



## Major Challenges for EU Tourism Policy

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**Abstract:** Tourism is one of the sectors that has been developing fastest and growing globally in the last thirty years. Because tourism has affected a wide range of areas, especially economic growth, education, employment, and social development, it has become a critical component of socio-economic development and prosperity for both developed and developing countries. EU member states are among the most important and attractive destinations for travelers. Italy, Germany, France and Spain are among the top 10 global destinations in Europe. Even though the tourism sector is an important industry in the EU, the tourism industry has encountered some difficulties and challenges in the region. These difficulties force the EU to act together with the member countries. The EU is endeavoring to take better action on tourism because of its positive impact on other industries. In the light of this information, the aim of the research is to evaluate the priority of tourism policies of the EU and determine its challenges. The results of the study show that the EU does not have a common tourism policy that includes common rules, applications and principles among member states. However, it doesn't mean that the EU do not have any policies regarding the tourism sector. The EU has many activities under other policy headings, but it has developed in a limited way. Even though there are many challenges that the EU must overcome, it's clear that creating a common tourism policy among member states has a vital importance for the EU economy and society.

**Keywords:** European Union; Policy; Tourism; Challenges

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the most relevant and dynamic industries in the global world. Some factors such as globalization, demographic changes and evolution force the tourism industry to grow rapidly (European Commission, 2016).

The EU countries are important destinations where the tourism sector is influential. All member countries are positively impressed by tourism. Especially, economic and employment implications make serious contributions to the EU countries. Therefore, tourism is one of the important activities in the EU. The fact that the tourism sector is so important requires effective management. Therefore, determining effective and efficient tourism policies will facilitate both overcoming difficulties and presenting a vision for tourism.

Although the issue of tourism has been on the agenda of the EU since the Treaty of Rome, it cannot be mentioned that there is a “common tourism policy” within the Union. The aim of the EU's tourism policies is to create an effective, efficient and safe tourism sector within the Union. Most of the legal regulations adopted by the union affect tourism (Yeğen vd, 2011: 238).

The purpose of the research is to evaluate the challenges for the development of tourism policy in the EU. In this paper, the tourism policy of the European Union is generally evaluated from a historical perspective and the progress is discussed. The study starts with literature review. In order to understand and make progress comparison of the tourism policy, tourism statistics are evaluated. Most of the research consists of the European Commission studies, Eurostat and European Parliament Research Center data and academic research. Data on arrival night spent rates is typically collected from Eurostat and world tourism organisation data including annual date. These statistics help to make comparisons between past and expected future values. Finally, challenges affecting EU tourism policy are evaluated. Especially, the effect of Covid 19 on tourism will be discussed.

## 2. Development of EU Tourism Policy

Tourism policy is a policy that aims to maximize economic, social and cultural gains from tourism and to minimize costs (Yeğen, 2011: 238). Tourism is a national and regional adequateness field within the EU (Juul, 2015). Due to its multidimensional characteristics, the tourism sector is greatly affected by the new demands derived

from the enlargement and deepening of the European Union. The policies implemented in regional areas and the further implementation of integration attract attention as determining factors in the development of the tourism sector in member countries (Cardoso and Ferreira, 2000: 403). The most important goal of the EU in the development of tourism is the effort to create an environmentally friendly, sustainable and quality system (Aslan and Akin, 2016: 158). Member states have full autonomy about tourism policy. In general, the EU does not have any common policies like other policies in the European Union. Instruments of tourism policy in the EU member states is the responsibility of every interior authority (Directive. 2015). Member states voluntarily implement all policies and actions that are created by the EU (Juul, 2015)).

The EU member states have different roles in the tourism sector. They are both tourist destination countries and tourism outgoing countries. The EU countries have the world's biggest tourism industry. Economic growth, employment, social and cultural integration have an impact on the tourism industry. It can be clearly said that this industry has an impact on a wide-ranging area (EU2017, 2017). Therefore, tourism is quite an important industry for the union. The main objectives of these policies are to develop tourism in underdeveloped countries, to support the suburbs in tourist areas, to preserve the environment, to encourage desire for return to nature, to preserve the common cultural heritage, to prevent touristic seasonal concentration and make tourism statistics easy and understandable (Emekli, 2005).

After the signing of the Rome Treaty, the EU has been trying to establish common policies on different issues such as migration, education and visa policies. Tourism is one of these issues that force EU countries to collaborate. In general, policies of the European Union have certain conditions, strengthened with legal rules and fully supported policies. But the EU does not have any specific provision about tourism policy. In other words, the EU doesn't have any common tourism policy and the current policies are not obligatory. Even though the tourism policy of the EU has evaluated its own legal foundation, it still doesn't have a different budget (European Parliament, 2017). The policies are carried out by sub-commissions and sub-committees. There is a need for efforts to attract tourism policy to the union level (Pirnar and Miral, 2018). Tourism has connected some subjects such as transportation, freedom of movement, and environment to each other. Levels of competition are different among member countries. And there is no EU body to solve this competition. All these factors can be the reason for creating effective common policy (Dinçer, 1997).

The European Union Presidents Council declared that tourism should be dealt with at the Union level in July 1992. Tourism was mentioned for the first time in the Maastricht Treaty. The EU started to cooperate with member countries in order to determine the role of tourism in 1994. The working paper was completed in 1994. Because of strengthening tourism policy and emphasizing the importance of the tourism industry in the Union, the Unit of Directorate General-XXIII was established. This unit cooperates with the other General Directorates in the Union (Karakuş, 2003).

One of the important policy tools that is applied by the EU is the Schengen Agreement. The Schengen Agreement was signed in 1995 and it makes the creation of a Single Market possible (European Commission, 2021a). Thanks to the Schengen Agreement, the borders are eliminated across union member countries and travelers perceive the zone as a single region. Therefore, The Schengen Agreement caused a positive increase in tourist movement to Europe (Timothy and Saarinen, 2013). In 1999, The European Union introduced a common currency, Euro. It is an important development in the angle of tourism policy. Euro came fully into being on 1 January 2002 (Directorate for EU Affairs, 2021).

Because of demographic changes in the EU, health tourism, cultural and natural heritage tourism is becoming more popular on the commission agenda. Therefore, the need for sustainable tourism is one of the priorities of the EU. After that, the EU has developed a new tourism policy which is named as “A Renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a Stronger Partnership for European Tourism in 2006”. The main purpose of this new policy is to improve the European tourism industry and achieve sustainable growth of tourism at EU level. For successful implementation of this policy, all EU countries should try and work together (European Commission, 2016). This policy EU also aims to reduce diversity of EU countries on tourism policy (European Commission, 2016).

EU member states holding the Presidency of the Council of the European have been organizing the annual European Tourism Forum since 2002. This forum aims to work and cooperate with the Commission, the member states and the European tourism industry. At the beginning, the tourism forum took place in different countries; 2002 Belgium, 2004 Hungary, 2005 Malta, 2006 Cyprus, 2007 Portugal, 2008 France, 2009 Belgium, 2010 Malta, 2011 Poland, 2012 Cyprus, 2013 Lithuania, 2014 Italy, 2015 Luxemburg, 2016 Slovakia. This year 16<sup>th</sup> The European Tourism Forum will take place in Estonia. The forum will focus on these subjects:

*“Innovation in tourism for sustainable growth, energy efficiency, protection of natural resources and environmentally friendly measures towards more sustainable EU tourism, balance between security and seamless travel in Europe”* (EU2017, 2017).

In the last ten years, the European Commission has presented two political frameworks for tourism named as ‘Europe, the world’s No. 1 tourist destination (2010), and European strategy for more growth and jobs in coastal and maritime tourism’ (2014). Creating these policies, the EU has aimed to define priority for tourism in Europe. These priorities are to encourage competitiveness in the European tourism industry, promote the development of responsible, sustainable and high-quality tourism, strengthen Europe’s image as a collection of sustainable, high-quality destinations and maximize the potential of EU financial policies for developing tourism (European Commission, 2013). The Lisbon treaty which was signed in 2009 regulates the competence in tourism in the EU. According to the Lisbon treaty, the actions of the member states are coordinated, scheduled or supported in the field of tourism. The EU commission set up actions to provide financial support for tourism in the EU (Jul, 2015). In 2017, the Commission plan to support projects on transnational tourism products with a call for proposals exploiting synergies between tourism and the cultural and creative industries (European Parliament, 2017).

It can clearly be said that the main aim of the EU tourism policy is **“to improve the competitiveness of the European tourism industry and create more and better jobs through the sustainable growth of tourism in Europe and globally”**. Cooperation with all stakeholders is a really important factor in implementing these policies (European Commission, 2016). European Commission identified number of priorities for EU tourism policy in future (European Parliament, 2015; European Commission (2013):

- To promote competitiveness in the European tourism sector
- To support the development of responsible, sustainable and high-quality tourism
- To strengthen Europe’s image as a collection of sustainable, high-quality destinations
- To maximize the potential of EU financial policies for developing tourism
- To encourage digitalization of tourism
- To develop low and medium season tourism exchanges

- To develop governance of tourism

Although tourism has a positive impact on the countries, coordination with the countries is less than expected. During this policy, in order to make progress, EU should cooperate with Community institutions, national administrations, professional organizations, employers and employees, NGOs and researchers etc. The EU should release and show the importance of European tourism. The European Tourism Forum will provide an advantage to follow the progress of the policies (European Commission, 2016). Knowledge, education, quality, sustainable development and new technologies are five categories of the policies (Pirnar and Miral, 2018).

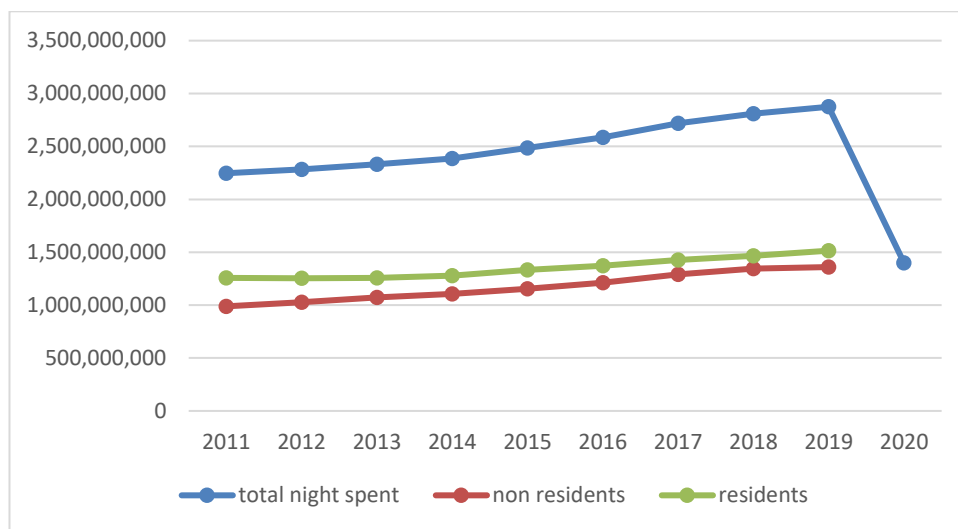
### **3. Statistical Information about Tourism in the EU**

Statistical expression of tourism is the activity of visitors taking a trip to a destination from their usual environment for less than a year. This definition encompasses private leisure trips, visits to family and friends, and business trips (Eurostat, 2020).

Information on recent statistics in relation to tourism in the European Union (EU) countries are given in this part. Statistics are taken from Eurostat and official website of the European Parliamentary. The statistics will give an idea about residents and non-residents' night accommodation numbers, the number of residents traveling both domestic and abroad, total night spent by non-residents and the number of tourist arrivals in EU-27 since 2011. Comparative perspective will make it easy to understand how the tourism industry develops in EU countries. Total night spend is considered as a key indicator for analyzing the tourism sector. It refers to the total number of nights spent by all tourists and represents both the length of stay and the number of tourists. There were 2.8 billion nights spent in tourist accommodation across the EU countries (Eurostat, 2020).

As it can be seen from Figure 1, over the period between 2011-2019, the total number of nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments in the EU decreased. But the total number of nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments in 2020 is down by %51 compared to 2019. The number of nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments reached a peak in terms of both residents and non-residents in 2019. While Residents (EU-27) and non-residents spent 2. 874 million nights in 2019, this number dropped by 1.4 million in 2020. Because Covid 19

affected the tourism sector and the number of tourists, accommodation establishments dramatically decreased. When compared with the numbers of 2019, 1.4 billion fewer nights were spent in EU tourist accommodation. Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece were the most affected countries during Covid 19 (Eurostat, 2021).

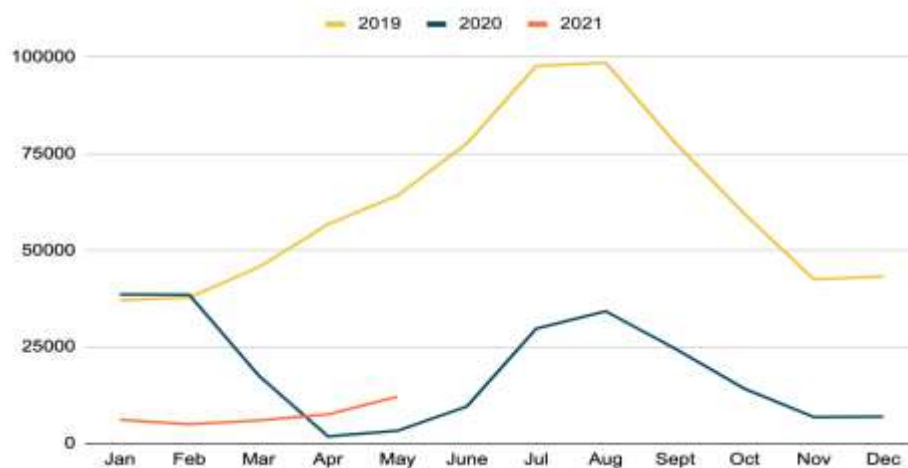


**Figure 1. Nights Spent at Tourist Accommodation Establishments 2021**

Source:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tin00175/default/table?lang=en>

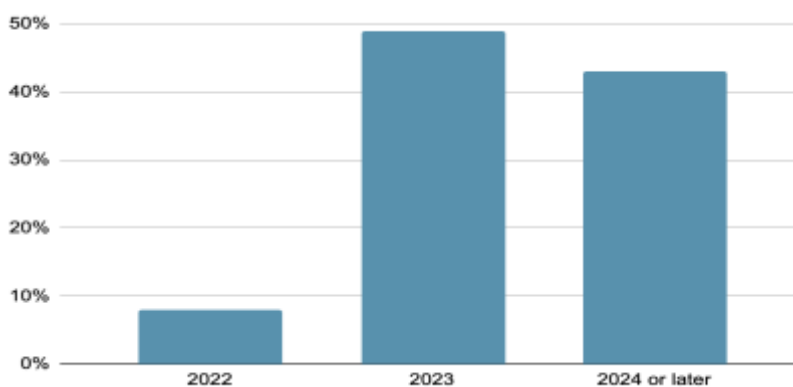
Figure 2 showed the change in international tourist arrivals in Europe due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) in detail. International tourist arrival fell by 97% in April 2020 over compared to the same month of 2019. As it can be seen from Figure 2, Even Though the number of tourist arrivals rose in May 2021 compared to the same month of 2019. However, the number of tourist arrivals was still far below before Covid 19 (Statista, 2021). The high vaccination rates were very effective in this increase.



**Figure 2: Change in International Tourist Arrivals in Europe Due to the Covid 19**

Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1229666/monthly-change-in-tourist-arrivals-in-europe-coronavirus/>, 2021.

Although the vaccination rate increases, it will take time to reach the recovery in tourism. According to a global survey which is conducted by UNWTO, 49% of respondents believe that Europe will return to 2019 levels in 2023, while 43% point to a recovery in 2024 or later (UNWTO, 2021a).



**Figure 3. Expected Time of Recovery in EU Tourism**



## **4. Major Challenges for EU Tourism Policy**

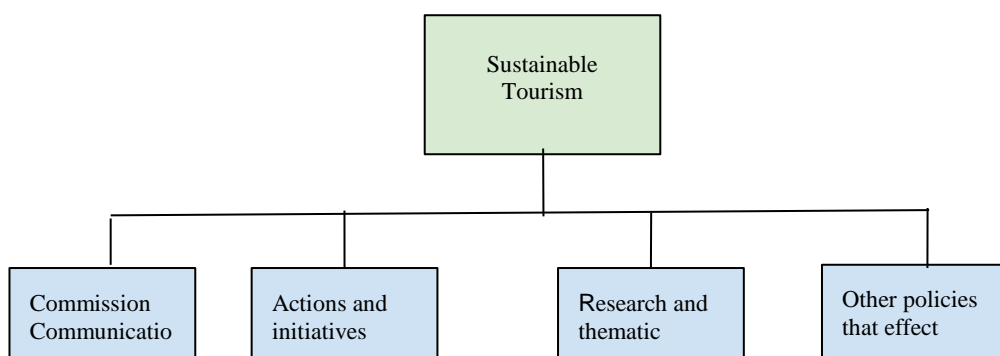
The EU has to face some challenges while creating tourism policies. These challenges must be considered in order to develop the tourism industry and control the risk related to it.

### **4.1. Sustainability**

Sustainability enables us to satisfy today's needs without limiting the chances for future generations. Sustainability is one of the challenges for tourism policy. Massive tourism may also lead to deterioration of natural resources, destruction of biodiversity, or noise pollution (Adamczyk and Nitkiewicz, 2008; Panasiuk and Skulska 2021; European Parliament, 2017). Therefore, the context of sustainability should be taken into consideration. Environmental and nature cleaning is one of the important factors determining the choice of tourists. This factor will be the main determinant of competition in the long term. Sustainability tourism is not just related to the environment. At the same time, it also aims to achieve economic sustainability (European Parliamentary Research Center, 2014).

The EU should realize the need to conserve natural resources in the long term. While creating policies, the EU should consider this factor.

As it can be seen in Figure 1, four different ways are created in order to develop sustainability of tourism by the EU. On a policy level, firstly, in the shape of Commission Communications particularly addressing to tourism. These signify EU level policy documents. The second possibility constitutes specific action and initiatives that promote the sustainable development of tourism. The next research and thematic networks enable to create thematic and research networks concerning sustainable tourism. And the final way is the other policies related to different thematic fields influencing the sustainable development of tourism (Back, 2018, p. 6).



**Figure 4. Sustainable Tourism Structure of the EU**

*Source: (Beck, 2018, p. 7)*

#### **4.2. Political Instability**

As understood from the experiences from the past, the tourism sector is inherently vulnerable to both natural and human-caused disasters (Corbet and others, 2018, p. 1). Substantial literature argues that different types of political causes affect the tourism industry and hospitality sectors. Tourism arrivals decrease because of a number of different political factors such as human rights violations, terrorist attacks, conflict, instability of domestic policy, and other political/violent events (Ivanov and other, 2017, 104; Neumayer, 2004)

If the country is unstable and domestic policy is complicated, tourists don't prefer these countries for their destination. For example, because of the terrorist attack in Paris, the number of tourists has dramatically reduced in France. And, because of the terror event in Istanbul last year, people didn't feel safe and didn't prefer to spend their holiday in Turkey, especially in Istanbul (European Parliament, 2017). Negative events in Arab countries, number of tourists chose European countries as a destination (European Parliament, 2017). European countries received a high number of tourists, especially after starting the Arab Spring. These examples show that negative events have an impact on tourist motivation while choosing a destination.

### **4.3. Competition from Other Markets**

Competition among touristic places plays a key role in shaping the global tourism market (Crouch & Ritchie, 2006). Therefore, communicating with other tourism markets emerges as another important challenge for EU tourism policy. EU countries have to face and try to compete with other markets. Because an increasing number of countries are trying to become accessible to tourists in the global world (European Parliament, 2017). EU countries could be compared by their ability to accommodate and sustain competitive positions (Vodeb, 2012: 274). EU countries are most preferable and cheap destinations when compared with other regions. But alternative new destinations are arising and the EU must focus its efforts to develop its policies. Although the importance of tourism in the global world continues to increase, there is also an emergence in geographical competitiveness. Countries have to face this reality and should try to develop and improve their competitiveness (European Parliament, 2017).

### **4.4. Changes in the Demographic Structure and Attracting New Target Groups**

Demographic structure has changed day to day and it has an effect on tourism. The number of older people will grow. New target group emerges in Europe. Therefore, the number of travelers over the age of fifty is increasing. This change causes the change of the demand of the people. Because of that, creating new policies for target groups needs to arise. This may have a positive impact on tourism. For example, some resorts can provide some extra facilities such as bathrooms, elevators for seniors. And also, some resorts have tried to be sensitive to the needs of travelers with special needs. Therefore, these facilities may motivate seniors to choose their hotel, city etc. Other target groups are single parents, disabled travelers, young adults, families with older children etc. In order to attract new target groups, countries should focus on the needs and preferences of these groups (Tusiad, 2012).

### **4.5. Visa Policies**

Visa policies are used as a mechanism to limit entry to unwelcome travelers. Visa requirements are generally costly and difficult for many travelers. This may cause some tourists to change their destination with different places and reduce the mobility of people (Song, 2012).

Different, non-common and stringent visa policies among EU countries are other difficulties for the development of tourism. Visa policy is a significant factor for the development of tourism. The EU works on visa policies to make it easier for third country nationals to travel in Europe. The EU takes some possible steps on it. Because of difficulties of visa procedure, potential travelers were lost in the past (CBI Ministry of Foreign Trends, 2016). Therefore, especially short stay visa facilities are provided for the nations of South Africa, China, Russia, India, Saudi Arabia, and Ukraine due to visa application difficulties. These facilities revitalize the tourism industry (CBI Ministry of Foreign Trend, 2016).

#### **4.6. Digitalization and Regulation of Online Services**

Digitalization is one of the most important trends affecting the tourism sector. But this trend constitutes a challenge as well. Increasing the number of people using the internet before, during and after the holiday such as accommodation, transfer, shopping etc. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs are quite important for travel planning. Therefore, these developments bring some problems in terms of regulation and taxation etc. Struggling with online fraud is an important priority for countries (European Commission, 2016).

Therefore, the adoption and incorporation of new information and communication technologies should be accepted as a factor of competitiveness for following the developments closely (Commission of the European Communities, 2001).

#### **4.7. The Need for New Services and a Quality Upgrade**

Tourism sector is a competitive industry and it has the power to affect other industries as well. In order for EU countries to step forward with other destinations, they may organize a powerful promotion to compete with the tourism industry (European Commission, 2016). In order to promote tourism, an intensive tourism campaign may be effective.

One of the important success elements for the tourism service providers and tourism industry is focusing on quality. Growing consumers' needs, increasing competition, market globalization, and development of modern technology has caused discussions about quality approaches in tourism (Foris and others, 2018: 162). Quality service is a serious issue in the tourism sector. This is because tourism actors have difficulty

understanding "what" tourist needs are. Understanding the expectation of the tourist is quite essential in order to provide good quality services according to changing conditions day by day (Titu and others, 2016: 295).

The European Commission takes some actions that improve the mobility and skills of employees, especially IT skills (European Commission, 2013).

#### **4.8. Diseases**

Tourism contributes positively to the country's economy by creating employment and increasing foreign exchange income. Tourism revenues positively affect economic growth. The social, political and economic crisis, epidemics, and natural disasters can negatively affect the tourism industry. From the point of the tourism sector, the most remarkable negative result of arising health crises is the relatively sudden fall in the demand for destinations (Çeti & Ünlüönen, 2019).

In the past, SARS, MeRS and Ebola cases largely impacted the tourism volume. Epidemic first erupted in Wuhan at the end of 2019 and has been spreading in China and the world. It impacts economies, public services, and life conditions all over the world. After Covid 19, the tourist movement has come to a halt. In 2020, the tourism industry is among the sectors most affected by the Covid 19 pandemic. Every country took some precautions and restrictions to stop the spread of the disease (Pratt, 2020), Because of Covid 19, there is a dramatic decrease in demand for travel and countries that have closed their borders; and international events. According to the UNWTO Travel Restrictions Report published on 8 March 2021, totally 69 destinations (32%) in the world were completely closed for international tourism. Of these destinations, 15 are in Europe (European Travel Commission, 2021). As it has already been shown in the graphic 1. The number of nights spent in the EU tourist accommodations dropped by 52% compared to 2019 (European Travel Commission, 2021).

According to a flash Eurobarometer survey applied in May 2021 shows that 75% of respondents thought that Vaccination is the only way to end the Covid 19 pandemic. In addition, 49% of respondents agree that getting a vaccine is quite important to restart the tourism movement (European Commission, 2021b). As the survey results showed, vaccination is quite important for getting global tourism restarted in the safest way. According to statistics, Covid 19 vaccine has been received by 54.6% of the world population (Outworld in Data, 2022). By 6 July 2021, 61.5 % of adults had

received at least one dose of vaccine and 40.3 % had received two doses of vaccine. In the EU (European Parliament, 2021a)

Even though this negative effect of Covid 19, the pandemic has positive results for the international system as destination recovery policies focus on responsible tourism. One of the important steps is the determination of priorities on the rebuilding of the tourism industry. The five priority fields have been determined in order to rebuild the tourism industry by the UN Secretary-General: (United Nations, 2020).

- To reduce the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic;
- To create flexibility across the entire tourism value chain;
- To raise the use of technology in the tourism sector;
- To support sustainability and green growth;
- To promote partnerships to facilitate tourism to further support the Sustainable Development Goals.

The EU has taken measures that are formulated as an EU Digital COVID Certificate and European Tourism COVID-19 Safety Seal. In Addition to this common action, each member state has developed to restart tourism on behalf of UNWTO's European COVID-19 Task Force. For example Greece introduced a recommendation document that is called "White Paper on Recommendations for Restarting Tourism". Spain presented "Guidelines for Reducing Coronavirus Infection in the Tourism Industry" in order to reactivate tourism in a short time. Furthermore, Portugal developed the Clean & Safe stamp project in 2020 in order to accept travelers to the country in a responsible way (UNWTO, 2021b).

Another measure taken by the EU is the EU Digital COVID Certificate. EU digital COVID Certificate entered into force on 01 July 2021. It allows people to easily visit the countries within the union without any restrictions. It shows that a person a) vaccinated against COVID-19 at least 14 days ago, b) has a negative test result before travel. c) has recovered from COVID-19 last 6 months (The EU recognized these coronavirus vaccines; Pfizer/BioNTech, Oxford/AstraZeneca, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson. Before entering a country, travelers should download QR code on their phone or on paper (European Parliament, 2021b). The certificate will include the person's name, surname, date of birth, date of issue of the certificate, and vaccine, test or anticor status (Özkan, 2021).

The EU Digital COVID Certificate is an important tool to harmonize travel protocols within Europe. All Member States and also, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland, recognized this certificate (European Parliament, 2021b). EU member states will have the right to impose a re-travel restriction in case of new dangerous virus variants and high case numbers (Özkan, 2021). According to a report published by the EU, more than 591 million EU Digital COVID Certificates (EUDCC) have now been issued by member states (European Commission, 2021c).

## 5. Conclusion

Tourism is a significant source of development in Europe as many other countries in the world because of its positive effect on the economy, social and cultural. Due to the tourism effect on this wide area, the EU needs to develop policies that will include all stakeholders such as community institutions, organizations, administrations, NGOs, employers and employees, and researchers etc.

As it can clearly be seen in the paper, the EU has had several initiatives to support tourism since the Rome Treaty. The main idea of these initiatives is creating links between member countries and other stakeholders and cooperating with them. In order to create effective policies, the EU should consider all stakeholders in the process. Although the EU carries into effect policies, rules and new procedures, there are still not effective common policies on tourism. Even though the EU is one of the great destinations for tourists in the global world, other markets continue to grow. Therefore, the EU should feel obliged to develop common policy.

Due to the variety of interests and sectional nature, the tourism sector has no significant identity. This may explain that it is very low in the political level despite the economic and social importance (Commission of the European Communities, 2001).

The EU is continuing to improve the initiatives day by day. Especially finding ways to attract more tourists, development visa policies, competition to other markets, sustainability of tourism are important common features for all countries. The European Tourism forum will help to follow the progress of the policies.

The paper indicates that the aim of the policies on tourism, EU, is to encourage the digitalization of tourism and sustainable and responsible tourism, to develop low and

medium season tourism exchanges, and to develop the governance of tourism and introduce Europe as a tourist destination in other markets.

In an increasingly competitive global environment, the EU should evaluate its own capacity and lead to change the actions at Member State and regional or local level if it is needed (European Parliament, 2015).

The European Union faces key challenges in order to develop tourism policy in a global world. These challenges are sustainability, political instability, competition from new non-European markets, changes in the demographic structure and attracting new target groups, visa policies, digitalization and regulation of online services, the need for new services and a quality upgrade and diseases. Since the end of 2019, Covid 19 has become the transnational challenge that the whole world has to overcome. Statistics clearly show that the international tourist arrivals fell by 97% in April 2020 compared to the same month of 2019. Even though the international tourist arrivals increased in 2021, these rates are less than expected. It's clear that the recovery of the tourism industry is still a long road ahead. According to research by UNWTO, Europe will return to 2019 levels in 2023. Vaccination rate is the safest way to return to 2019 levels. Europe has the highest vaccination rate in the world. Actually, the tourism industry continues to grow and there will always be challenges in the tourism policy of the EU. But the important things are determining a common tourism policy, making effective planning but considering the unique dynamics of the countries.

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