# Kim Daenen new Head of Corporate Communications at Brussels Airlines

**– Kim Daenen, Head of Corporate Communications at Brussels Airlines**

Predecessor Wencke Lemmes takes on the role of Head of Customer Experience, Product and Marketing and remains responsible for Public Affairs

Kim Daenen has been appointed as the new Head of Corporate Communications at Brussels Airlines, directly reporting to Peter Gerber, CEO of the company. She hereby succeeds Wencke Lemmes who has taken up the role of Head of Customer Experience, Product & Marketing since May 15th. In her new role, Wencke will remain responsible for Public Affairs and Lobbying, a function she took on recently.

Kim Daenen, who has a Master's degree in Translation & Business Communication as well as a Master's degree in Journalism, started her journey at Brussels Airlines in 2009. As part of the e-commerce department and later as the airline's Social Media Manager, she contributed to the airline's online reputation and developed its social media communication strategy. In 2014, Kim Daenen joined the Corporate Communications department of Brussels Airlines as a Media Relations Manager and Spokesperson, managing and building further on the reputation of the Belgian airline. With her vast experience in internal and external communications, crisis communication and public relations and her extensive knowledge of the company and the aviation sector, Kim will further develop the public relations and communication strategy of Brussels Airlines.

*"With our turnaround plan REBOOT Plus, a new Brussels*

*Airlines will emerge, in which change will be the one constant. To make this new Brussels Airlines and the profound investments in our future a success, transparent and extensive communication will be key. We are convinced that Kim is the perfect fit for this challenge and will make the communications and public relations strategy future-proof."*
***— Peter Gerber,*** *CEO Brussels Airlines*

*"Our company has gone through tremendous change in recent years and will continue to do so. In the coming months and years, one of our key priorities will be to transparently communicate our sustainability ambitions. Next to this, our focus will continue to be on our Belgian ambassadorship, our key market Africa and our ongoing improvements and investments to become a structurally sustainable company, offering perspectives to our employees and stakeholders."*

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# Brussels Airport and skeyes test use of drones for bird control during normal operations



*Brussels Airport and skeyes continue to explore the possible uses of drones at the airport with a second series of testing days. These test days specifically focus on the use of drones for bird control at the airport, to monitor the presence of birds and to direct them away from aircraft when necessary. The tests happen in safe conditions during normal operations and will have no impact on the air traffic.*

In normal circumstances drones are prohibited at and around the airport, as a stray drone can create dangerous situations for air traffic. However, in order to explore the possibilities of innovative use of drones, Brussels Airport and skeyes are organising testing days with drones in safe and secure conditions. After a successful test in April with a safety drone, this time the possibilities of a drone for bird control will be further investigated.

During the test days, that started on 9 September, a drone, operated by Citymesh, is used for bird control: to detect, monitor and if necessary, direct birds away from the airport. As much as we love and, through several initiatives, support the biodiversity around the airport grounds, birds have to be kept away from the runways for their safety and that of the aircraft. The airport's Bird Control Unit regularly circles the airport to prevent and monitor animal presence and to keep them at a safe distance. During these test days, the use of a drone as an additional tool to support the Bird Control Unit is tested.

Given the large surface area of the airport and the fact that certain areas are more difficult to reach by car, a drone can be a useful means of inspecting the airport grounds. The

drone is used for monitoring, inspection and mapping out locations of birds and other animals. Additionally, it is equipped with a speaker that replicates the sounds made by birds of prey, acting as a natural deterrent to keep the birds away from aircraft operations. The goal is to find out if the use of a drone for these tasks can increase the efficiency and to test and evaluate the possibilities of using a drone during normal airport operations.

Drones are normally not allowed in the vicinity of the airport for the safety of the air traffic and skeyes is responsible for authorising drone flights in the airspace around Belgian airports. Thus, during these carefully planned test days, the drone flights are carried out in optimal safe conditions, applying efficient and reactive operational coordination procedures established in close cooperation between the air traffic controllers in the skeyes tower and the staff of the Airport Operations Centre at Brussels Airport. The drone is used during normal operations and only operates at a safe distance of the aircraft and in between the take-off and landing of the aircraft. Airport operations and runway use will not be impacted by these tests.

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# Rothaarsteig: een wandelroute voor alle zintuigen viert 20-jarig bestaan



Mooi zijn ze alle dertien, de Top Trails of Germany. Maar toch heeft elke wandelroute iets eigens. Wandelend door de uitgestrekte bossen op de Rothaarsteig bijvoorbeeld laat je de drukte achter je en kun je helemaal opgaan in de natuur. Onderweg zijn er volop bijzonder vormgegeven banken en andere zitgelegenheden om de omgeving in je op te nemen. Niet voor niets is het motto: route van de zintuigen.

## Wandelen in een modern jasje

Dit jaar is het 20 jaar geleden dat de Rothaarsteig werd geopend. De allereerste Premiumwandelroute van Duitsland was een echte trendsetter. Door bijvoorbeeld gebruik te maken van een herkenbaar logo en langs de route allerlei bijzondere zit- en ligobjecten neer te zetten, werd wandelen opeens hip. Een grappige bijkomstigheid is dat de vorm van het logo – een witte liggende R op een rode achtergrond – de inspiratie vormde voor de gewelfde vorm van de ‘Waldsofa’, de zitgelegenheid die speciaal voor de Rothaarsteig werd ontwikkeld.

## Genieten met alle zintuigen



Het motto *Weg der Sinne* is niet zomaar gekozen. Je kunt hier urenlang wandelen door de uitgestrekte bossen en groene weilanden zonder iemand tegen te komen. Laat je blik over het landschap van het Rothaargebergte glijden vanaf de Kahler Asten, het hoogste punt van de route, of vanaf de markante rotsformatie Bruchhauser Steine. Neem onderweg plaats

op een van de 300 bijzonder vormgegeven banken, ligstoelen, picknickplekken, schommels en hangmatten, kom even helemaal tot rust en zuig de omgeving in je op. Op vijf fotogenieke plekken staat een omlijsting om het fraaie uitzicht nog eens extra in scène te zetten.



Rothaarsteig zwischen Brilon und Dillenburg

**Kort en bondig**

- Lengte: 154 km
- Aantal etappes: 8
- Van Brilon naar Dillenburg
- Ligging: Sauerland, regio Siegen-Wittgenstein en Westerwald
- Moeilijkheidsgraad: middelzwaar

Meer informatie en GPX-tracks van de Rothaarsteig en andere Top Trails of Germany: toptrails.nl

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# Budapest Airport's rising

# schedule with Wizz Air




**Photo caption: Budapest Airport's Head of Airline Development, Balázs Bogáts welcomed Wizz Air's connection to Kazan on 9 September, adding to the carrier's resumption of its full route map from the Hungarian gateway.**

Welcoming the return of a further five services with Wizz Air this last week, Budapest Airport now offers 55 destinations with its home-based airline. Witnessing the resumption of 85% of Wizz Air's routes when compared with 2019, the Hungarian gateway continues to show robust recovery following the pandemic.

With no direct competition, the ULCC increased Budapest's frequency growth to Russia, adding connections to Kazan and St. Petersburg. This advancement of its route network means the Hungarian capital city will be linked to six Russian cities this winter as Wizz Air's new services join Koltsovo, Sheremetyevo, Vnukovo, and Zhukovsky.

As Wizz Air relaunches services to Kiev Khulyany today, joining Budapest's connections to Ukraine, the airline will offer 42% of Budapest's links to the Eastern European country this winter, joining services to Kharkiv, Lviv, and Odessa.

Continuing of its path of regrowth, Budapest also welcomed the ultra-low-cost carrier's (ULCC) resumed twice-weekly services to Edinburgh and Warsaw early last week.

Balázs Bogáts, Head of Airline Development, Budapest Airport says: “We continue to strive to rebuild our connections in a safe and secure environment for all. Wizz Air’s latest relaunches are a hugely positive sign of our commitment, and the strength of our airport’s networks.”

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# Brussels Airlines and Moulinsart restore Belgian Icon Rackham and partner up for five more years

Rackham, still one of the most photographed planes in the world, will be part of the Brussels Airlines fleet until 2026. As Rackham reached its repainting deadline, Moulinsart and Brussels Airlines agreed to prolong their partnership and restore the aircraft painting in its original state, meaning that Rackham will stay in the airline’s fleet for at least five more years. While the painting on the outside remains almost identical, the interior of the aircraft has been upgraded with more Tintin illustrations by the hand of Hergé.

## ABOUT BRUSSELS AIRLINES

Brussels Airlines is Belgium’s national airline, connecting the capital of Europe to more than 70 destinations, whereof 15 in Africa, the continent that Brussels Airlines carries closes to its heart. Moreover, Brussels Airlines offers 60 destinations in Europe, 2 in North America and Tel Aviv. The company employs 3,100 employees and operates 38 aircraft.

In view of the global coronavirus pandemic, Brussels Airlines has committed itself to the strictest health safety measures in aviation worldwide, following the recommendations of EASA (European Air Safety Agency). Since the outbreak of the coronavirus, the Belgian airline operates an adapted flight schedule that is based on market demand and that takes into account the travel restrictions of the different authorities.

Thanks to its no-compromise positioning, Brussels Airlines combines competitive all-flexible fares with  the highest service quality. With yearly changing Belgian Star Chefs, its wide offer of Belgian food and drinks and the five Belgian Icons, Brussels Airlines is acting as a real ambassador of its country, bringing the world to Belgium and the best of Belgium to the world.

Creating over 40.000 direct and indirect jobs, Brussels Airlines plays an important role in the Belgian economy and is part of Belgium’s second largest economic engine: its hub at Brussels Airport. In 2019, the airline transported over 10 million passengers to, from and via Brussels Airport.

Brussels Airlines offers cargo capacity on all its flights, commercialized by Lufthansa Cargo. The airline also handles the daily maintenance of its aircraft fleet.

Brussels Airlines is one of the four Lufthansa Group network airlines (Austrian, Brussels Airlines, Lufthansa and Swiss) and member of Star Alliance. The company was founded in 2002 and is 100% owned by Deutsche Lufthansa AG.

# Nazomeren in Tsjechië

**Genieten van de herfst en haar kleurrijke natuur**



*September en oktober zijn schitterende maanden die vaak in het teken staan van gastronomie en de prachtige kleuren van de natuur. Ook in Tsjechië is het genieten in het najaar. De kastelen zijn nog open, de natuur is fotogeniek en stadjes vullen zich weer met studenten. Dit zijn onze zes nazomer tips.*

1. **Bezoek pittoresk Domažlice**

Kleurige renaissancehuizen, gotische arcades en een stad van folklore. **Domažlice** is het hart van de regio Chodsko in **West-Bohemen**. Dit deel van het land heeft veel volkstradities, waaronder kleurrijke kostuums, een rijk scala aan volksevenementen en de delicatesse Chodsko taart. Het historische centrum bevat een kasteel waar nu het Chodsko museum is gevestigd. Domažlice is bovendien ideaal voor een uitstapje naar het nabijgelegen natuurgebied **Boheemse Bos (Tsjechisch: Český les)** gelegen aan de Duitse grens. Tot de val van het communistische regime in 1989 maakte het deel uit van de westelijke grenszone en was het hier vrijwel onbewoond. Nog steeds zijn er slechts enkele inwoners in dit beschermde natuurgebied. Tijdens een wandeling of fietstocht naar bijvoorbeeld de uitzichttoren Čerchov kun je in alle rust genieten van de ongerepte natuur.

2. **Streel de tong in het Jeseník gebergte**

Het Jeseník gebergte is het op één na hoogste gebergte van het land. Bezoekers komen hier voor de natuur, maar ook voor de heilzame kuuroorden en de **gastronomie**. Het beste restaurant van de regio, benoemd met de titel ‘Beste Gastronomische Faciliteit in de regio Olomouc’ is het pension Kovárna in Lipová. Je kunt hier eend met kastanjevulling, rundvlees met wijn, peperkoek en gerookte wortelen of huisgemaakte kwarkbollen krijgen. Proef in de regio ook zeker het bier dat in de lokale brouwerijen van Zlosin, Hasič, Sobotín en Holba wordt gebrouwen en de likeuren Jesenická bylinná en Domašovská hořká.

3. **Historie en zoetigheid in Pardubice**

In **Oost-Bohemen** ligt de stad van peperkoek. **Pardubice** is niet alleen bekend vanwege deze zoetigheid, maar ook door de paardenrace Velká Pardubická. Eén van de zwaarste paardenraces van Europa. De stad ligt in het laagland van de rivier de Elbe, omgeven door weiden, loofbossen en historische grachten. Het renaissance kasteel, uit de late 15e en vroege 16e eeuw, is één van de bezienswaardigheden van de stad en herbergt het museum van Oost-Bohemen. Het plein Perštýnské náměstí wordt omringd door sierlijke huizen met vlakbij de poort Zelená brána, dat tevens een uitzichttoren is. Op een half uur rijden van Pardubice ligt de **stoeterij Kladruby nad Labem** waar als sinds de zestiende eeuw Kladruber-paarder worden gefokt.

4. **Wijn proeven in Zuid-Moravië**

Het najaar is de perfecte maand om te genieten van wijn in **Zuid-Moravië**. In deze gemoedelijke wijnregio sieren wijnranken in herfstkleuren de heuvels en zijn de boeren druk bezig met het maken van de nieuwe wijnen. **Znojmo** en Valtice zijn een van de warmste plekken van het land en hierdoor een belangrijk wijncentrum. Ook in Milotice en Strážnice zijn volop wijngaarden te vinden. Bij de fotogenieke **wijnkelders Plže** in Petrov kun je verschillende wijnen proeven, waaronder de

lokale druivensoort Pálava. Het wijnhuis Gotberg met een uniek industrieël gebouw biedt begeleide proeverijen aan met een adembenemend uitzicht op de Pálava heuvels. Vanaf de wijnmakerij Volařík kijk je uit op het **Mikulov** kasteel en de Heilige Berg met een ecologische wijntje in de hand.

5. **Actief genieten in het Beskiden gebergte**

Aan de grens van Slowakije en Polen bevindt zich de bergketen Beskiden die zich helemaal naar Oekraïne uitstrekt. De hoogste top ligt in Oekraïne, maar **Lysá Hora** is de hoogste berg in het Tsjechische deel. De omgeving van Lysá Hora is prachtig: ongerepte natuur met bossen, rivieren en talloze wandelpaden. De wandeling naar de top is niet al te uitdagend en duurt ongeveer twee uur. Vanaf de top is er een adembenemend uitzicht naar de steden Nový Jičín en **Ostrava**. Lysá hora is ook de perfecte plek om een zonsopgang te bekijken na een nacht in de nieuwe blokhut Chata Emil Zatokep.

6. **Ontdekking onder de grond in Jihlava**

Midden in de uitgestrekte heuvelachtige, beboste en vijverachtige Boheems-Moravische Hooglanden, aan weerszijden van de voormalige landgrens tussen Bohemen en Moravië, ligt de oude stad **Jihlava**. Tegenwoordig is Jihlava een moderne stad, maar in het verleden was het een stad die samen met **Kutná Hora** de titel droeg van de zilveren schatkamer van het Tsjechische koninkrijk. De zilverkoorts bracht mijnwerkers, ambachtslieden en handelaren uit heel Europa hierheen. De attractie van Jihlava is het enorme ondergrondse gangenstelsel. Het heeft een totale lengte van 25 kilometer. De gangen liggen op verschillende niveaus onder de grond en strekken zich uit onder bijna alle huizen rond het plein. Uniek is de “glimmende gang” die tevoorschijn komt als het licht wordt uitgedaan.

**Benieuwd naar meer mooie plekken in Tsjechië? Ontdek ze hier.**

# Brussels Airlines facilite le voyage avec une vérification de documents à domicile et une carte de voyage interactive.




Mardi 17 août 2021 – Brussels Airlines veut rendre à nouveau le voyage facile et accessible en aidant ses clients à se munir des bons documents. L'évolution constante des restrictions de voyage et les nombreuses différences dans les documents demandés par les services d'immigration en Europe et à l'extérieur de l'union européenne impliquent une grande quantité de paperasse. Depuis le début des restrictions de voyage, Brussels Airlines a fait de nombreux efforts pour informer ses passagers des documents nécessaires. Les contrôles de documents effectués actuellement dans les différents aéroports entraînent une complexité énorme tant pour les clients que pour le personnel des compagnies aériennes. C'est pourquoi Brussels Airlines lance deux initiatives différentes pour informer encore au mieux les passagers, et offre la possibilité de vérifier les documents de voyage à domicile au lieu que ce contrôle soit effectué à l'aéroport. De cette façon, les voyageurs peuvent éviter de longs délais d'attente aux comptoirs d'enregistrement de

l’aéroport.

**Vérification de documents à domicile**À compter du 18 août, Brussels Airlines offrira à ses clients qui se rendent vers la France, l’Espagne, le Portugal, l’Italie et la Grèce la possibilité de faire vérifier à distance leurs documents sanitaires nécessaires (après une période de test réussie pour les vols vers/en provenance de l’Espagne depuis le 11 août). Avec ce nouveau service, la compagnie aérienne veut rendre le voyage plus facile et accessible, et souhaite limiter les files d’attente aux comptoirs d’enregistrement de l’aéroport. Les clients admissibles à la vérification des documents à domicile recevront un courriel par laquelle il leur sera demandé de télécharger leurs documents.  Cette notification sera envoyée 6, 3 et 1 jours avant le départ.Une fois les documents téléchargés, un courriel crypté est envoyé à un centre de service du Groupe Lufthansa, où les documents soumis sont vérifiés. Si les documents sont approuvés, le passager reçoit un courriel de confirmation et peut s’enregistrer en ligne. En cas de documents manquants ou non conformes aux règles, le centre de service informe le passager et demande de télécharger les documents manquants. Dans ce cas, le passager ne pourra pas utiliser l’enregistrement en ligne.
D’autres destinations pourront être ajoutées à l’avenir selon la capacité du centre de service.

**Carte de voyage interactive**

En coopération avec Sherpa, Brussels Airlines a lancé une carte interactive par laquelle les voyageurs peuvent trouver toutes les informations pertinentes et un aperçu des documents qu’ils doivent posséder pendant leur voyage. La carte interactive a pour objectif de donner aux clients un aperçu clair des possibilités de voyage au sein de l’Europe et en dehors, et de servir de source d’inspiration pour redécouvrir la liberté de voyager. Avec une simple case à cocher, les passagers peuvent indiquer qu’ils sont vaccinés et voir les restrictions par pays.

Les sources d’information pour la mise à jour de la carte interactive sont les sites web officiels des gouvernements belge et étrangers ainsi que des outils d’informations gouvernementales. La carte redirige les passagers vers le site Web du gouvernement respectif de leur destination pour obtenir des informations plus détaillées ainsi que les documents nécessaires.

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# Budapest Airport wins Skytrax Award for eighth year in a row



Budapest Airport won the recognition in the category of “best airport in Eastern Europe” for the eighth time running. As in previous years, the award was decided by the passengers themselves, recognising the work of the Budapest Airport community.

World Airport Awards is one of the most prestigious aviation accolades. The Skytrax Award is decided every year – independently of airports – based on a satisfaction survey completed by tens of thousands of passengers, who evaluate

airport services, including the check-in procedure, the quality of passenger services and safety levels.

Edward Plaisted, CEO, Skytrax said: *"With many airports around the world having seen a 70-80% drop in passenger numbers during our survey period, we considered that our 2021 awards should reflect these conditions, and whilst many customers voted for their favourite airport without visiting there in the last year, we had a very large survey response for airports where users have been travelling during COVID-19."*

Chris Dinsdale, CEO, Budapest Airport said: *"It is a great honour that Budapest Airport became the best airport in Eastern Europe for the eighth time in a row, based on the votes of the passengers. Especially in the light of the fact that the last 18 months has been the most challenging period for the aviation industry, requiring extra effort from everyone. This year's award is therefore of special importance for us, since passengers did not only recognise the general performance of the airport, but our response to the pandemic as well."*




Budapest Airport aims to provide the safest possible environment and excellent services for its passengers. Thanks to its health protection measures, in line with international protocols, the airport operator is constantly working to ensure a risk-free stay at the airport for passengers.

In addition, continuously improving the passenger experience and the quality of airport services is a top priority for both the owners and the management of Budapest Airport. To this end, investments worth 167 million EUR have been carried out at the airport over the past two years, half of which were implemented last year, during the pandemic. Although Budapest Airport closed 2020 with its largest ever loss of €110 million, infrastructural, capacity and digital expansion

investments related to the development of the airport remained constant. Despite the crisis affecting the industry, the company completed 95% of the development projects planned in 2019; moreover, the airport operator brought forward the completion of several development or renovation projects to the period characterised by low passenger numbers.

Budapest Airport won several awards over the past months in reputation management and employer branding. The first place in the “Reputation and brand management” category of the IPRA Golden World Awards – often referred to as the Oscars of the PR profession – recognised the joint reputation management activities of Budapest Airport and the Lounge Group during the first wave of the coronavirus. The airport received another prestigious PR accolade recently, when the cooperation of Budapest Airport and the PR division of the Lounge Group won an international reputation management award at the 2020 Eventiada IPRA Golden World Awards. According to the results of the Randstad Employer Brand Research 2021, the most comprehensive independent employer brand research project in the world carried out in 34 countries, Budapest Airport is the most attractive employer in the Hungarian service sector.

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# Tourism Panel at Bled Strategic Forum 2021 highlights key challenges of European tourism



*As part of this year's Bled Strategic Forum, the Tourism Panel hosted renowned international experts, who highlighted one of the key current issues that the tourism industry in Europe deals with today: What will the future bring? Prominent international and Slovenian experts, guests, panelists and representatives of Slovenian tourism were addressed by Minister of Economic Development and Technology Zdravko Počivalšek, Director-General for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs at the European Commission Kerstin Jorna, Director of the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) MSc. Maja Pak, Director of Regional Department for Europeat at the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Prof. Alessandra Priante and Director of the Portugal National Tourist Board and President of the European Travel Commission (ETC) Luis Araújo.*

As part of **the 16th Bled Strategic Forum (BSF)**, a panel entitled The Future of European Tourism was held for the 7th time in a row. At the panel, prominent personalities from the tourism industry discussed the challenges of tourism today and tomorrow.

This year's Tourism Panel therefore raises the question **What will the future bring to European tourism?**

In his introductory speech, Minister of Economic Development and Technology **Zdravko Počivalšek** highlighted the future of tourism and described it as a sector that quickly responds to changes: *"The last 'corona' years have undoubtedly been a great test for European and thus for Slovenian tourism, but I would like to recall the well-known fact that tourism is known as a sector that reacts very quickly to changes in society and*

*adapts to them. This is why I believe that it will be the same this time. With a 70% drop in overnight stays of foreign guests in Slovenia, the recovery will of course be a bit longer, but we must be aware that the trends according to which tourism will develop in the future are something we have been practicing in Slovenia for the last seven years. Boutique, sustainable, safe, tailor-made experiences in tourism are the foundations on which we have built our success already in the past strategic framework. It is also important to emphasize that, according to the findings of Eurostat, we are the country that has increased the volume of domestic tourism to the greatest extent – also thanks to timely and appropriate measures of the state. In the year and a half of the epidemic, the government has supported tourism with one billion funds, thus proving that it is aware of the strategic importance of the industry for the national economy and believes in its further development."*

**Kerstin Jorna**, Director-General for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs at the European Commission, highlighted the efforts of EU Member States to safely revive tourism flows and recover tourism: *"The joint efforts of the EU Member States in the vaccination campaign and in implementing the EU Digital COVID Certificate have been paramount in the smooth reopening of the travel. By end of August, we had more than 355 million EU Digital Certificates issued. There are 54 countries either connected to the European Digital Certificate Gateway or applying to do so. Just before the summer, the European Commission launched a co-creation process to create a transitional path in tourism. We want to define together with all the stakeholders a roadmap for the industry and destinations, a blueprint of European Tourism that is greener, fit for the digital age and ultimately more resilient and competitive."*

**MSc. Maja Pak**, Director of the STB, highlighted the key challenges of European tourism in the light of the changed

situation and the new conditions posed by the pandemic to the European tourism industry: *"Last year, the pandemic plunged tourism into the biggest crisis so far and showed the great economic importance of tourism and its impact on other activities. Many companies are struggling to survive. A precondition for the resumption of tourist flows as soon as possible is coordinated action and intensive coordination between European countries on flow restrictions. At the same time, the pandemic brings challenges and new opportunities for more sustainable, resilient and inclusive tourism. The behaviour of tourists has changed dramatically due to pandemics, climate change and other challenges. For the successful transformation of tourism, it is necessary to redefine performance indicators and better business models that will enable a sustainable and digital transformation. There is a need for close cooperation between all stakeholders: government, tourism organizations and businesses, local communities and employees. To gain back the trust of tourists and to seek the satisfaction of the local population, it is necessary to create better tourism, but we do not want to return to the old tracks. It is therefore necessary to think in advance about the coordinated shaping of the European future of tourism, which is a key theme of this year's panel."*

**Prof. Alessandra Priante**, Director of Regional Department for Europe at at the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), addressed the participants: *"Collaboration and cooperation are key to restart tourism, to establish harmonised protocols, that will increase predictability of the procedures before, during and after travel, which in turn is the prerequisite for tourists' willingness, let alone desire to travel."*

**Luís Araújo**, President of the European Travel Commission (ETC) and the Director of the Portugal National Tourist Board, pinpointed: *"The future of Tourism will be brighter if we base our actions in a collective and shared responsibility,*

*focusing on how to transform and improve our sector (from supply to demand). Tourism can and will be, more than ever, a force for good."*

Take a look also at **the video**, in which **Zurab Pololikashvili**, Secretary-General of the UNWTO, addressed the participants.

The current challenges and opportunities of European tourism were discussed by **Simon Zajc**, State Secretary at the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of Slovenia; **Lola Uña Cárdenas**, Vice President of Government Affairs at World Travel & Tourism Council; **Jane Stacey**, Head of Tourism Unit, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; **Marie Audren**, Director General, Association of Hotels, Restaurants, Pubs and Cafes (HOTREC); **MSc. Petra Stušek**, Director of Ljubljana Tourism and the President of the Board at European Cities Marketing; and **Dr Mario Hardy**, former CEO of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

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# A vaccine for all mankind: Sputnik V's efficacy in fighting COVID-19 is validated by internationally peer reviewed data published in The Lancet



- In an interim analysis of a Phase III clinical trial, Sputnik V showed strong efficacy, immunogenicity and safety results.
- Efficacy of Sputnik V against COVID-19 was reported at 91.6%.
- Sputnik V provides full protection against severe cases of COVID-19.
- Among the cases analyzed, over 98% of volunteers developed humoral immune response and 100% – cellular immune response.
- The level of virus neutralizing antibodies of volunteers vaccinated with Sputnik V is 1.3-1.5 times higher than the level of antibodies of patients who recovered from COVID-19.
- Excellent safety profile. Most adverse events (94%) were mild and included flu-like syndromes, injection site reactions, headache and asthenia.
- Sputnik V is one of the three vaccines in the world with efficacy of over 90%. Furthermore, Sputnik V stands out among these vaccines thanks

**to a number of key advantages:**

- **Sputnik V is already registered in 16 countries: Russia, Belarus, Serbia, Argentina, Bolivia, Algeria, Palestine, Venezuela, Paraguay, Turkmenistan, Hungary, UAE, Iran, Republic of Guinea, Tunisia and Armenia.**

- **In the first week of February, vaccination with Sputnik V will start in the following 12 countries: Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Palestine, UAE, Paraguay, Hungary, Armenia, Algeria, Bosnian Serb Republic, Venezuela and Iran.**



**Moscow, February 2, 2021** – The Gamaleya National Research Center of Epidemiology and Microbiology of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation and the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF, Russia's sovereign wealth fund) announce that the Lancet, one of the world's oldest and most respected medical journals, has published interim results of a Phase III clinical trial of Sputnik V, confirming the vaccine's high efficacy and safety. Sputnik V, which is based on a well-studied human adenoviral vectors platform, is the world's first registered vaccine against coronavirus.



In the interim efficacy analysis of the randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial, where data on 19,866 volunteers were included in the efficacy analysis (14,964 of whom received the vaccine and 4,902 the placebo), the two-dose treatment of Sputnik V administered 21 days apart demonstrated efficacy of 91.6% against COVID-19. The calculation is based on the analysis of 78 confirmed cases of COVID-19 identified in the placebo group (62 cases) and in the vaccine group (16 cases). Sputnik V generated a robust humoral and cell mediated immune response.

**Alexander Gintsburg, Director of the Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology,** said:

“The publication of internationally peer reviewed data on Sputnik V’s clinical trial results is a great success in the global battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. The Russian vaccine’s safety and high efficacy are shown by the hard scientific data presented and I congratulate the entire team of Gamaleya National Research Center for this monumental achievement. Several vaccines have already been created based on human adenoviruses and this tool is one of the most promising for development of new vaccines in the future.”



**Kirill Dmitriev, CEO of the Russian Direct Investment Fund,** commented:

“This is a great day in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The data published by The Lancet proves that not only Sputnik V is the world’s first registered vaccine, but also one of the best. It fully protects against severe COVID-19 according to data which has been independently compiled and reviewed by peers and then published in The Lancet. Sputnik V is one of only three vaccines in the world with efficacy of over 90% but outperforms them in terms of safety, ease of transportation due to storage requirements of +2 to +8 degrees and a more affordable price. Sputnik V is a vaccine for all mankind.”

**Hildegund C.J. Ertl, M.D., Professor, Vaccine & Immunotherapy Center, The Wistar Institute, USA,** said:

“The vaccine is 100% effective in preventing serious disease or death, which in the end is the most crucial parameter; we can all deal with the sniffles as long as we stay out of the hospital or the graveyard. Even after a single dose of this prime-boost regimen protection against disease was at 87.6%. Sputnik V is thus more effective than the AstraZeneca or Johnson&Johnson. Sputnik V, which, unlike the equally efficacious RNA vaccines of Pfizer and Moderna, can be stored in the fridge, will be of tremendous value to combat the global COVID-19 pandemic.”

**Cecil Czerkinsky, PhD, M.D., Research Director, National Institute of Health and Medical research (Inserm), France,**said:

“The interim results of the phase 3 clinical trial of Sputnik V COVID adenovirus vector vaccine are fairly impressive. This vaccine appears to be highly efficacious and immunogenic across age groups. This is clearly good news as this dual formulation vaccine is comparatively easy to manufacture and

to deploy amid the anticipated global shortage of vaccines and logistical problems in vaccination roll-out of temperature-sensitive vaccines recently authorized for emergency use."

**Omar Sued, President of the Society of infectologists, Argentina,** said:

"The paper, published in The Lancet, confirms successful results and provides additional information about the efficacy and the safety of this vaccine in different subgroups. From the public health´s point of view, the efficacy of the vaccine was very high. The safety profile was very good. The dissemination of this information is vital for informing the scaling up and rollout of this vaccine worldwide."

**David Livermore, Professor of Medical Microbiology at the University of East Anglia, UK,** said:

"Presently the world needs all the good vaccines that it can get against COVID-19. And these are impressive results: Sputnik V is the first adenovirus vector vaccine to achieve the 90% efficacy seen with the two mRNA vaccines."

According to the peer-reviewed study results, the vaccine provides full protection against severe cases of the novel coronavirus infection. Among the confirmed severe cases of COVID-19, 20 were recorded in the placebo group, while none were recorded in the vaccine group. Due to the time needed for the immune response to develop, in the first week after vaccination there was no significant difference in protection against severe cases of COVID-19 between the vaccine and placebo groups, while in the period from 7 to 14 days the vaccine's efficacy rose to 50%, in the period from 14 to 21 days to 74.1%, and to 100% from the 21st day, giving full protection against severe cases of the coronavirus.

Importantly, the study included 2,144 volunteers over 60 years old with the maximum ages of 87 years (vaccine group) and 84 years (placebo group), showing great safety results for the

elder age strata. The vaccine's efficacy for the elderly was shown at 91.8% and did not differ statistically from the group of 18-60 years old, also demonstrating great safety and immunogenicity results.

Sputnik V has demonstrated an excellent safety profile: 70 episodes of serious adverse events (SAE) not related to COVID-19 were recorded in 68 study participants: in 45 volunteers from the vaccine group and 23 volunteers from the placebo group. None of these events were associated with the vaccination as confirmed by Independent Data Monitoring Committee. Most adverse events (94%) were mild and were limited to flu-like syndromes, injection site reactions, headache and asthenia.

Sputnik V is one of only three vaccines in the world to have demonstrated efficacy of over 90%. Sputnik V stands out among these vaccines thanks to a number of key advantages, namely: a well-studied and highly efficient human adenoviral vector mechanism proven safe over decades; the vaccine's low cost in comparison to other approaches; and fewer logistics requirements with a storage temperature of between two to eight degrees Celsius allowing for easier distribution worldwide.

The safety of vaccines based on human adenoviruses has been confirmed in more than 75 international publications and more than 250 clinical trials conducted during the past two decades – while the history of use of human adenoviruses in vaccine development started in 1953. Adenovirus vectors are genetically modified viruses of the regular flu that cannot reproduce in a human body. When the Sputnik V vaccine is used, the coronavirus itself does not enter the body as the vaccine only contains genetic information about part of its outer protein coat, the so called "spikes" forming its crown. This completely eliminates the possibility of getting infected as a result of vaccination while also causing the body to generate a stable immune response.

In addition, Sputnik V uses two different vectors – based on human adenovirus serotypes Ad5 and Ad26 – in two separate shots, allowing for a more effective defense against the coronavirus than vaccines using the same vector for both shots. By deploying two different vectors, Sputnik V avoids a possible neutralizing effect and generates a durable and longer-lasting immune response.

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**The Gamaleya National Research Center for Epidemiology and Microbiology of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation** is one of the oldest research centers in Russia, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1991. The main focus of the center's research is the fundamental problems in epidemiology, medical and molecular microbiology, and infectious immunology. More information can be found at www.gamaleya.org

**Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF)** is Russia's sovereign wealth fund established in 2011 to make equity co-investments, primarily in Russia, alongside reputable international financial and strategic investors. RDIF acts as a catalyst for direct investment in the Russian economy. RDIF's management company is based in Moscow. Currently, RDIF has experience of the successful joint implementation of more than 80 projects with foreign partners totaling more than RUB2 tn and covering 95% of the regions of the Russian Federation. RDIF portfolio companies employ more than 800,000 people and generate revenues which equate to more than 6% of Russia's GDP. RDIF has established joint strategic partnerships with leading international co-investors from more than 18 countries that total more than $40 bn. Further information can be found at www.rdif.ru

# Democracy Index ranks Taiwan top in Asia, 11th globally



**The Legislative Yuan’s last day of reviewing the government’s 2021 budget on Jan. 29.**

Taipei, Feb. 3 (CNA) Taiwan has jumped 20 places in the 2020 Democracy Index rankings to 11th position globally from 31st in 2019, to rank top in Asia, according to the index report released Tuesday by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

Describing Taiwan as a beacon of democracy in Asia, the report said that the country’s spectacular rise reflects a consolidation of positive political and legal development in recent years.

“The transparency of the financing of political parties has improved and legislative reforms have more explicitly affirmed the judiciary’s independence from government influence,” according to the report.

The EIU began compiling the Democracy Index in 2006 and the main focus of the 2020 report is the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on democracy and freedom around the world.

The global average score in the 2020 Democracy Index hit an all-time low, falling from 5.44 in 2019 to 5.37. This is by far the worst global score since the index was first produced in 2006, according to the report.

In 2020, a large majority of countries – 116 of a total of 167 polled – recorded a decline in their total scores compared with the previous year. Only 38 recorded an improvement, the report said, noting that the star performer in this year's index is Taiwan, which was upgraded from a "flawed democracy" to a "full democracy."

Based on its scores on a range of indicators, each country is then itself classified as one of four types of regime: "full democracy;" "flawed democracy;" "hybrid regime," or "authoritarian regime.".

According to the EIU's measure of democracy, only about 49.4 percent of the world's population live in a democracy of some sort, and just 8.4 percent reside in a "full democracy."

More than one-third – 35.6 percent of the world's population – live under authoritarian rule, with a large share being in China, the report revealed.

The top five places in the global democracy rankings were occupied by Norway, Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand and Canada.

Taiwan, Japan and South Korea took the top three spots in Asia, moving from the "flawed democracy" category to be classified as "full democracies."

(By Chen Yi-wei and Evelyn Kao)

Enditem/J