



Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa. Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax (+27 12) 444 7027  
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa. Tel. (+27 21) 469 5800, Fax: (+27 21) 465 3216

## **Minister Lindiwe Sisulu welcomes decision by EU countries to remove SA from red lists**

**11 January 2022**

Tourism Minister Lindiwe Sisulu has welcomed the decision by EU countries to remove South Africa from red lists following the discovery of the Omicron COVID-19 variant.

“While these moves are welcomed, it comes after the peak of the tourist season and in the wake of over R1 billion lost in cancelled bookings following re-imposition of travel bans in late November. We welcome EU’s visitors to our country and are assured that their safety is guaranteed,” Minister Sisulu said.

“We remain grateful and open and we appreciate the continued support from various partners across the world.” Minister Sisulu also thanked tourism stakeholders that have lobbied with her to ensure that South Africa is removed from all red lists.

“This is the culmination of sustained advocacy efforts and dedication of all tourism stakeholders. The war room which we put together is yielding results. Let us continue to work hand in hand to revive our industry,” Minister Sisulu said.

European Union member states yesterday agreed to lift the air travel ban on South Africa and other southern African countries, which will allow more travel to resume.

Travellers from the region will still be subject to health measures applicable to travellers from third countries. European nations had suspended most air travel from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe as scientists scrambled to assess the severity of the omicron variant. The bloc maintained the limits even after cases continued to surge around the world, despite an outcry from the region.

International - South Africa received 10.2 million international overnight visitors in 2019. In 2020, this dropped sharply to 3.2 million – almost 70% fewer than in 2019. The number of inbound visitors in 2021 hampered by travel bans remained low.

For the Tourism Sector, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have devastating effects.

According to the Tourism & Migration Report released by Statistics South Africa in May 2021, international arrivals to South Africa drastically declined since the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic. For the period, January – March 2020, South Africa received a total of 2 429 177 tourist arrivals. In 2021, South Africa only received 386 937 tourist arrivals, indicating a decline of 84.1% (2 042 240) in international tourist arrivals.

**Steve Motale**  
Cell: 083 784 0719

**OR**

**Mpumzi Zuzile**

**MLO**

Cell: 072 550 9019