

The Rt. Hon. Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
2 Marsham St
London SW1P 4DF

27th May 2020

Dear Home Secretary

We are writing to urge you to withdraw immediately the proposed legislative amendment to the Coronavirus Act 2020 which would enable the government to impose mandatory 14 day quarantine periods on any person(s) arriving in the United Kingdom.

Many people urged the government to impose quarantine regulations during the early phases of COVID-19. Instead, no action was taken and flights from many infected countries were allowed to land, making it easy for thousands of potentially affected passengers to spread the virus into the wider UK community.

COVID-19 is now under control and we commend the government for its handling of what was an extraordinary and unprecedented situation. However, the economic cost of the government's action is yet to be seen, but the early indicators paint a grim picture with Q1 GDP contracting by 2% (despite only seven days of lockdown), and Q2 likely to be considerably higher at 20% with possibly a 12% contraction for the 2020 fiscal year. Government bonds are now yielding negative returns, the initial PMI reading for May is 28.9, deflation looms, and at least 7.5m workers are now on furlough. Severe recession is a high probability.

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the global travel industry accounts for US\$8.9 trillion contribution to the world's GDP (10.3%), and 330 million jobs accounting for 1 in 10 jobs around the world. In the UK, the Travel & Tourism sector accounts for almost four million jobs, or 11% of the country's entire work force. In 2019 the sector generated almost £200 billion to the UK economy (9% GDP). An analysis of the outbound sector by Tourism Alliance shows that the direct economic impact of travel – the revenue generated from specific travel services, such as flights, and package holidays – is £32.3 billion. According to ABTA, 221,000 jobs are now directly employed throughout this sector, which supports a further 526,000 jobs in the wider economy. ABTA's analysis further finds that travellers now spend more in the UK before they travel than they do while abroad. In 2017 UK travellers spent £45.7 billion within the UK prior to departure, compared to a spend of £44.8 billion whilst overseas.

The UK travel industry is currently severely challenged. The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018 were never designed to cope with a global pandemic. The government has been woefully slow to react and has procrastinated to the point of absurdity in terms of either providing support for, or ruling against, the concept of Refund Credit Notes. Unlike many industries who can scale down their workforce very rapidly, travel companies still need to employ staff when business stops, to either cancel, or rearrange existing, often complex, bookings. In essence, this means that whilst facing up to a 100% cancellation of forward bookings, cashflows are stretched even further in order to look after and protect existing consumers.

COVID-19 is thankfully, for now anyway, on the retreat. There is a glimmer of hope that at least some of the summer business (the most important period of the year for many travel companies and hotels) might be salvaged, perhaps even more so for those companies that have a large portfolio of European product. The very last thing the travel industry needs is a mandatory quarantine imposed on all arriving passengers which will deter foreign visitors from coming here, deter UK visitors from travelling abroad, and most likely cause other countries to impose reciprocal quarantine requirements on British visitors. We therefore believe there is substantial merit in the plan put forward by Grant Shapps for 'air bridges' to be formed between the UK and countries where there is a low rate of COVID-19. It is completely wrong of the Government to have dismissed this plan without due consultation.

It would be far more constructive, not just for the economy but also for controlling the spread of COVID-19, to ensure the ramped-up testing capability is carried out on those arriving in the UK and that all arrivals are required to download the soon-to-be-launched Government App.

The government has done its best to suppress and control this invidious viral contagion, but it should not, and must not, exceed its mandate. The people of this country do not wish to be prevented from travelling. The government itself has urged people to use their common sense in terms of their behaviour. Quite simply, it is time to switch the emphasis from protection to economic recovery, before it is too late. We the undersigned, therefore urge the Home Secretary to abandon the concept of mandatory quarantine and instead, champion an industry that provides not only a major economic contribution to the whole of the UK, but also such joy to so many people.

Yours sincerely,



George Morgan-Grenville – Founder & CEO, Red Savannah Ltd

This letter is also endorsed by the following all of whom have seen a copy:

Sir Rocco Forte – Chairman & CEO, Rocco Forte Hotels
Henrietta Loyd – Founder, Cazenove & Loyd
Geoffrey Kent – Co-Chairman, Abercrombie & Kent Group
Andrew Sutcliffe QC – 3VB Chambers
Andrew Dunn – Chairman, Scott Dunn
Tom Barber – Co-Founder & Director – Original Travel
Henry Cookson FRGS - Chairman & Founder, Cookson Adventures
Oliver Brendon – CEO & Founder, ATD Travel Services
Edward Orr – Chairman, Mr & Mrs Smith
Manfredi Lefebvre – Co-Chairman, Abercrombie & Kent Group
Victoria Williams Hooberman – Director, Scott Williams
Derek Jones – CEO, Der Touristik UK
Francis Torrilla - Managing Director, Jules Verne
Jennifer Atkinson – CEO, Inspiring Travel Company
Rupert Longsdon – Founder & CEO, Oxford Ski Company & Oxford Private Travel
James Jayasundera – Founder & Managing Director, Ampersand Travel
Joss Kent – CEO, &Beyond
Edward Granville – Director, Red Savannah

Nick Van Gruisen – Managing Director, The Ultimate Travel Company
Simon Leadsford – Publisher, Conde Nast Traveller
Kerry Golds – Managing Director, Abercrombie & Kent
Tom Marchant – Co-Founder, The Black Tomato Group
Maymie White – Director, Scott Williams
Glen Donovan – Founder, Earth
Paul Cleary – Managing Director, Caribtours
Ted Wake – Director, Kirker Holidays
Roz Webster – Founder, Cream Travel
Mehra Dalton – Founder & CEO, Greaves Travel
James Merrett – Co-Founder, The Black Tomato Group
Pammy Goodman – Travel Editor, House & Garden
Kane Pirie – Founder & CEO, Vivid Travel
Lucy Cleland – Editorial Director, Country & Townhouse
Sarah Mason – Managing Director, Mason Rose Private
Serge Dive – Founder & CEO, Beyond Media
Ileana von Hirsch – Managing Director, Five Star Greece
Mary Ann Curtis-Green – Managing Director – Mahout
Andrew Loyd – Co-Founder, Loyd & Townsend Rose
Matt Smith – Co-Founder, The Black Tomato Group
Gemma Antrobus – Managing Director, Haslemere Travel
Alice Daunt – Founder, Daunt Travel
Marina Gratsos – Founder, Carpe Diem Luxury Travel
Judy Menier – Founder, SJ Villas
Mark Hudson – Chairman, Digital Health Intelligence
Michelle Jana Chan – Travel Editor, Vanity Fair
David Morgan-Hewitt – Managing Director, The Goring
Amanda Hyndman – General Manager & Vice President Operations, Mandarin Oriental
Michael Bonsor - Managing Director, The Rosewood London
Bob Van Den Oord - Managing Director, The Langham London
Guillaume Marly - Managing Director, Hotel Cafe Royal
Jannes Soerensen - General Manager, The Beaumont
Philip Barnes - Regional Vice President and Managing Director, The Savoy
Aaron Kaupp - General Manager, Jumeirah Carlton Tower
Andrew Batchelor - General Manager, The Landmark London
Thomas Kochs - Managing Director, Corinthia London
Stuart Proctor – COO, Stafford Collection
Joanna Taylor-Stagg - General Manager, The Athenaeum Hotel
Kurt Macher - General Manager, Shangri-La Hotel The Shard Hotel, London
Stuart Johnson – Managing Director, Browns Hotel
Kostas Sfaltos – General Manager, Bvlgari Hotel
Guillaume Marly – Managing Director, Café Royal
Paul Jackson – General Manager, Claridge's
Jurgen Ammerstorfer - General Manager, The London Edition
Philip Barnes - Managing Director, The Savoy
Arnaud de Saint-Exupery – General Manager, Hyatt Regency London - The Churchill
Sonja Vodusek – Managing Director, The Peninsula London
Knut Wylde – General Manager - The Berkeley
Sandeep Bhalla – General Manager, The Connaught
Sal Gowili – General Manager, The Ritz
Andrew Batchelor – General Manager, The Landmark Hotel

Bob Van Den Oord – Managing Director, The Langham
Klaus Kabelitz – General Manager, The Biltmore Mayfair
Frank Kenyon-Slaney – Director, World Odyssey
Jeremy Goring – CEO, The Goring
Huw Beaugié – Founder, The Thinking Traveller
Viscount Garmoye – Chairman, Red Savannah
Robert Whitfield – Regional Director & General Manager, The Dorchester