

ROMANIA - RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND SUPPORT MEASURES FOR TOURISM SECTOR

According to statistical data compiled by National Institute of Statistics (INS), the total number of tourists decreased in 2020 compared to 2019 by 52.3%, the number of tourists in Romania by 44.5% and the number of foreign tourists by 83%.

Measures implemented by the Romanian government in the field of tourism, to reduce the effects of the COVID pandemic¹⁹.

1. Extension of the validity of holiday vouchers issued for employees in 2019 and 2020 until 31 December 2021.

2. State financing of 75% of the employee's salary, without exceeding 75% of the average gross salary taken into account when substantiating the state social insurance budget for the current year.

3. Employers whose employees were in the case stated at point 2, benefit, for a period of three months, from the settlement of a part of the salary, borne from the unemployment insurance budget, representing 41.5% of the gross basic salary corresponding to the job occupied, but not more than 41.5% of the earnings average gross salary provided by the Law on the state social insurance budget for 2020 no. 6/2020, with subsequent amendments.

4. State aid schemes

- Grants offered to companies affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, total value 1 billion euro, from European non-reimbursable funds:
 - microgrants
 - working capital for restarting economic activities
 - investments and economic conversion
- Compensation for losses of 20% of the revenue volume recorded in 2020 compared to 2019 for HoReCa and travel agencies.
- The scheme for cinema, meant to be a vector for the promotion of domestic tourism.
- The scheme to guarantee the vouchers issued by the tourism operators for the holidays affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. It refers to a 100% guarantee of vouchers offered by travel agencies and accommodation facilities, as an alternative to cash reimbursement for travel canceled in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, in the case of insolvency of voucher issuers.

5. 30% reduction in rents for the beach sectors

6. Cancellation of payment for specific tax.

7. The stimulation of investment support for the relaunch of the Romanian economy, as well as of the tourism development sector is facilitated through the SME INVEST ROMANIA Program, which supports economic operators affected by the negative consequences of the COVID-19 epidemiological situation. In order to ensure the necessary liquidity to carry out investments and carry out current activities, the program aims to support the access of medium, small and micro enterprises to access

loans guaranteed by FNGCIMM, in the name and account of the Romanian state, through the Ministry of Public Finance

8. SMEs with activity affected by the COVID restrictions, which received emergency certificate issued by the Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Tourism, benefited from the deferred payment for utility services (electricity, natural gas, water, telephone and Internet services), as well as from the deferred payment of rents for real estate, in the case of registered offices and secondary offices.

9. Support for a short working programme, where the employee will have a salary of 87.5 %, working only 50% of the actual working time.

10. Periodically the list of countries with high epidemiologic risk is updated, the persons entering Romania from these countries having to stay in quarantine at home address/declared address, for 14 days.

According to the Decision no 9/11.02.2021 of the National Committee for Emergency Situations, there were established measures for facilitating travel, so that the persons vaccinated for COVID-19, or who already tested positive for COVID-19, 14 days prior to arrival, or present a test proving the presence of IgG antibodies, are excepted from quarantine.

11. The activity of HORECA is periodically updated according to the infection indicator.