

An Analysis of the Medium Term Effects of COVID-19 on European Transport and Tourism Economies

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Abstract

Outbreaks of an infectious disease by definition turn into an epidemic when people in a society or region infect each other rapidly and develop into a pandemic by spreading over a wide geographical area and affecting many people around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in the Wuhan province of the Hubei region of China on December 31, 2019 as a disease, was primarily seen as a Chinese and later Southeast Asian problem, but it has spread to many parts of the world in a short period of about three months due to global mobility. It was officially accepted by the World Health Organization as pandemic on March 11, 2020. The services provided by the transportation economy systems and tourism activities are adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic at national, regional and international level. Limited international cross-border travel within the EU caused a decrease in the capacity utilization of transportation based economy systems as well as tourism activities which are directly linked to developments in transportation. Transportation services ensure the mobility of persons and goods and accelerate economic development with effects on various sectors. These systems are compared in terms of technical factors such as speed and capacity and operational factors such as speed limits and safety. Investments to be made in these systems and transportation policies to be implemented have to apply an integrated approach to accelerate the development of national and regional economies. Europe, the second region where the disease spread after Southeast Asia, ranks second after America in terms of the number of infected person and deaths 2 years after the beginning of COVID-19. Providing transportation services by considering many components, especially environment and energy, the EU did not ignore national approaches and created a legal framework for a common transportation policy at the supranational level as a requirement of the common market. The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic on the European transport and tourism economies in the medium term. Within this framework, the study primarily touches on the theories of transportation and tourism economies. Secondly, the approaches of the EU common transport policy according to transport systems within the framework of legal regulations and thirdly, the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on EU transport systems and tourism performances in the medium term (2 years after its onset) are discussed. The findings show that the measures taken to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic concerning transportation have negative economic effects on the dynamic element of tourism (especially the number of passengers carried by the transportation systems) as well as on accommodation, which forms the static economic element of tourism. This study additionally emphasizes the effects of transportation services and tourism activities as regards to their impact on the physical and social environment.

Keywords: COVID-19, Europe, Transportation economics, Transportation systems, Tourism economy

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