

“Restart Tourism”

Newsletter

May 22
2020



**KARATZAS
& PARTNERS**



“Restart Tourism” Newsletter

A. “RESTART TOURISM” PLAN

The Greek government has presented Greece’s restart plan for the tourism sector in the post-Covid-19 period.

‘Restart Tourism’ is a comprehensive and detailed plan to restore Greek tourism to function safely and efficiently for the national economy. The plan has been established after consultation with health experts who are confident that Greece is ready to host tourists and manage possible Covid-19 cases efficiently and responsibly. Protocols for the safe operation of tourism businesses and the protection of visitors during their travel and transport will be established in the following days.

Timeframe for the Greek ‘Restart Tourism’ plan

1. Reopening of accommodation facilities

The first restrictions to be lifted are those regarding the provision of yachting services, which are set to start their operations on 25.05.2020. On 01.06.2020 camps, campsites and year-round hotels will restart their operations. Then, on 15.06.2020 all other accommodations (seasonal hotels and resorts) will become operational.

2. Entrance of international tourists into the country

Flights to Greece will gradually be resumed from permitted countries.

On 15.06.2020 the first stage of lifting restrictions on international flights will take place, with aircraft landing initially permitted at Athens International Airport “*Eleftherios Venizelos*”. Later, on 01.07.2020 international flights at all Greek airports will resume.

On 01.06.2020, tourists from specific countries, chosen based on “epidemiological criteria”, will be allowed to travel to Greece. The ministry will release a list of countries from which visitors will be able to arrive in Greece by the end of May. On 01.07.2020 the second phase of the lifting of the travel ban will occur, with Greek airports welcoming international flights from all countries not specifically excluded based on relevant epidemiological indicators.

Incoming tourists will not be required to be tested for the virus prior to traveling, nor will they be quarantined after arrival. However, there will be sample testing in order to monitor any potential outbreaks.

Health Protocols

Specific health protocols will be established regarding the operation of tourism businesses and the transportation of tourists.

Each accommodation facility will need to designate a doctor who will assess any potential Covid-19 case, as well as a member of the staff who will be responsible to coordinate any further actions necessary. These health protocols will be adopted in parliament in the following days.

The capacity of all Greek tourism destinations to treat Covid-19 patients will be boosted, with a focus on the country’s smaller islands, by providing test analysis equipment, hospital beds, and establishing a coordinated system for the rapid transportation of patients to nearby areas for treatment when necessary. Furthermore, there will be a designated quarantine area in each region and island.

Tourists will have access to information regarding the health protocols via a specific application called “*visitGreeceapp*”.

The authorities will perform intensive oversight on tourism businesses to ensure compliance with the health protocols. Tourism businesses will have the option to seek certification for their compliance with the health protocols, which will be advertised by a special “health first” label.



Support Measures for Businesses

The following measures for the support of tourism businesses have been announced:

- Tourism businesses will be able to extend the suspension of their employment agreements until July 2020.
- Tourism businesses will benefit from reduced commercial lease payments of up to 40% until August.
- Tourism employees will receive additional financial support until September with relevant allocation of funds granted by the EU program “SURE”.
- The government will provide financial support to seasonal tourism employees.
- The government will regulate repayable advances to relieve businesses.
- Tourism businesses will benefit from a reduction of advance income tax payments.
- VAT cuts on transport, coffee, non-alcoholic beverages and package travel
- Businesses will receive financing through the ‘Entrepreneurship Fund II- TEPIX II’ in combination with the Guarantee Fund and the Development Bank.

Measures to strengthen domestic tourism

‘Restart Tourism’ also includes plans to boost domestic tourism, aiming to attract more Greeks to destinations and tourism enterprises for the 2020 season.

According to the minister, an advertising campaign will be launched, while the social tourism holiday program by the Greek Labour and Employment Service (OAED) will be expanded.

A second Greek social tourism holiday program, known as “Tourism for All”, will be financed with 30 million euros and is set to provide e-vouchers worth 120 euros to each eligible holidaymaker for a 4-night (minimum) stay at a Greek hotel. Beneficiaries of the program are estimated at around 250,000 Greeks.

Moreover, corporate holiday travel vouchers worth 300 euros will be made available for private sector employees.



Promotion

Promotional actions will include targeted advertising campaigns for countries from which traveling is permitted, a brand campaign, as well as co-advertising deals and agreements with leading tour operators. Specially designed campaigns will aim to promote Greece as a safe destination for all visitors.

B. Measures for Tourism Businesses regarding the Cancellation of Booked Services (PNP 13.04.2020)

Further to any cancellation of booked services by any contracting party, in lieu of refund owed to the customers (for any advance payment, deposit, partial or total prepayment they had made, or guarantee they had provided), Tourism Businesses are provided with the option to offer their customers (consumers or other tourism businesses based in Greece or abroad) credit notes, which shall be valid for eighteen (18) months from the date of issue, for the provision of a tourism service similar to the one cancelled.

In case the credit note is not used in the indicated period, the customer must be refunded in full.

This applies to agreements governed by both Greek and foreign law.

This provision applies to cancellations of reservations for services made directly or in the form of vacation packages.

It concerns reservations cancelled between 25.02.2020 and 30.09.2020.



For the purposes of the present the following terms will have the meaning indicated here:

Tourism businesses:

- a. Accommodation Facilities: businesses that provide accommodation and other accommodation-related services such as dining, amusement, leisure, sports;*
- b. Special Tourist Facilities: conference centers, golf courts , tourist ports, ski resorts, theme parks, thermal treatment retreats, spas, thalassotherapy institutes, sports tourism training centers, mountain refuges, moto racing tracks;*
- c. Tourism Agencies;*
- d. Businesses for the rental of cars, motorcycles, three-wheel and tourism specific four-wheel vehicles;*
- e. Road Transport Tourism Companies;*
- f. Ship Brokerage Offices for commercial pleasure crafts;*
- g. Passenger cars of public use without a meter (limousines) with a driver.*

Customers:

- a. Consumers;*
- b. Persons who professionally provide reservation services for trips (including representatives of small businesses, self-employed or self-employed persons);*
- c. Businesses and persons, who enter into agreements with tourism businesses in the context of their activities;*
- d. Natural or legal persons, including schools, educational institutions and non-profit associations, who enter into contracts with tourism businesses to arrange occasional non-profit trips for a limited group of travelers.*

Authors

Nina Leopoulou, Trainee Lawyer
Vassiliki Nikolaou, Trainee Lawyer
Vassiliki Salaka, Partner