

# Booking.com to repay Dutch COVID aid in bonus row

June 4 2021

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Online travel agency Booking.com said on Friday it will repay more than 60 million euros of coronavirus aid to the Dutch government after a row over bonuses for its bosses.

Dutch MPs expressed outrage this week after the NRC newspaper reported that three senior members of the Amsterdam-based site's US holding company received 28 million euros (\$34 million) in bonuses last year.

"While we have not recovered fully, we have heard Dutch society, and have taken considerations seriously," a Booking.com spokesman said in an emailed statement to AFP.

"As we are in a more stable position than when we applied for the NOW (Dutch COVID state aid) program in early 2020, and on a path toward recovery, we will pay back the subsidies received."

Booking.com said it had been operating in a "very unpredictable environment" with an 80-percent decline in business at the start of the pandemic and a 165-million-euro loss in the [first quarter](#) of 2021.

The firm said last August that it would cut a quarter of its 17,500 staff worldwide as coronavirus paralysed global travel.

Dutch social affairs and employment minister Wouter Koolmees said Booking.com had "rightly and wisely... taken this step".

The Dutch lower house of parliament called on Booking.com earlier this week to repay the aid but Koolmees told MPs there was no way to legally enforce the demand.

There were also calls on [social media](#) for a boycott of the company.

Founded in 1996, Booking.com has 28 million listings on its website which is available in 43 languages.

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