



Statement

A coordinated EU approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Brussels, 13 November 2020

The Confederation of European Security Services (CoESS) calls on EU Member States to rapidly implement the Council Recommendation on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic ([2020/1475](#)), and welcomes the European Commission's Communication on additional COVID-19 response measures ([COM\(2020\) 687](#)). Member States have to urgently step up efforts for the coordination of travel restrictions.

Free movement is a key pillar of the European identity and economy, enshrined in Art. 21 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). For months, it has been severely limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions introduced by EU Member States.

Protecting the health of our citizens must always be the guiding principle, but the patchwork of travel restrictions, risk assessment approaches, testing and quarantine policies across the EU remains unsustainable. It prevents citizens' trust in, and reestablishment of, free movement as well as recovery in cross-border transport. The economic consequences are alarming, particularly in the aviation sector. The long-term sustainability of the European air transport system is at risk.

CoESS believes that the actions proposed in the European Commission's Communication on Building a European Health Union ([COM\(2020\) 724](#)) will help improve the coordination of prevention and response measures to cross-border health threats across Europe in the long-term future.

But in the meantime, we need urgent action to deal with the ongoing pandemic and to improve coordination and information sharing in support of common risk assessment and travel restriction approaches; effective testing and tracing frameworks; a common approach towards quarantine policies; and forward-looking vaccination strategies across the EU.

Otherwise, CoESS fears that EU Member States will be ill-prepared for the months to come and additional waves of infections, which could have irrevocable, disastrous consequences for the European transport ecosystem.



Information sharing and travel restrictions

Efficient information sharing is key - both among EU Member States and in communication with the public. As a lesson learned from the current pandemic, it is important to strengthen, as outlined in [COM\(2020\) 724](#) (and [COM\(2020\) 726](#)), the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) and Health Security Committee in the long-term. But action is already needed now. CoESS notes that [COM\(2020\) 687](#) still identifies important shortcomings in the efforts of EU Member States to share information with the ECDC, preventing coordinated risk assessments and a homogenous approach towards travel restrictions.

CoESS therefore calls on EU Member States to swiftly implement the Council Recommendation [2020/1475](#), but also recommends extending the timeframe for the provision of information on new travel restrictions to the public from 24 hours, which is currently insufficient for citizens to gain trust again in cross-border travel, to five days.

CoESS reminds that EU Member States should, in principle, not refuse entry to persons travelling from other Member States, in compliance with Art. 21 TFEU. If the protection of public health makes travel restrictions necessary, CoESS underlines that measures must be proportionate, non-discriminatory and based on evidence that confirms their benefit to public health.

CoESS welcomes the European Commission Guidance on persons exempted from the temporary restriction on non-essential travel ([COM\(2020\) 686](#)), and reminds that private security workers exercise a critical occupation, as per the European Commission Guidelines concerning the exercise of the free movement of workers during COVID-19 outbreak ([2020/C 102 I/03](#)).

Testing and tracing

CoESS considers that a harmonised approach on testing and tracing across EU Member States is key to re-establish and facilitate free movement across the Union. This should include the coordination of testing strategies, the facilitation of an exchange of best practices, mutual recognition of tests and common criteria for the selection and deployment of rapid and reliable antigen tests. CoESS therefore highly welcomes the European Commission's Council Recommendation on COVID-19 testing strategies ([C\(2020\) 7502](#)) and proposed actions to reinforce EU capacities for contact tracing across borders in [COM\(2020\) 724](#).

CoESS also warmly welcomes that the European Commission is responding to a concrete need in the management of the COVID-19 crisis with the €100 million investment under the Emergency Support

Instrument for the purchase and delivery of rapid antigen tests for Member States, and calls on Member States to participate in the announced joint procurement initiative for rapid antigen tests.

CoESS considers the development of Testing Guidelines in Aviation by ECDC and EASA as a key step to facilitating cross-border travel in the months to come, and calls on the Commission to closely cooperate with aviation stakeholders on this important initiative - especially those who are responsible for testing prior to departure and on arrival.

CoESS further welcomes the European Commission's efforts in developing a common, user-friendly European Passenger Locator Form, as well as the linking of national contact tracing apps through a 'European Federation Gateway Service', which will be helpful for tracing efforts. The "Reopen EU" online tool already plays an important role in re-establishing citizens' trust in cross-border travel and must be further promoted by Member States.

Quarantine policies

The diverse patchwork of quarantine policies in EU Member States is a central impediment for recovery in cross-border transport and must be addressed urgently at EU-level.

CoESS therefore highly welcomes the European Commission's announcement to publish Scientific Guidance from the ECDC on quarantines and reminds Member States that a common and proportionate approach towards quarantine policies in Europe is essential for re-establishing citizen trust in free movement and recovery of cross-border transport. CoESS is pleased that the European Commission plans to publish respective Recommendations on COVID-19 related isolation and quarantine measures on 18 November 2020.

Vaccination strategies

It is essential that Member States prepare now for the roll-out of an unprecedented vaccination campaign. The efficiency and availability of a vaccine is crucial for protecting the EU citizens' health and relaunching the economy. The European Commission must therefore support Member States in the development of national vaccination strategies and in ensuring essential supplies now.

CoESS recognises not only the tremendous efforts of the Commission in this regard, but also its plans to facilitate the exchange of best practices among Member States and to monitor the effectiveness of vaccine strategies as they are rolled out.

About CoESS

CoESS acts as the voice of the private security industry, covering 23 countries in Europe and representing 2 million guards as well as over 45,000 companies. The private security services provide a wide range of services, both for private and public clients, ranging from Critical Infrastructure facilities to public spaces and facilities, including transport, events, HORECA, retail, supply chains, national government and EU institutions buildings. CoESS is actively involved in European Social Dialogue and member of multiple EU Expert Groups, including the EU Operators Forum on the protection of public spaces as well as SAGAS, SAGMAS, LANDSEC and RAILSEC.

Selected publications for further reading

[October 2020 - CoESS White Paper - The New Normal 2.0: Private Security and COVID-19 in Europe](#)

[July 2020 - European Business Services Alliance - Helping Europe to reopen after the COVID-10 Pandemic](#)

[July 2020 - CoESS Position Paper - Guidance on the Resumption of Cruise Ship Operations in the EU](#)

[May 2020 - CoESS Position Paper - European Commission Communication “Tourism and Transport in 2020 and beyond”](#)

[May 2020 - CoESS and UNI Europa - Joint Declaration on “Ensuring business continuity and protection of workers in the COVID-19 pandemic”](#)

[May 2020 - European Business Services Alliance - Good Contracting Practices in the COVID-19 crisis](#)

[April 2020 - CoESS Statement - Call for EU measures towards a safe and secure recovery of the tourism and transport sectors](#)

[April 2020 - CoESS Statement - Better Recognition of Private Security for Safe and Secure Economic Recovery in the COVID-19 Situation](#)

[April 2020 - Airport Security Services Association International \(ASSA-i\) - Observations and Recommendations on the COVID-19 Situation](#)

[April 2020 - CoESS Statement - Call for pro-active Engagement with the Private Security Sector on the COVID-19 Situation](#)

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