

The Brewers of Europe



Brussels, 18 February 2021

Dear Dr Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission  
Dear Mrs Christine Lagarde, President of the European Central Bank  
Dear Mr Paschal Donohoe, President of the Eurogroup  
Dear Mr Charles Michel, President of the European Council  
Dear Mr David Sassoli, President of the European Parliament  
Dear Mr Apostolos Tzitzikostas, President of the European Committee of the Regions

**Joint call from business and trade unions for the setting up of an EU hospitality task force**

COVID-19 has hit Europe hard, taking thousands of lives, destroying families and impacting the health of many more people. We would like to first and foremost commend the hard work and diligence of Europe's health and frontline workers, who have proven themselves the true heroes of this crisis. We wish to express our heartfelt sympathy to all those who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The arrival and distribution of successful vaccines gives us hope for 2021 and a successful recovery.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also hit livelihoods and businesses hard, throwing Europe's restaurants, bars, hotels, cafés, pubs and nightclubs into a deep crisis. The hospitality sector has been among the hardest hit, with businesses being forced to shut down at short notice as part of the collective fight against the virus and many workers being laid off temporarily or definitely.

This has also led to a dramatic knock-on effect on its suppliers. Many actors in the food supply chain such as farmers, processors, traders, wholesalers, and food and drinks manufacturers face severe hardship. Supporting millions of jobs, these sectors are primarily made up of SMEs and are intrinsic to the functioning of the hospitality sector.

We turn towards the coming months with the core objective of creating some predictability for the hospitality sector and its supply chain. As soon as the epidemiological situation allows it, we need a safe, timely and sustainable reopening, recognising the important role that tourism and hospitality can play in rebuilding our cultural, social and economic communities. Bars, restaurants and cafés help attract people to town centre shopping districts and, likewise, these shopping destinations help bring custom to town centre hospitality venues. The hospitality and supply sectors should be considered as partners for ensuring, when the epidemiological situation allows it, a well-regulated, safe and sustainable reopening of Europe's restaurants, bars, canteens and alike.

**The undersigned associations, representing European hospitality, many of its supplier sectors and their workers, call for the urgent setting up of a hospitality task force across the EU Institutions to discuss the impact that COVID-19 has had on business and jobs and deliver a road map for the recovery of the hospitality sector and its value chain.**

We and our members are committed to working with European, national and local policymakers to support and inform their policy objectives both on COVID safety and the recovery. The World Tourism Organisation has identified tourism and hospitality as being critical to the global economy post-COVID and with the right support, just as our sectors were amongst the most impacted, we know that we can bring back jobs, growth and investment, leading the overall recovery.

We feel the work that we have carried out internally will be useful to share with EU Institutions over the course of the next few weeks so will continue to feed our experiences into officials and policymakers from the European Commission, Member States, local and regional authorities and Members of the European Parliament.

To provide our sectors the basis for returning to growth and helping lead the Green Recovery, we ask that EU Institutions and national policymakers prioritise the following areas:

1. Recognition of the massive and long-term impact that the COVID crisis and ongoing shutdowns have had on businesses throughout the hospitality value chain and the livelihoods they create. Likewise, recognition of the huge potential these sectors have to re-launch the economy, job-creation, culture and the communities in which we all live. By helping the sector to stay open, moving progressively away from simply supporting it to stay closed, we can create much-needed stability and reliability in this crisis for the millions of people in the European Union.
2. Clarity is needed as soon as possible on when and under which conditions the hospitality sector will be able to reopen, to ensure sufficient time to refurbish stocks and adapt to additional measures, if any. The unpredictability faced so far over measures opening and closing restaurants, bars, canteens and alike has generated huge uncertainty for everyone involved along the supply chain.
3. Dedicated financial and policy support to the hospitality value chain, addressing both immediate and long-term needs. Many businesses in the hospitality sector are at risk of collapse, with a potential domino effect on the supplying industries along the chain. Millions of workers and their families are facing great uncertainty and fear for the future. The necessary financial, fiscal and operational support must be extended for companies directly and indirectly affected by the lockdown, for as long as it is necessary, beyond (often partial) reopening, to provide liquidity to companies, help avoid bankruptcies and support jobs. State wage compensation schemes must also be extended until this crisis is over to protect as many livelihoods as possible.

As our associations and unions have demonstrated throughout the crisis, we are keen to work with you and your teams at the earliest opportunity to feed into the plan for a successful recovery. **We would like to discuss the way forward with you at your earliest convenience.**

Every day counts.

Yours sincerely,



Eamonn Bates  
Secretary General  
Serving Europe



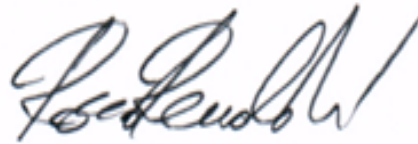
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Director-General EuroCommerce



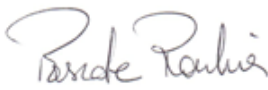
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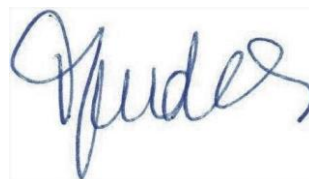
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Encl. Joint Statement

Cc

Executive Vice President, Margrethe Vestager

Executive Vice-President, Valdis Dombrovskis

EU Commissioner, Thierry Breton

EU Commissioner, Nicolas Schmit

EU Commissioner, Paolo Gentiloni