

Berlin, 18 May 2020

JOINT DECLARATION

We the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of [Austria], Bulgaria, Cyprus, Spain, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Slovenia

have met today, 18 May 2020, by means of videoconference to discuss a coordinated approach towards restoring the EU value of freedom of movement and travelling in the EU.

Freedom of movement and travelling across Europe is a fundamental part of the European project. Our goal is to restore free movement for all citizens, be it for professional, educational or merely private purposes.

Against the backdrop of the current Corona pandemic, however, Europe needs to ensure even more than that: the freedom of travelling *safely* within the EU!

We therefore welcome the guidelines issued by the European Commission on 13 May 2020 in its Communications on a phased and coordinated approach for restoring freedom of movement and lifting internal border controls, on the progressive restoration of transport services and connectivity, and on the progressive resumption of tourism services and for health protocols in hospitality establishments. They represent an important basis for discussions among European partners with a view to agreeing criteria and timelines for the next steps.

Within this context, we agreed on the following principles:

- We believe that an approach of phased steps, closely coordinated and agreed among EU Member States, is the best way to achieve a gradual normalization of cross-border travelling.
- Exploring ways of allowing travelling while avoiding that the risk of an increase in infections gets out of hand will be key.
- It will be crucial to ensure that our citizens cannot just travel freely within Europe, but can also safely return home. Thus, we need to coordinate closely regarding conditions for lifting rules of confinement and of quarantine and regarding the restoration of transport services. In this context, it will also be important to work on a common understanding of health-related standards and procedures.
- We believe the restoration of the freedom of cross-border movements can be achieved progressively, provided current positive trends continue leading to comparable epidemiological situations in countries of origin and of destination.

We call on tourism businesses and related private actors to use the coming weeks to take appropriate precautionary measures to protect travelers once freedom of movement and travelling is restored. We believe this is a crucial element to rebuild public trust in the safety of travelling.

Also we encourage our citizens to continue to take carefully note of the health information put at their disposal by relevant national and European authorities.

Even though currently the situation concerning the Corona pandemic continues to differ from country to country, it is our common goal to coordinate our approach among European partners as closely as possible with a view to restoring freedom of movement and travelling in the near future.