

Travel restrictions: Council reviews the list of third countries for which restrictions on non-essential travel should be lifted

Following a review under the recommendation on the gradual lifting of the temporary restrictions on non-essential travel into the EU, the Council updated the list of countries for which travel restrictions should be lifted. As stipulated in the Council recommendation, this list will continue to be reviewed regularly and, as the case may be, updated.

Based on the criteria and conditions set out in the recommendation, as from 16 December member states should **gradually lift the travel restrictions at the external borders for residents of the following third countries:**

- Australia
 - Japan
 - New Zealand
 - Rwanda
 - Singapore
 - South Korea
 - Thailand
- China, subject to confirmation of reciprocity

Travel restrictions should also be gradually lifted for the special administrative regions of China Hong Kong and Macao, subject to confirmation of reciprocity.

Residents of Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican should be considered as EU residents for the purpose of this recommendation.

The **criteria** to determine the third countries for which the current travel restriction should be lifted cover in particular the epidemiological situation and containment measures, including physical distancing, as well as economic and social considerations. They are applied cumulatively. Reciprocity should also be taken into account regularly and on a case-by-case basis.

Schengen associated countries (Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Switzerland) also take part in this recommendation.

Background

On 16 March 2020, the Commission adopted a communication recommending a temporary restriction of all non-essential travel from third countries into the EU for one month. EU heads of state or government agreed to implement this restriction on 17 March. The travel restriction was extended for a further month respectively on 8 April 2020 and 8 May 2020.

On 11 June the Commission adopted a communication recommending the further extension of the restriction until 30 June 2020 and setting out an approach for a gradual lifting of the restriction on non-essential travel into the EU as of 1 July 2020.

On 30 June the Council adopted a recommendation on the gradual lifting of the temporary restrictions on non-essential travel into the EU, including an initial list of countries for which member states should start lifting the travel restrictions at the external borders. The list is reviewed regularly and, as the case may be, updated.

The Council recommendation is not a legally binding instrument. The authorities of the member states remain responsible for implementing the content of the recommendation. They may, in full transparency, lift only progressively travel restrictions towards countries listed.

A Member State should not decide to lift the travel restrictions for non-listed third countries before this has been decided in a coordinated manner.

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