

ENAT President's Message, December 2021

Rome, 17th December 2021

Facing risks and regenerating tourism, with accessibility as a priority

Dear Friends,

Despite all our hopes and timid signals to slowly go back to normality, we are confronted with a situation which we all expected to be much better.

Particularly, in this period when the holiday season is upon us and the usual activities of travelling and meet friends and relatives should be at the top of everyone's priorities.

It is not so or, at least not completely: we still face risks to stop the limited economic recovery from the severe effects of the pandemic; we see the Coronavirus spreading exponentially; we encounter travel bans and restrictions that are causing havoc for tourists and travel operators in Europe and around the world.

Repeating the words of the [European Tourism Manifesto Alliance](#), to which ENAT belongs:

“We welcome the European Commission's continued efforts to ensure a coordinated approach to travel measures and support the proposed shift to an individual traveller-based approach, in which a valid EU Digital COVID Certificate (DCC) is sufficient to travel without additional requirements (no further testing or quarantine). This is in line with the most recent [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\)](#) authoritative and science-based analysis, which confirms that travel restrictions generally have no effective impact on the spread of the virus in Europe.”

Right now we are in the midst of the Omicron-variant outbreak, which requires extra vigilance, wider distribution of vaccines and greater vaccine uptake, everywhere.

We had many important events during this year. Let me focus on the more recent one where representatives of many countries of the world met, at the UN COP26 conference, to design a framework for a better and more sustainable environment. States have clearly seen the need to give support to all the citizens of those countries which may suffer more than others by the effects of the climate changes. The citizens of those countries are often those who also suffer more from the effects of the pandemic and the scarce supply of vaccines.

Again, these situations may endanger the development of tourism activities and leave a lot of potential tourists behind, in particular, visitors with specific access requirements.

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This is a dangerous change which is facing us and we have to make all possible efforts to improve, or even modify, the approach we have towards tourism and tourist activities.

We must try to see the future of tourism in terms of more participatory efforts from tourist destination organisations and public bodies, to regenerate our vision of tourism by involving destinations, local communities and tourists themselves in designing an offer which will be a real added value for both the visitors and the welcoming destinations. The dual crises of 'overtourism' and 'undertourism' are still real threats going forward.

ENAT, our members and partners are strongly engaged in designing new and more responsible tourism perspectives which, in the end, will continue to guarantee participation and inclusion. We encourage the whole tourism industry to give priority to accessibility and inclusion for all, as we work together to re-develop tourism as a force for good in the world.

I wish to leave you with this message and wishes for next year: let us live 2022 with an improved understanding of our mutual needs and work together to achieve them.

Happy New Year.

Anna Grazia Laura, ENAT President