



SPAIN PROMOTES AN INITIATIVE AT THE OECD TO DEVELOP AN INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SAFE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

The President of the Spanish Government, Pedro Sánchez, has announced today at the official commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the OECD Convention that **Spain will be working with the OECD Secretariat, Member countries and partners to try to develop an international framework for safe international mobility in the coming months.**

A transition strategy to mitigate the long-term economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic is becoming urgent. Some sectors have been hit hard. International tourism is estimated to have contracted by around 80% in 2020, and the sector is expected to remain in survival mode well into 2021, which will constrain wider economy recovery in several countries. Restrictions on international mobility also affect other areas of the economy, including trade in goods and services, and undermines confidence.

Even in the most optimistic scenarios for vaccine development, massive administration will not be a reality well into 2021 in OECD countries, and possibly much longer in lower- and middle-income countries. As part of this effort, it is necessary to develop measures to allow for the safe cross-border movement of people necessary for the continuity of business and other key economic, social and cultural activities, as recognised in the OECD 2020 [Ministerial Council Statement](#) agreed under Spain's chairmanship.

The different requirements for traveling currently enforced by countries (including restrictions on arrivals from selected countries, medical screening or resting and quarantine requirements, often subject to exceptions for certain categories of people of types of travel) **are making travel difficult.** The lack of common protocols for testing, medical screening and quarantines not only hinders economies, but it may also not provide a comprehensive response to mitigate public health risks. At the same time, rapid technological development in diagnostic tests, including new antigen tests, have opened up possibilities for the quick and reliable



diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 infection as well as for managing international travel in a safer, more effective way.

In this context, Spain is proposing to undertake work within the OECD to **develop an international framework for safe international** mobility that can be based on the mutual recognition of COVID-19 diagnostic tests. The development of common protocols or standards to ensure the reliability and comparability of test procedures and results (for instance regarding the quality of procedures followed by laboratories) can help create the level of trust among governments needed for mutual recognition.

In full co-ordination with other initiatives carried out at the EU level as well as internationally, and engaging other relevant international organisations and specialised agencies, Spain will be working with its fellow OECD Member countries and the OECD Secretariat to **encourage the harmonisation and standardisation of health protocols and COVID-19 test procedures and results required for international travel**. This common framework may include: (a) the development of a protocol about what tests, certification, and quarantine are required in different circumstances (e.g. source and destination country, mode of travel); (b) an agreement on the type of documentation, benchmark and assessment procedures required to prove compliance and the information and certifications it must contain, including recognised issuing authorities in source country; (c) an agreement on whether this documentation needs to be transmitted between countries to avoid the prospect of fraud or privacy breach and if so, how it should be done; and (d) potentially, this agreement on the protocol could be set out in a legal document through a model Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) open for use on a bilateral or multilateral basis.

Work on this initiative will start immediately. The OECD will be working as a catalyst for the development of an international framework in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including other international organisations, civil society and business in the tourism and transportation industries. It is expected that **a final proposal will be developed and presented at a high-level conference in early February 2021.**