



Mark Harbers
Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management
e-mail : DBO-min@minienw.nl

18 February 2022

Ernst Kuipers
Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport
e-mail: ministervws@minvws.nl

Wopke Hoekstra
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs
e-mail: ministerbuza@minbuza.nl

Dear Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management,
Dear Minister of Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport,
Dear Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs,

We are writing to you from the tourism and transport sector in the Netherlands, on behalf of IATA, A4E, ANVR, BARIN, CLIA and the representatives of the corporate business travellers, NATM and CORTAS.

As you know, our sector has been particularly affected by the COVID pandemic and remain so, with passenger traffic in the Netherlands in 2021 at 36% of the 2019 level.

Before the crisis, the tourism and business travel sector accounted for 10.4% of global GDP and 10.8% of Netherlands' GDP. Moreover, it represented about 10% of global employment and 18.1% of total employment in the Netherlands. The dynamism of the Dutch economy and its international influence will depend to a large extent on the possibility for all those who wish to do so to be able to travel quickly and without major constraints within the European Union, as well as between the Netherlands and the non-EU international markets.

We thank you for all the support measures taken for our sectors. However, the restrictive entry measures currently in place, in particular, for vaccinated and recovered persons wishing to travel to the Netherlands are preventing the restart and long-awaited recovery for our industry and the Dutch economy. Currently, those fully vaccinated and recovered travellers must also always hold a negative COVID-19 test result when entering The Netherlands from a country outside the European Union or Schengen Area. In the interest of a European level-playing-field, entry requirements should be aligned with the European Digital Covid-19 Certificate (DCC) systematic, allowing entry when either being fully vaccinated, or recovered or tested.

As Dutch stakeholders in the air transport, travel, tourism sector and representatives of the Dutch corporate travellers, we are calling on the Dutch authorities to lift restrictions for, at least, fully vaccinated and recovered persons who travel to the Netherlands, regardless their country of origin. Indeed, several countries have recently announced the lifting of restrictions, including France, Germany, Spain, Ireland, United Kingdom, Sweden, and Switzerland, which no longer require testing for fully vaccinated individuals arriving both from EU and non-EU/Schengen.

This request is fully consistent with the spirit of the [European Council Recommendation 2022/107](#) of 25 January 2022 which calls for a risk assessment based on the health status of the passenger rather on the country of origin. Furthermore, the World Health Organization (WHO) has further recommended "*lifting or relaxing international travel bans as they do not add value*". It is also relevant to indicate that this mandatory testing for vaccinated persons discourages many people from traveling because of the cost of testing, the difficulty in some foreign countries to have access to it and finally the fear of being stranded abroad.

Last but not least, a recent Oxera study¹ has demonstrated that pre-departure testing requirements for vaccinated/recovered travellers have had no impact on the spread of the Omicron variant. This is inherent to the fact that variants circulate well ahead of the time by which they are identified, which is the reason why both the WHO and ECDC generally consider travel restrictions to be ineffective.

¹ <https://www.iata.org/en/pressroom/2022-releases/2022-02-01-01/>

Based on all the above, we would therefore kindly encourage the Dutch authorities to adopt the following measures to help the travel industry and by doing this it indirectly supports businesses to lift its corporate travel bans for businesses travellers, to return to a more normal situation, given the current situation in the Netherlands and to support the Dutch recovery program:

- Ensure that travel is now possible without mandatory testing, at least for fully vaccinated travellers as well as those who have fully recovered, regardless of their country of origin.
 - Fully implement the European recommendations regarding the recognition of vaccines on the WHO emergency list.
- These measures would send a clear signal that the Netherlands has been able to take action, within the framework of European coordination and international recommendations, to allow its citizens to continue to live in an open society while protecting their health.

Thank you for your consideration of this important step toward learning to live with COVID in a way that doesn't compromise health and safety nor limiting growth for the Dutch tourism, the economy of the Netherlands and the transport sector.

Yours sincerely,



Rafael Schwartzman
Regional Vice President Europe
International Air Transport Association



Thomas Reynaert
Managing Director
Airlines for Europe - A4E



Frank Oostdam
Chairman/Director
ANVR



Marnix H Fruitema
Chairman
BARIN



Marie-Caroline Laurent
Director General
Cruise Lines International Association Europe



Stephanie Smook
Managing Director
CORTAS Corporate Travel Association



Odete Pimenta da Silva
Managing Director
Netherlands Association for Travel Management