament's report on the Digital Markets Act

#Digital @EU_Growth @EU_Competition #DigitalMarketsAct #Gatekeepers

HOTREC warmly welcomed the European Parliament's vote on the Digital Markets Act, which approved some crucial improvements to the future legislation and brought important clarifications to the criteria which will be used to identify so-called 'gatekeeper' platforms.

Under the proposals put forward by the European Parliament, gatekeepers would not be able to restrict the pricing policy of establishments on their own online sales channels via so-called narrow price parity clauses and would have to share more detailed and granular data with business users. HOTREC highlights these two key improvements which go a long way towards supporting the digitalisation of hospitality establishments and their capacity to compete with platforms for consumers' attention in the digital space.

With trilogue negotiations set to get underway under the French Presidency of the EU in 2022, **HOTREC urges the EU Member States to agree with the regulatory 'do's' and 'don'ts' put forward by the European Parliament.** When it comes to designating gatekeepers, HOTREC considers that the criteria outlined by both Parliament and Council offer a solid basis for a good compromise.



Tourism transition and short-term rentals on French Presidency of the EU's 'to-do' list

Tags: #tourism @Europe2022FR #EU2022FR #PFUE2022 #EURecovery #STR

France took the reigns of the EU Presidency on 1 January 2022 with a busy programme that gives high priority to the management of borders, coordinated response to the coronavirus pandemic and the European economic recovery plan.

The French Presidency will aim to reach the highest possible level of vaccine protection in the EU and to ensure that all restrictions are based on objective criteria and do not disproportionately hinder free movement internally or travel to the European Union.

The French Presidency will concentrate on the recovery of the tourism sector and on strengthening its resilience to future crises by building on the European Commission's transition pathway for the tourism document. The Presidency will also institute talks on the proposal for a regulation on short-term rentals.

Commission sets validity period of EU COVID Certificate at 9 months, while winter travel chaos proliferates in Europe

Tags: #tourism #EUCovidCertificate #travel



On 21 December 2021, the European Commission announced a **delegated regulation** extending the validity period of the EU Digital COVID Certificate to nine months after the first full vaccination schedule. This binding act will come into force on 1 February 2022, after which outdated certificates – i.e., of people that had their second or first vaccine shot nine months before – will no longer be valid to travel in the EU. The Regulation still does not mention the validity of the booster.

HOTREC, together with other travel and tourism stakeholders, **has systematically defended the harmonization of travel restrictions within the EU**. Therefore, we **support a standard duration of the vaccination certificate**, as long as it is based on scientific evidence. In any case, **the validity of the booster needs to be urgently harmonized** as well, otherwise, the efficacy of the certificate and the possibility of allowing free movement within the Schengen area will be quickly jeopardized.

Moreover, **we support the principle of the individual risk-based approach**, meaning that someone with a valid EU COVID certificate should be able to travel across Schengen without further restrictions (testing or quarantine requirements).

Renovating hospitality buildings to help Europe go carbon-neutral

#sustainability @EU_ENV #EUGreenDeal

On 15 December 2021, the EU moved another step closer to its ambitious goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. The European Commission **adopted a second package of proposals to reduce net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 55% by 2030**. The new **EU Energy performance of buildings directive proposal (2021/0426)**, in particular, introduced an EU-wide minimum energy performance standard for buildings in the Union identified as worst-performing (i.e., G-index). Public and non-residential buildings will undergo renovations and reach energy performance level F (by 2027) and level E (by 2030). Newly-built public and private buildings in the Union will have to be carbon neutral by 2027 and 2030. Fossil fuel-powered heating systems will no longer be eligible for public support from 2027.



The Commission will help to finance initial investment costs, allocating up to €150 billion to implement minimum energy performance standards by 2030. In this regard, we believe that the EU Institutions should pay special attention to SMEs and further incentivize them to transition to green business models. Businesses and workers will also need further support in developing new training and skills.

We welcome the new proposal, as it is based on the 'energy efficiency first' principle and combines common objectives with flexible timetables for each member state. However, we believe that the proposal should not include bureaucratic data collection that results in burdens to owners and consumers.

New Commission directive focuses on working conditions of platform workers

Tags: [#SocialAffairs](#) [#platforms](#)

On 9 December 2021, the European Commission proposed a legislative text on 'Improving working conditions in platform work' (**COM(2021)762 final**) to strengthen the protection of digital platforms workers.

HOTREC welcomes the initiative to ameliorate working conditions of all types of work including self-employed that offer their services to platforms. However, **we regret that the Commission proposed a directive** instead of a recommendation or general guidelines.

Concretely, we disagree with a reputable presumption of employment – as several platform workers would prefer to be considered self-employed. The presumption can also hinder the development of a true self-employment status.

Overall, **platforms considered as employers will have to fulfil their obligations under national law** – such as paying a minimum wage and respecting working hours and annual and family leave. This will influence the prices customers will pay to the products they consume and also the fees restaurants pay to the platforms (e.g., food delivery services). **We are afraid that the impact of the proposed directive will worsen even more the situation of the hospitality sector**, already very much weakened by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Council of the EU reaches general approach on pay transparency

Tags: [#SocialAffairs](#)

On 6 December 2021, the Council of the EU reached a general approach on the proposal for a directive on pay transparency.

HOTREC welcomes the fact that SMEs kept their exemption on reporting on pay transparency. We also appreciate the introduction, within the proposal, of even more exemptions for small businesses (e.g., from pay progression), as well as more possibilities for companies to justify pay differences. We are also pleased with the recognition of the role of social partners and national law/collective agreements and with the fact that legal and judicial costs take the position of the employer into better account. However, we believe that any assessments should be based on comparable situations based on gender-neutrality.

The European Parliament EMPL and FEMM committees will vote on this proposal in February. HOTREC hopes that compromise amendments will be put forward to protect SMEs from extra administrative and economic burdens.

Triologue negotiations on minimum wages to start

Tags: [#SocialAffairs](#)

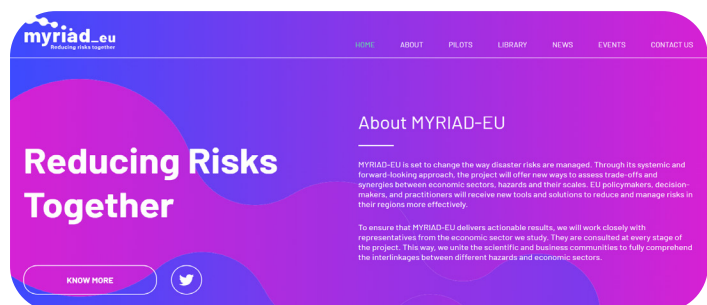
On 6 December 2021, the Council of the EU adopted a **general approach** to the proposal for a Directive on minimum wages.

HOTREC welcomed most of the outcomes – such as the recognition of the autonomy of the social partners; the exclusion of any obligations to conclude collective agreements; and the fact that 70% of collective bargaining coverage is not considered as an objective, but only an indicative threshold. With regard to the promotion of statutory minimum wages, despite the fact that the criteria are binding, we consider that it is quite broad, and it is positive that it includes productivity.

The European Parliament plenary approved the **report on minimum wage** adopted by the EP EMPL Committee as its mandate for the triologue negotiations. HOTREC **fears that this proposal might interfere with the autonomy of social partners and statutory minimum wage systems**. In view of reaching a balanced compromise, HOTREC issued its **position for the triologue negotiations** and counts on the support of both co-legislators.

Preventing and fighting future crises: HOTREC joins the MYRIAD project

Tags: #LiveFromTheNetwork @Myriad_EU @CORDIS_EU @HorizonEU #ReducingRisksTogether



HOTREC is taking part in **MYRIAD**, a 4-year project part of the **Horizon 2020** EU framework programme for research and innovation. The main objective is improving the understanding, assessment and management of existing multi-hazard risks – such as droughts, volcanos, storms and heavy rain, to name a few – and avoiding their impact.

The EU-MYRIAD consortium will count on the expertise of industry stakeholders, researchers and experts in the field, including universities,

research institutes, companies and NGOs. The EU project will target six different sectors, namely: tourism; infrastructure & transport; food & agriculture; energy; finance; and ecosystem & forestry.

IHOTREC will be involved in 2 pilots focusing on the Canary Islands (Spain) and the Veneto region (Italy): our goal will be providing input to all project phases and finding experts to participate in workshops and communication strategies. We will provide information to public authorities and draft guidelines and training materials for SMEs on how to prevent & react if a crisis occurs.

What's next

In the HOTREC Team's and membership's agenda

27 January – Close the glass loop | 90 minutes to close the loop, Episode 5

8 February – EU Industry Days 2022

27-29 April – HOTREC 84th General Assembly, Prague, Czech Republic

