

Restriction of freedom of movement in response to Covid-19

(Brussels, 22 September 2020) This week, the EU General Affairs Council discussed a [coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the Covid-19 pandemic](#). The proposal will also be discussed by the European Parliament. The need for a harmonised approach is of great importance to the food and drink industry.

FoodDrinkEurope statement:

With the Covid-19 pandemic ongoing, it is right that the European Union and its members are considering all options to stop the spread of the disease and limit its impact. However, we urge Member States to resist the temptation to enforce unilateral restrictions on the movement of workers, goods and services across Europe's internal borders, as we have seen in some cases.

Given the food industry's integrated supply chains, any undermining of the Single Market hampers our ability to ensure a stable and safe food supply – and our ability to help keep shelves stocked. Moving skilled labour around Europe is crucial for businesses to ensure continuity of food supplies. Additional restrictions added by individual Member States can also add costs and unpredictability to food and drink businesses already under the strain of Covid-19.

When the pandemic began in March the European Commission rightly recognised the food sector as an 'essential service' and put in place measures to ensure the continued movement of goods and workers across borders to keep food supplies moving and prevent queues of goods at country borders.

A more predictable and harmonised approach to travel restrictions would also help the tourism sector better adjust and prepare their businesses for the weeks and months ahead.

We urge Member States to support the Commission's attempts for a continued coordinated approach to free movement and to urgently put in place a common framework to precautionary restrictions.

Note to the editors:

FoodDrinkEurope represents Europe's food and drink industry, the largest manufacturing sector and leading employer in the EU with 294,000 companies (99% SMEs) and 4.7 million employees.