



24 April 2020

**Re: Impact of COVID-19 on the Duty Free and Travel Retail sector**

Dear Minister,

In advance of the informal meeting of EU Transport Ministers on April 29, we are writing to request your support to ensure that the Duty Free and Travel Retail (DF&TR) channel receives the same consideration for economic support as that given to other parts of the passenger transport industry to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

DF&TR is a unique retail channel that serves international passengers travelling through airports and ports, and on board airlines and cruise and ferry vessels. DF&TR has been the first major retail channel in Europe to be economically impacted by COVID-19 since travel restrictions began, first in Asia, then in Europe and across the rest of the world.

As a result, this channel is today at a standstill. It is further expected that any rebound will take longer for DF&TR than domestic retail as it is entirely dependent on air and maritime passenger traffic resuming normal capacity and passengers regaining the confidence to travel again. This situation has had profound impacts on the DF&TR channel, including serious short-term damage to the profitability and cash flow/liquidity of companies operating in this sector, in particular duty free and travel retail operators, airside concessionaires, suppliers and brands.

ETRC therefore welcomes measures from the European Commission and European governments to protect employment in Europe and European assets during the COVID-19 crisis. ETRC however encourages EU governments to further extend financial support schemes and implement targeted measures to protect the travel retail channel. Finally, we call for travel restrictions to be lifted in a coordinated and harmonised way across Europe, and for governments to take account of the specific needs required for DF&TR shops to resume operations and ensure passengers gain the confidence to travel again.

DF&TR is the largest single component of commercial revenues for European airports and ferries, providing a substantial contribution to the financing of aviation and maritime infrastructure. Ensuring the channel receives adequate support and benefits from targeted measures, some of which are suggested in the documents accompanying this letter, will hasten the long-term recovery of the European transport system, essential to the European economy, tourism and connectivity of citizens.

We remain at your full disposal should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Lassaigne  
Secretary General  
European Travel Retail Confederation



## Attachments

- ETRC Position Paper “Duty Free and Travel Retail industry calls for extended and targeted support to address long-lasting impact of COVID-19”
- ETRC Best Practice Guidelines on practical measures necessary to reopen Duty Free & Travel Retail shops in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak

## **About ETRC**

*The European Travel Retail Confederation (ETRC) represents the European duty free and travel retail industry. ETRC is composed of national and regional affiliated trade associations representing over 200 European companies, Tax Free World Association (TFWA) representing 520 brand companies, and direct corporate membership from individual companies working in the duty free and travel retail trade across Europe and beyond.*