

# FRAMING THE NEW NORMAL IN TOURISM DISCOURSE A Focus on Air Travel

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**Abstract** – This article sets out to map the discursive geographies of the new normal in tourism, placing its focus on airlines' communication after the COVID-19 crisis. Today, in the post-peak period, airlines are faced with new risk perceptions, forms of consumer behaviour and mobility trends. By means of a mixed-methods approach that focusses on linguistic cues and discursive frames identified with the support of an ad hoc textual corpus, this paper investigates how the enforced restrictions and required sanitary measures are explained and promotional messages addressed to customers by a number of major European airlines. The overview of a few salient linguistic and discursive strategies adopted on their corporate websites will show possible new attitudes and values in the world and words of air travel.

**Keywords:** air travel; crisis communication; linguistic framing; response strategies; tourism recovery.

## 1. Study background

With tourism as one of the sectors hit hardest, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a particularly negative impact on the aviation industry, forcing governments around the world to intervene to support airlines through various types of subsidies (Burini 2020). Trying to weather the shock, airline companies have adopted a number of recovery plans in order to mitigate the crisis and rebuild their business. Beyond the almost immediate crisis response strategies studied by established scholarship and adjusted to current times (Coombs 2007; Scheiwiller and Zizka 2021; Wodak 2021), the focus of this analysis is on the reshaping of their communication strategies as a key area of intervention and innovation and on the relationship of this reframing, if any, with new tourism paradigms (Gössling et al. 2021 Tremblay-Huet and Lapointe 2021; Villacé-Molinero 2021).

The assumption that underlines the analysis is that new communication strategies go beyond mere corporate branding and are forced to some extent, at least, to address the reconceptualisation of travel made necessary after the pandemic. The reason for this rethinking has been induced by the risk scenarios and contingency measures that have affected our previously taken-

for-granted mobility (often indeed, hypermobility and overtourism) and have connoted the communication of the pandemic. Among the most frequent words and phrases we find *bans, confinement, disruptions, face masks, limitations, lockdowns, precautions, protective equipment, quarantines, restrictions, self-isolation* and *social distancing*, and all this against the contradictory notion of *non-essential* travel,<sup>1</sup> the closure of borders and the suspension of the Schengen area.<sup>2</sup> With regard to these deterring factors, it comes as no surprise that the official website of the European Union should host a “Re-open EU” section.<sup>3</sup>

In terms of public sentiment, two years after the outbreak, we can say that the pandemic has changed the way people think about travelling, making air passengers more aware of the risk of contracting infectious diseases, and not only when they fly to exotic destinations. This attitude, which becomes travel anxiety at times, is not without consequences for the civil aviation industry and the ways airlines connect with, and engage, their customers.

On the one hand, airlines’ messages have to take in the respect for sanitary measures as imposed by international regulating bodies of civil airlines such as the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and as affected by specific national restrictions. On the other, airlines need to look ahead and rebuild trust and confidence with customers through proactive communication. However, it appears that, in order to be effective and long-lasting, recovery will have to take into consideration several factors, such as changing consumer behaviour, altered risk perception, increased attention to air passenger rights and emerging mobility trends. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has raised public awareness of the many dimensions of wellness and highlighted the importance of healthy, responsible and sustainable tourism (Wilks et al. 2021), although passengers still prioritise “price and connections over sustainability in booking decisions” (Ahmad et al. 2022).

By means of a qualitative approach that focusses on linguistic, discursive and rhetorical strategies enacted in the post-pandemic period, this paper investigates how European airlines explain the enforced restrictions and required sanitary measures and how they reframe promotional messages

<sup>1</sup> Conversely, *essential* travellers belong to those categories with an essential function in society or are individuals having the imperative need to travel.

<sup>2</sup> Among several difficulties, passengers had to fill in their data in the European Digital Passenger Locator Form (dPLF), prior to entering a country.

<sup>3</sup> “Re-open EU provides information on the various measures in place, including on quarantine and testing requirements for travellers, the EU Digital COVID certificate to help you exercise your right to free movement, and mobile coronavirus contact tracing and warning apps. The information is updated frequently and available in 24 languages. This should help you plan your travel in Europe, while staying safe and healthy”: <https://reopen.europa.eu>.

to customers in an effort to map the discursive geographies of the new normal in tourism.

## 2. Materials and methods

The analysis, which is qualitative in essence, resorts to the mixed-methods toolkit that goes under the name of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADS), whereby hypothesis-driven research is tested against linguistic evidence provided by corpora (Taylor and Marchi 2018). The qualitative approach has benefited from the concept of linguistic framing as applied in Critical Discourse Studies (Entman 1993; Wodak and Meyer 2016), which has proven useful in interpreting rhetorical structures that airlines have deployed to face the crisis in the aviation industry and then to attract customers again.

An ad hoc corpus of texts of over 73,000 words was created on November 15, 2021, with the help of the Sketch Engine web crawler tool (Kilgarriff et al. 2014). First, the websites of twenty European airlines (flag carriers and low cost) were selected: Austrian Airlines, Aegean Airlines, airBaltic, Air France, British Airways, Easy Jet, Finnair, Iberia, ITA, Jet2, KLM, Lufthansa, Norwegian, Ryanair, SAS, Swiss Air, TAP, Virgin Atlantic, Vueling and Wizz Air. To start web crawling, Sketch Engine was given the twenty URL addresses of the selected airlines. The suggested search words were *Corona*, *COVID-19*, *restriction*, *safety*, as they were thought to be general and inclusive enough to capture pertinent content. Secondly, as some airlines turned out not to be so visible in the collected data, these airlines' corporate websites were searched for posts on COVID-19 related content and the .txt files thus obtained were added to the corpus, a function allowed by Sketch Engine.

The linguistic data set thus collected was assessed and interpreted through discourse-analytic insights that will be illustrated in what follows.

## 3. Response strategies: a critical assessment

Recent research in corporate crisis communication and in trust-repair discourse has shown that airlines have resorted to three main types of post-pandemic response strategies, *instructing and adjusting*, *compensation* and *rebuilding* (Fuoli and Hart 2018; Scheiwiller and Zizka 2021; Tommaso 2021). This model is also employed here to begin the analysis. The first type of strategy aims to explain the necessity of the introduction of travel restrictions and health and safety measures, often subject to change, the

second offers redressive actions, and the third one promotes air travel, nonetheless. While the first two response strategies will be dealt with in this section, the third type will be discussed in the following one.

### 3.1. Risk, restrictions, responsibilities

The least palatable of response strategies, as it runs counter to the feeling of endless freedom and limitless opportunities associated with the tourist imagination in affluent democracies, is the implementation and enforcement of public health measures for epidemiological surveillance. This is confirmed by a first exploratory investigation of the corpus through the keyword extraction tool provided by Sketch Engine. The first five keyphrases (i.e. multi-word terms) that are obtained by comparing the target corpus against the pre-selected enTenTen20 reference corpus of over 36.5 billion words (Table 1) leave no doubt as to the pervasiveness of the strict COVID-19 regulatory framework in the aviation industry and airlines' communication.

| <i>Rank</i> | <i>Keyphrases</i>  |
|-------------|--------------------|
| 1           | entry requirement  |
| 2           | COVID-19 test      |
| 3           | face mask          |
| 4           | antigen test       |
| 5           | travel restriction |

Table 1  
Keyphrases by Keyness in the Target Corpus.

Further insights may be gleaned by expanding the search to other semantically related collocations in the corpus. We encounter *Corona restrictions, entry restrictions, government mandates and restrictions, hotel quarantine restrictions, national and community restrictions, transit restrictions, travel and health restrictions, entry bans, travel bans, health requirements, quarantine requirements, testing centres, vaccination or test certificate*. Moreover, terms such as *compulsory, mandatory and necessary* add intensity to the framing of new unpleasant obligations, which are also *changing, latest, updated, varying, additional*, depending on the evolution of the epidemiological situation and the number of countries on the red list. The resulting feeling of uncertainty is often expressed through the use of the epistemic modal *may* (Table 2).

| <i>Left Context</i>   | <i>KWIC</i>       | <i>Right Context</i>                                   |
|---|-------------------|--|
| Face masks are  | <i>compulsory</i> | and they significantly reduce the risk                 |
| they will have to   | <i>compulsory</i> | self-isolate until the testing outcome is available    |
| of their 10-day   | <i>compulsory</i> | quarantine   |
| testing is also   | <i>compulsory</i> | for those vaccinated                                   |
| entry bans or   | <i>mandatory</i>  | quarantines are put in place at your destination       |
| it is   | <i>mandatory</i>  | to present the Green Pass                              |
| not made of fabric or<br>surgical masks, are                    | <i>mandatory</i>  | on all Lufthansa flights.                              |
| all the   | <i>necessary</i>  | health documents to travel                             |
| ensure you can provide all                                      | <i>necessary</i>  | documents and complete all pre-travel checks           |
| Due to the travel restrictions<br>currently in force, it may be | <i>necessary</i>  | to adjust our schedule                                 |
| where it is reasonably  | <i>necessary</i>  | to do so, or removing your face covering               |
| the current rules and<br>restrictions                           | <i>changing</i>   | all the time   |
| travel restrictions are   | <i>changing</i>   | frequently   |
| Given the   | <i>changing</i>   | nature of this information                             |
| You must check the  | <i>latest</i>     | travel updates for each destination                    |
| Here, you'll find all the                                       | <i>latest</i>     | go-to countries  |
| You can find the  | <i>latest</i>     | entry restrictions here                                |
| Please make sure to keep<br>yourself                            | <i>updated</i>    | since entry restrictions may change on short<br>notice |
| Travel disruption<br>information –                              | <i>updated</i>    | 9 June   |
| our map info is regularly                                       | <i>updated</i>    | but it's simply a guide                                |
| travel and entry restrictions                                   | <i>may</i>        | apply for some destinations                            |
| alternative flight or hotel<br>arrangements, but this           | <i>may</i>        | not always be possible                                 |
| Quarantine  | <i>may</i>        | also apply to transit passengers                       |
| All the information in this<br>section                          | <i>may</i>        | be affected by current travel restrictions             |
| security controls, which  | <i>may</i>        | further increase the queuing times                     |
| We understand your plans  | <i>may</i>        | need to change   |

Table 2  
Edited KWIC Concordance Lines (Source: Author's Elaboration).

Moving from lexis to discourse, it can be generally observed that all the airlines here investigated try to avoid negative emotion words when referring to the pandemic. They give advice on risk-reducing behaviour and refrain from stigmatizing COVID-19 infection carriers – a passenger testing positive for the virus is described as a *confirmed case*. Nonetheless, this kind of market-driven persuasive discourse – often the hallmark of corporate branding – is ultimately at odds with the language of authority that is needed to announce the introduction and enforcement of new rules following government-level decisions. A case in point is when health-related information and requirements co-occur with words that convey explicit obligations, prohibitions and the negative consequences of violating them. It is hard to understate the fact that *failure to comply with* travel restrictions (or any *breach* thereof) may result in *denied boarding, refused entry, removal*

*from the aircraft, substantial fines, cancellation charges and costs imposed on the passenger.*

As the three examples below illustrate, COVID-19 requirements, which place a burden on air passengers and detract from the pleasure of flying, are frequently framed as restrictions.

- (1) Due to the current public health situation, travel restrictions are changing frequently. (Aegean Airlines, “Entry Requirements”)
- (2) Some countries have established temporary entry requirements and restrictions, like having to show negative COVID-19 test results or going into quarantine. (Vueling, “COVID-19 Travel Requirements”)
- (3) Please make sure to keep yourself updated since entry restrictions may change on short notice. As a traveler you are responsible for making sure you meet the necessary requirements to enter your destination, before leaving for the airport. (SAS, “Safe Travel”)

We are faced with a legitimation of “the necessities of security” (Wodak 2021, p. 333) that includes the introduction of preventive public health and safety measures, another identifiable discourse strand within response strategies aiming to cope with the crisis.

- (4) The most stringent health measures against COVID-19. (Vueling, “Travel Safely and with Peace of Mind”)
- (5) Unvaccinated Children 2-17, traveling with a fully vaccinated adult, must have a proof of a negative COVID-19 test (PCR or Antigen) taken no earlier than 3 days before departure. (SAS, “Traffic Information”)
- (6) Below you’ll find advice on what to do before, during and after your flight for travelling safely. Get to know our numerous health and safety measures designed to ensure your well-being throughout the journey. (Finnair, “Checklist for Safe Travelling”)

Notably, compliance with regulations and health and safety measures – social distancing, amended cabin baggage policy, the array of COVID-19 tests (amplification test, antigen test, antibody test), the FFP2 mask requirement and mandatory quarantine in case of positivity, appropriate vaccine status – is framed as passenger responsibility by recourse to deontic expressions that in turn convey obligation (*must, should, to be required/compulsory/mandatory, to have to, to need*), recommendability (*to advise, to recommend, to suggest*) and permission (*to allow, to be allowed/permitted*). Customers should ensure they abide by these regulations. It is their responsibility to assess the risks and benefits of their decision to travel, also on the basis of their individual vulnerability to the virus which is implied in the warnings.

- (7) The customer is always responsible for finding out what requirements apply to documents (passport, visa, etc.). You are also responsible for

- adhering to what entry requirements apply to vaccinations, which also includes the requirements that apply due to COVID-19. (SAS, “Entry Regulations”)
- (8) Depending on where you’re going, certain countries are asking for different entry requirements, like completing specific forms, providing evidence of a negative COVID test, and quarantining on arrival. (Easy Jet, “COVID-19 Travel Restrictions”)
  - (9) Due to the evolution of the pandemic situation, national and international mobility may be subject to the limitations imposed by local governments. It is therefore advisable to check the latest regulations before planning your trip. (ITA Airways, “Mobility Limitations”)

As for sharing of risk and responsibilities in airlines’ communication, we observe that hygiene protocols and safety measures are discursively prioritised. High safety standards work to contain the spread of the outbreak and minimise risk for airlines by means of *extensive hygiene measures* that include *disinfection, disinfecting and cleaning procedures, additional, deeper cleaning, efficient air ventilation and filtering and sanitation*.

- (10) As well as disinfecting our aircraft, we’ve reinforced the cleaning procedure on board and in all the places where we have contact with customers: desks, buses between the aircraft and terminal, and all surfaces inside the aircraft. (Iberia, “Are the Aircrafts Disinfected?”)
- (11) During the new aircraft cleaning procedure, new mild sanitizers are used in order to clean and sanitize all sensitive touch areas such as seats, hand rests, tray tables, side walls, toilets etc, according to the instructions of the local health authorities. (Aegean Airlines, “COVID-19: Info & Prevention”)
- (12) The cabins of our planes are designed to keep the air clean at all times. The air is fully renewed every three minutes, purifying it and mixing it with fresh air from outside. HEPA filters get rid of bacteria and particles like those of the COVID-19 virus, with an efficiency of 99.99%. (Vueling, “Travel Safely and with Peace of Mind”)

The mention of “certain countries”, “local governments” and “local health authorities” in examples (8), (9) and (11) underlines an important element in the framing of response strategies, shedding light on mutual responsibilities in a complex landscape of rights and regulations. It is well-known that sanitary restrictions and safety measures were introduced by individual countries in different moments, as the pandemic spread through the world in subsequent waves. Analysts claim that such lack of coordination and the unilateral manner in which national measures were taken “contributed to the collapse of air travel” (European Commission 2021, p. 5). It follows that, to this date, airlines have had to frame their health and safety measures constantly negotiating with national biopolitics and body politics (Wodak 2021, p. 336), a difficult communicative task.

As for the issue of biopolitics, we are reminded of Adey's critique of the biopolitics (2009) that problematises the use of profiling and biometric sensitive data in airport and border security as a potential restriction of human rights. It should be pointed out, however, that the pandemic is not the first time that air passengers have had to adapt "to enhanced security controls in airports and strict rules regarding their luggage" (*The Lancet* 2020, p. 993). Added security measures that changed the way people used to travel were established after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Besides, the pandemic was very soon represented as a public health crisis, a situation in which the legal but also the affective focus is placed on the public good rather than protection of individual rights, despite the number of unsolved tensions between these two poles. At any rate, recovery in air travel "will rely on biopolitical decisions aimed at securing the mobile bodies and (re)creating place around the sanitary measures" (Tremblay-Huet and Lapointe 2021, p. 257).

### **3.2. Offering redressive measures**

Drawing on Fuoli and Hart's observations on trust-repair discourse (2018), Tommaso applies them to the field of air travel and observes that "to meet the expectations of the customers who may be concerned with health risks, a strong degree of willingness is foregrounded through a wider range of linguistic resources" (2021, p. 158). A communication strategy which is consistent with their corporate ethics (Garzone and Catenaccio 2022), airlines display unrelenting empathy while committing themselves to their customers' well-being and safety.

With reference to health and safety measures, it is to be noted that they do not lose their priority in the post-pandemic context. Public health concerns are still cogent and continuity of action is important despite social bias towards underestimating the pandemic. In the post-pandemic context, instead, sanitary measures, often employing high-tech sanitizing technology, are discursively reframed as a sign of excellent corporate performance and customer service.

- (13) Your health and safety remain at the heart of everything we do. We have put in place the strictest health measures on the ground and in flight to keep you protected at every step of your journey. (Air France, "Health Measures")
- (14) We know that things look and feel a little different these days. But rest assured, your safety is our priority. We've put lots of extra measures in place to make sure you have a happy and healthy holiday. (Jet2, "COVID-19 Hub")

As restrictions are gradually lifted, a new service has seen the creation of rapid test centers, offering certified tests at the airport as opposed to self-



tests, as well as comprehensive forms of travel insurance with COVID-19 cover. This service aims to grant passengers “peace of mind” (in examples 4, 12, 15 and 18).

- (15) To ensure easy access to testing services at a discounted price we have partnered with the healthcare service companies Vaccina and Expresscare. You can start your journey with peace of mind, as you are provided with a COVID-19 test that meets the international quality standards. The test methods used by our partners is the most accepted coronavirus test in the world. (SAS, “Safe Travel”)
- (16) Protect your trip with the insurance cover of our partner AIG. All important COVID-19 benefits are already included in our individual insurance packages and will therefore also provide you with comprehensive cover in the event of a COVID-19 infection. (Lufthansa, “The Right Insurance Cover for Your Trip”)

Redressive promotional measures include compensation/e-vouchers for cancelled flights (on certain conditions). In fact, although air passengers are entitled to the timely reimbursement of airfare in case of cancellation, a 2021 European Commission report shows, instead, that they were often unprotected against airline insolvency, especially during the first wave.<sup>4</sup>

- (17) If your ticket is within the conditions mentioned on this page, we recommend that the free change of your ticket or the request of the refund voucher be made online through Manage Booking. (TAP, “Rescheduling and Refunding”)
- (18) Travelling today comes with new concerns, and Finnair would like to offer you some extra peace of mind when you travel. Finnair Corona Cover is offered at no additional cost and provides cover in case you test positive for COVID-19 while at your destination. (Finnair, “How to Travel Safely on Holiday”)

These marketing moves and communication strategies had already been anticipated in a 2020 editorial in *The Lancet*. The medical journal listed the availability of a vaccine, rapid testing for crew members and passengers, enhanced cleanliness and sanitation and a common use of masks or other protective equipment “as instrumental in reinstating confidence in travellers” (p. 993), together with “touchless service delivery and investments in digital technologies” (Babii and Nadeem 2021), such as contactless forms of

<sup>4</sup> “The COVID-19 crisis brought into sharp focus the fact that air passengers were not informed fully about their rights, and that there was a risk that they would consequently lose money to which they were entitled. The crisis also shed light on limitations to Member States’ enforcement of air passenger rights: many passengers were not reimbursed in the initial phase of the crisis; many others had no other choice than to accept vouchers” (European Commission 2021, p. 4).

payment and the introduction of downloadable menus and magazines. It is a new form of service that airlines have started to implement, while air passengers have become familiar with storing vaccine certificates and COVID-19 test results on smart devices.

- (19) For your safety, we no longer offer newspapers and magazines on board. Download your favorite press titles 30 hours before your departure on the Air France Play app. (Air France, “Health Measures”)
- (20) No physical brochures or magazines will be located in seat pockets on board, only our easyJet Safety Card; these are sprayed with disinfectant which provides surface protection against viruses for at least 24 hours. (Easy Jet, “COVID-19 Travel Plans”)

#### 4. Promoting post-pandemic air travel

Despite an uneven post-pandemic recovery, confidence in travelling is slowly rising again (Ahmad et al. 2021; Krishnan et al. 2021). In Willie Wash’s words, IATA’s Director General:

People are increasingly frustrated with the COVID-19 travel restrictions and even more have seen their quality of life suffer as a result. They don’t see the necessity of travel restrictions to control the virus. And they have missed too many family moments, personal development opportunities and business priorities. In short, they miss the freedom of flying and want it restored. The message they are sending to governments is: COVID-19 is not going to disappear, so we must establish a way to manage its risks while living and traveling normally. (Cruise Guide, 7.10.2021)

In light of the restrictions and safety measures still in place and new risk perceptions and responsibilities, the question nonetheless remains about the effectiveness of airlines’ persuasive rhetoric to resume successful promotional communication and engage old and new customers in a ‘seamless’ travel experience, after the economic shock and job losses they are trying to recover from.

After a number of promotional messages during the pandemic that more or less amounted to “Dream now, Travel later”, a noticeable strategy now is that of reframing restrictions and regulations, which are still a burden for customers that have to keep abreast of change, as cautionary advice and new forms of agency. Within this frame, technology-assisted searches are offered as a way of engaging current and prospective customers against the

disruption and fragmentation suffered in the last two years and placing them again at the centre of the tourist experience.<sup>5</sup>

- (21) We strongly advise that all customers continue to check our interactive travel map to ensure you are aware of the latest requirements and can comply with all entry requirements for your destination(s) both before and at the time of travel. (Easy Jet, “COVID-19 Travel Plans”)
- (22) To check regulations in your destination, please select your origin and destination. Please note that the information in this widget is not managed by airBaltic, information is based on the most recent available data and might not be exhaustive. (airBaltic, “Travelling to Other Countries”)
- (23) Where can I fly to? Check out the COVID-19 requirements for your dream destination with our new tool. (KLM, “Find Your Destination”)
- (24) Enjoy the summer and plan your next trip to your dream destination. Use our interactive world map now to discover the destination that best matches your holiday requirements. Have fun planning your holiday! (Lufthansa, “Your Longed-for Destinations at a Glance”)

In the following examples, *flexibility* and *rebooking* reframe limitations imposed by the epidemiological situation and the unavailability of some destinations as empowering opportunities and newly regained freedom, counterbalancing the burden of restrictions and regulations.

- (25) Plan your travels with flexibility. (Finnair, “Change Your Booking Flexibly”)
- (26) Flexibility is important for travelers. We have therefore introduced more flexible rebooking options so that you can travel now or later. (SAS, “Flexible Booking”)
- (27) In view of the exceptional circumstances caused by the spread of the coronavirus we offer even greater flexibility for your travel plans. All fares and ticket prices can be rebooked for existing as well as new bookings on short, medium and long-haul routes. This also applies for cancelled flights. (Lufthansa, “Extended Rebooking and Voucher Options”)
- (27) We offer one free rebooking on all our flights. (Norwegian, “Flexible Travel”)
- (28) Our Flexdeals offer maximum flexibility when you need it. Book now and reunite with your loved ones during the holiday season! (KLM, “Flexdeals”)
- (29) Our current priority is to gradually resume our operations so you can travel once again on board our flights in the best possible health & safety conditions. We are also continuing our actions to ensure a responsible travel experience, to which we are still fully committed. After this crisis,

<sup>5</sup> The impact of smart working will probably result in a decrease in business travel in the future, even for financially healthy companies, as technologies will likely replace that type of mobility.

we will more than ever seek to be the pioneers of more sustainable aviation. (Air France, “Travel with Us”)

Finally, the discursive expansion in example (29) from health and safety measures for “a responsible travel experience” to more sustainable flying highlights what could be a highly desirable permanent trend in the new normal of air travel (Ruban and Yashalova 2020). It has been shown that the halt to air travel during the past two years resulted in positive environmental impacts such as reduced carbon footprints, improved air and water quality, and ecological restoration. Among consumers, besides, a new breed of eco-travellers is emerging, ‘flight shamers’ that abandon air travel because of high emissions and are opting for more sustainable means of transportation.

Apparently, however, sustainable travel remains a marginalised discourse, despite earnest efforts on the part of those airlines that have started to invest in biofuel R&D. We read in the news media that the trend now is still “revenge travel” (Marcus 2022), where people long to go back to hypermobility, one of the deprecated excesses in the world of tourism (Renaud 2020; Milano and Koens 2022).

## 5. Concluding remarks

This paper has investigated the linguistic and discursive reframing of response strategies of twenty European airlines in post-pandemic times, collecting a textual corpus from their corporate websites and highlighting how these companies have managed to formulate their response strategies against the complexity of intervening changes: country-specific biopolitical practices, changed risk perception, new consumer behaviours and attitudes. Response strategies have turned out to be substantially standardised across the different websites.

In light of all this, it is still uncertain whether the aviation industry will move in the desirable direction of sustainability and degrowth, as “the emerging discursive field of sanitary responsible tourism [...] is woven with neoliberal growth discourses, and therefore we should not underevaluate the capacity of the market to feed on risk as a growth factor, and especially on technologies and services that build a perception of risk mitigation” (Tremblay-Huet and Lapointe 2021 p. 258).

At the same time, a return of the industry to the mindset of pre-pandemic times seems unlikely (Bouwer, Saxon and Wittkamp 2021). Besides the introduction of biopolitical practices and technological solutions that are already changing air passengers’ travel experience in diverse ways, it is hard to believe that the pandemic and climate emergency will not leave an

indelible mark on how a global crisis is framed and possible ways of recovery envisaged, no matter how contradictory.

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## Sitography

IATA International Air Transport Association, <https://www.iata.org>

ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization, <https://www.icao.int>

## Airlines

Aegean Airlines, <https://en.aegeanair.com>

Air Baltic, <https://www.airbaltic.com>

Air France, <https://www.airfrance.com>

Air Portugal, <https://www.flytap.com>

Austrian Airlines, <https://www.austrian.com>

British Airways, <https://www.britishairways.com>

Easy Jet, <https://www.easyjet.com>

Finnair, <https://www.finnair.com>

Iberia, <https://www.iberia.com>

ITA, <https://www.italyair.com>

Jet2, <https://www.jet2.com>

KLM, <https://www.klm.com>

Lufthansa, <https://www.lufthansa.com>

Norwegian, <https://www.norwegian.com>

RyanAir, <https://www.ryanair.com>

Scandinavian Airlines, <https://www.flysas.com>

Swiss Air, <https://www.swiss.com>

Virgin Atlantic, <https://www.virginatlantic.com>

Vueling, <https://www.vueling.com>

WizzAir, <https://wizzair.com>