

## Chapter 30

# COVID–19 Policy Actions for the Recovery of the Tourism Industry and a Discussion for the Post–COVID Era

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world, and a new normal has some new rules including travel restrictions, social distancing, contactless technologies, and health and hygiene protocols. The post-COVID era will witness transformations in the tourism industry, and discussions about new policies and actions will be critical. In this context, the main aims of this study are twofold. The first aim is analyzing the policy actions of different countries for the recovery of tourism industry during COVID-19 pandemic. And the second aim is making a comprehensive discussion about the actions that should be taken in the post-COVID period. In this sense, the main contribution of this study is expected to be on the point that the enhanced discussion will shed light on the tourism recovery for the analysts, academics, and policymakers.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

COVID-19 pandemic have created a brand-new, multifaceted global crisis. While downturns have taking place in the economy, the outbreak also caused significant transformations in production and consumption patterns. New normal has brought a totally different world for everyone. Humanity has been experiencing a brand-new world, defined by new rules. We see that all the elements of Industry 4.0 have come to the fore and penetrated our lives quickly. Digitalization process increased tremendously in almost all areas of our lives. Lots of employees began to work from their homes; distance learning practices increased; robots took the places of some employees and automation increased in both manufacturing and services

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sectors. Moreover, the level of awareness about the environmental degradation and global warming increased significantly. Scientists underline that COVID-19 outbreak occurred due to the extinction of some species on Earth and hence, new era seems to be more critical to sustain natural balance (WWF, 2020). If environmental degradation continues in this path, then it's supposed that global warming will not be sustainable by 2050 (WTTC, 2020b: p. 13). It is also underlined that environmental degradation sounded the alarm and showed that if the humankind does not take the right policy actions, then the near future will bring more severe economic crises. The collective responsibility of humankind will be a key point in post-COVID era and it seems that it will change the context of travel and tourism activities too. Consequently, production and consumption patterns of near future will change significantly.

Tourism industry and related sectors have contributing to the global GDP (Gross Domestic Product) by creating employment, income and balance of payments (BoP) contributions. Travel and tourism activities created 330 million jobs and 8.9 trillion US dollars globally in 2019. However, currently tourism industry has facing with strong challenges stemming from COVID-19 pandemic. More than 197 million jobs and 5.5 trillion US dollars thought to have been lost in tourism industry at the end of 2020 (WTTC, 2020a: p. 1). COVID-19 outbreak has affected the global economy and caused significant downturns in basic economic indicators. Global unemployment has increased and labor income has declined due to the economic downturn. It's estimated that income losses corresponded to a global decline of 10.7% during the first three quarters of 2020 (ILO, 2020a). Also, global GDP has experienced a sharp decline during 2020 and it's expected to return its pre-pandemic level by the end of 2021 (OECD, 2020: p. 7). Today it's widely accepted that COVID-19 pandemic has caused a new global economic crisis. World real GDP growth has turned to the negative with the rate of -4.2% in 2020. It's underlined that this decline has mainly characterized by the sharp decline in trade and tourism activities (OECD, 2020: p. 13). International tourist arrivals have fallen by 72% between January – October 2020 over the same period of the previous year. The decline in the first ten months has showed a loss of 935 billion US\$ in export revenues from international tourism and this decline corresponds more than 10 times loss experienced in 2009 after the global financial crisis. World Tourism Organization underlines that the decline in international tourist arrivals means the international tourism to return its level to 30 years ago (UNWTO, 2020a: pp. 1-3).

All these developments show that tourism recovery will be on the forefront of the global actions and also new discussions will be made to develop tourism industry from the lens of sustainability. World Travel and Tourism Council - WTTC (2020) underlines that four trends will be in turn during recovery and beyond, as: demand evolution, health and hygiene, innovation and digitization, and sustainability. It seems that Post-COVID era will witness transformations in tourism industry from different aspects and hence discussions about new policies and actions will be critical. In this context, the main aims of this study are twofold. The first aim is analyzing the policy actions of different countries for the recovery of tourism industry during COVID-19 pandemic. And the second aim is making a comprehensive discussion about the actions that should be taken in post-COVID period. In this sense, the main contribution of this study is expected be on the point that the enhanced discussion will shed light on the tourism recovery for the analysts, academics and policymakers. Hence, after a brief introduction, the first section of this chapter is devoted to the importance of tourism industry in contemporary world and the developments in the industry, experienced during COVID-19 pandemic. Then the second section gives literature analysis about the impacts of COVID-19 on tourism industry. Moreover, the third section summarizes policy actions of countries for the recovery of tourism industry, solutions and recommendations. Then, in the conclusion, a comprehensive discussion about the new era of tourism industry will be enhanced

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