

The Brewers of Europe



## Working together for a quick, safe & sustainable recovery of Europe's hospitality sector

*The below signatories call for the immediate setting up of a hospitality task force across the EU Institutions to discuss the impact that COVID-19 has had on business and jobs and deliver a road map for the recovery of the hospitality sector and its value chain*

COVID-19 has hit Europe hard, taking thousands of lives, destroying families and impacting the health of many more people. We would like to first and foremost commend the hard work and diligence of Europe's health and frontline workers, who have proven themselves the true heroes of this crisis. We wish to express our heartfelt sympathy to all those who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The arrival and distribution of successful vaccines gives us hope for 2021 and a successful recovery.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also hit livelihoods and businesses hard, throwing Europe's restaurants, bars, hotels, cafés, pubs and nightclubs into a deep crisis. The hospitality sector has been among the hardest hit, with businesses being forced to shut down at short notice as part of the collective fight against the virus and many workers being laid off temporarily or definitely.

It has led to a dramatic knock-on effect on its suppliers. Many actors in the food supply chain such as farmers, processors, traders, wholesalers, and food and drinks manufacturers face severe hardship. Many of these sectors are primarily made up of SMEs and these businesses are intrinsic to the functioning of the hospitality sector.

**We turn towards 2021 with the core objective of creating some predictability for the hospitality sector and its supply chain, through a safe, timely and sustainable reopening as soon as the economy starts to open up again.**

These hospitality businesses are part of the European social and economic fabric, bringing diversity and vitality to city centres, rural communities, villages and tourist areas across Europe. Bars, restaurants and cafés help attract people to town centre shopping districts and, likewise, these shopping destinations help bring custom to town centre hospitality venues. This is part of the European way of life, combining tourism, high quality food, services and culture.

In normal times, the hospitality sector accounts for up to 20-30% of overall food and drink consumption in the EU – and can represent far more in certain products. It employs more than 12.5 million people across the EU. It is also a growth sector (between 5 and 12% growth per year before the pandemic, depending on the segment), adding tens of thousands of new jobs every year. It likewise represents a high value-added segment for specific agri-food products.

Hundreds of thousands of businesses have had to close due to the various lockdowns, shutdowns and restrictions, and all unfortunately face an uncertain future. This has resulted in millions of people currently temporarily unemployed, with a real risk of many drifting into permanent unemployment due to businesses not surviving this economic crisis. Some restaurants were able to focus on takeaway or food delivery services, but this can only help save a small percentage of traditional income streams. During Q2 2020, the hospitality sector's turnover in the EU dropped by 63.25% compared to Q2 2019<sup>1</sup>. In employment terms, hospitality services employed 1.84 million fewer people in Q2 2020 than in Q2 2019<sup>2</sup>.

### **Food & drink value chain businesses have taken their responsibility**

Hundreds of thousands of businesses within the hospitality sector, with support of their partners, worked hard to invest in new infrastructure and implement all national health and safety protocols to protect the health of staff and guests alike. Together, these establishments can and will ensure that these measures remain effective to enable their business to reopen and stay open safely, helping to restore consumer confidence.

### **The hospitality sector calls for strong and dedicated support to help its recovery**

The unpredictability over measures opening and closing restaurants, bars, canteens and alike has generated huge uncertainty for everyone involved along the supply chain. Clarity is needed as soon as possible on when and under which conditions the hospitality sector will be able to reopen, to ensure sufficient time to refurbish stocks and adapt to additional measures, if any.

Re-opening in a well-regulated manner, following all the health and safety protocols developed at national level and keeping hospitality companies open safely, if the epidemiological situation allows, is in everyone's interest. By helping the sector to stay open, moving progressively away from simply supporting it to stay closed, we can create much-needed stability and reliability in this crisis for the millions of people in the European Union.

Our needs are both immediate and long-term. Many businesses in the hospitality sector are at risk of collapse and will take down many other supporting industries in the process. Millions of workers and their families are facing great uncertainty and fear for the future. The necessary financial, fiscal and

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<sup>1</sup> [Eurostat source.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Eurostat source.](#)

operational support must be extended for companies directly and indirectly affected by the lockdown, for as long as it is necessary, to provide liquidity to companies and to help avoid bankruptcies. State wage compensation schemes must also be extended until this crisis is not over to protect as many jobs as possible. Supporting the hospitality sector and its value chain now, can play a leading role in Europe's recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

**Investing in the hospitality industry NOW will pay off for our collective recovery in the future, helping to kickstart the wider economy and society**



Eamonn Bates  
Secretary General  
Serving Europe



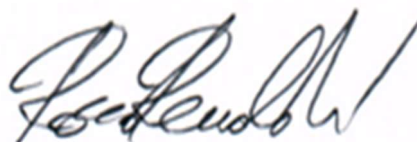
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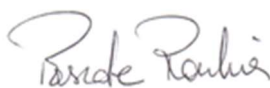
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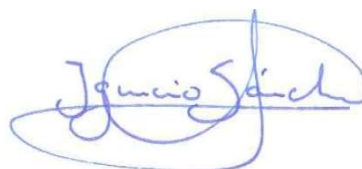
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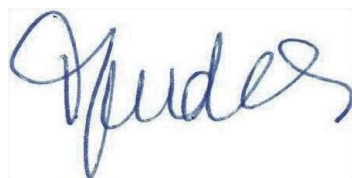
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