Objectives

The tourism sector is one of those hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rebuilding tourism is an opportunity for transformation with a focus on building more resilient communities and businesses through innovation, circularity, digitalization, sustainability, and partnerships.

This event will convene European government representatives, tourism institutions and international organisations to explore how sustainable tourism can build back greener towards a more sustainable tourism industry in a post-COVID scenario.

It will provide an overview of the impacts of COVID on the tourism sector and evaluate how stimulus packages and recovery plans could be aligned with a transition that meets health and safety requirements, leads to an inclusive green economy and meets the sustainable development agenda, and climate commitments.
The causes and consequences of the zoonotic COVID-19 disease highlight the links between tourism and nature. Tourism has helped to conserve nature and protect endangered species but the pandemic and the subsequent closure of natural protected areas has had a destructive impact on the communities responsible for the protected areas.

With its high climate and environmental footprint, the growth of tourism over recent years has put achieving the climate targets of the Paris Agreement at risk. Transport-related greenhouse gas emissions from tourism have been estimated at 5% of all human originated emissions and could rebound sharply if the recovery of the sector is not aligned with climate goals.

The increased health and safety requirements related to the COVID-19 response increase waste generation and water use creating additional pressure in popular destinations where waste and water systems are already under significant stress.

The current planning of recovery and related investments by the public and private actors is critical in steering tourism models into sustainability and capturing opportunities for biodiversity conservation, climate action and circular economy.