



UNWTO

World Tourism Organization

COVID – 19 RELATED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS A GLOBAL REVIEW FOR TOURISM

SECOND REPORT AS OF 28 APRIL 2020





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Prepared by
UNWTO
Sustainable Development of Tourism Department



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This second report *COVID-19 Related Travel Restrictions – A Global Review for Tourism* was developed by the World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) Sustainable Development of Tourism Department. The report was prepared under the supervision of Dr. Dirk Glaesser with lead contributions from Lorna Hartantyo, Marianna Stori and Cordula Wohlmuther. Virginia Fernández-Trapa reviewed and provided feedback to the report.

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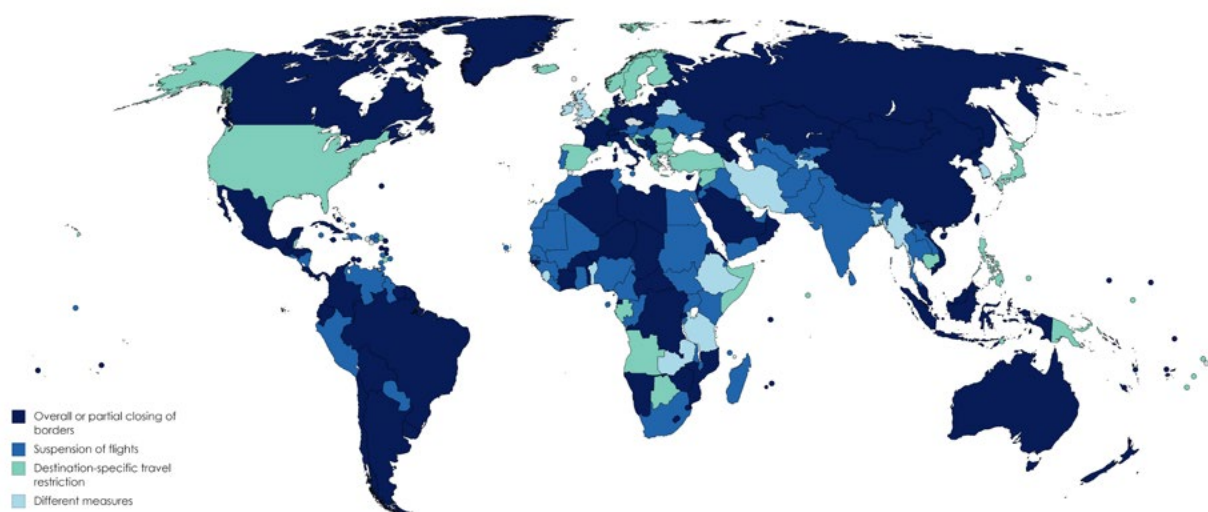
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1. Key Facts

- **As of today, 100% of destinations** worldwide have COVID-19 related travel restrictions in place. Never before in history has international travel been restricted in such an extreme manner.
- 180 destinations, i.e. 83% of all destinations worldwide, have COVID-19 related travel restrictions now in place for **more than four weeks**.
- Out of these, 107 destinations, i.e. 49% of all destinations worldwide, have closed their borders or suspended flights for more than 4 weeks.
- Currently, **four main categories** of travel restrictions are in use, with three of them consisting of total or partial bans to the entry of travellers.
- **Out of 217 destinations worldwide,**
 - 97 destinations (45%) have totally or partially closed their borders for tourists - “Passengers are not allowed to enter”.
 - 65 destinations (30%) have suspended totally or partially international flights - “All flights are suspended”.
 - 39 destinations (18%) are implementing the closing of borders in a more differentiated manner by banning the entry for passengers from specific countries of origin - “Passengers who have transited or been in x are not allowed to enter”.
 - The remaining 16 destinations (7%) are applying different measures, such as quarantine or self-isolation for 14 days or visa measures.
- **As of 20 April 2020, no destination has lifted a travel restriction.**

Figure A – Type of travel restriction by destination with COVID-19 travel restrictions



Source: Data compiled by UNWTO as of 20 April 2020¹.

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¹ The maps elaborated by UNWTO are for reference only and do not imply any judgement on the legal status of any territory, or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

2. Introduction

This is the second issue of a series of reports on COVID-19 Related Travel Restrictions – A Global Review for Tourism, aimed at providing an overview and analysis on the implementation of travel restrictions by governments as one of the means to address the global health crisis of COVID-19.

For the first time, UNWTO is reporting a historical and unprecedented situation with 100% of all destinations worldwide having introduced COVID-19 related travel measures limiting or interrupting entirely the access to their territories for tourists.

The *UNWTO reports on COVID-19 Related Travel Restrictions* are updated on a regular basis to support mitigation and recovery efforts of the tourism sector, providing a global overview of the measures in place and analysing them from a tourism perspective. With a view to supporting the responsible and successful implementation of exit strategies through which countries are planning the gradual return to normality, the report also aims at identifying critical issues and best practices of COVID-19 related travel measures and their implications on tourism.

The report is based on desk research carried out from the end of January 2020 until 20 April 2020 and contains the results of monitoring all travel restrictions that have been implemented during this period. For this purpose, official websites that provide such information, in particular the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Travel Centre² and the World Health Organization (WHO) Extranet, as well as the International SOS travel restrictions data contributing to the online platform of the World Food Programme (WFP) on global travel restrictions³, are reviewed on a regular basis.

In addition, UNWTO contacted authorities directly, when needed, to clarify the measures in place.

The research includes the analysis of different categories of travel restrictions, as well as their respective evolution into more differentiated and elaborated measures, and the timing of their implementation and/or future lifting. The monitoring of travel restrictions is carried out from the standpoint of travel facilitation for tourism purposes (i.e. focusing on temporary visitors/tourists) and does not take into account measures that are directed to residents, diplomats and other categories of travellers. In addition, this report does not consider travel advisories issued by governments for their respective citizens/residents.

This work is carried out by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Sustainable Development of Tourism Department (SDT) that, *inter alia*, monitors visa policies around the world since 2008 and produces the Visa Openness Reports, which focus on entry requirements for tourism purposes.⁴

² IATA Travel Centre, available online at: www.iatatravelcentre.com/.

³ International SOS is a medical and travel security services company, for more info on Travel restrictions, flight operations and screening see: <https://pandemic.internationalsos.com/2019-ncov/ncov-travel-restrictions-flight-operations-and-screening>.

⁴ World Tourism Organization, Travel Facilitation reports, available online at: www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/travel-facilitation.

3. Overview on Global Travel Restrictions as of 20 April 2020

3.1 Volume and severity of travel restrictions

UNWTO has been monitoring travel restrictions and facilitation measures for several years. The regularly published UNWTO Visa Openness reports⁵ have shown a continuously growing trend for more than a decade on the number of destinations facilitating visa policies for temporary visitors (tourists). When reporting last in 2018, the world openness reached its highest level ever, with an openness of 37 index points.⁶

The current COVID-19 crisis has impacted on travel like no other event before. For the first time in history, all destinations worldwide have imposed travel restrictions, including the full closure of borders for travellers in many destinations (Figure 1).

3.2 Evolution of travel restrictions over time

When on 30 January 2020 the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), 11 destinations had already implemented travel restrictions directed at travellers coming from China and prohibiting their entry into the destination. Six days later, on 5 February 2020, this number had grown four times and reached 40 destinations. Within another 5 days, on 10 February 2020, the number of destinations with travel restrictions had grown to 56. By then, 24 destinations worldwide had reported confirmed cases of COVID-19.

With the spread of COVID-19 cases in an increasing number of countries, the number of travel restrictions has also grown (Figure 2).

Figure 1 - Travel restrictions as of 20 April 2020



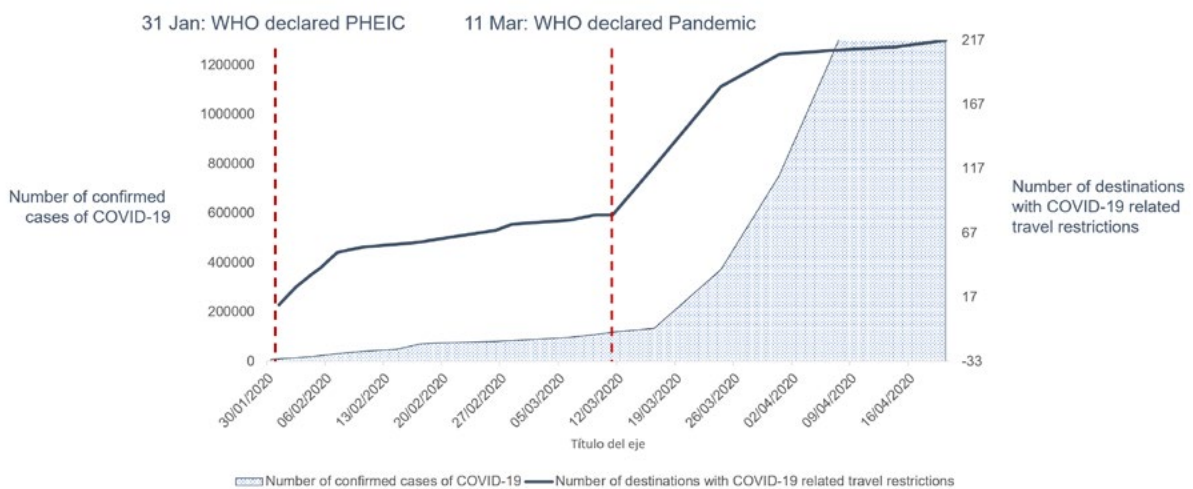
Source: Data compiled by UNWTO as of 20 April 2020.

Created with mapchart.net ©

⁵ World Tourism Organization, Travel Facilitation reports, available online at: www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/travel-facilitation.

⁶ The Openness Index ranges from 0 – 100 and is calculated by summing the percentage of the world population affected by no visa weighted by 1, visa on arrival weighted by 0.7, eVisa by 0.5 and traditional visa weighted by 0.

Figure 2 - Number of confirmed cases and destinations with COVID-19-related travel restrictions



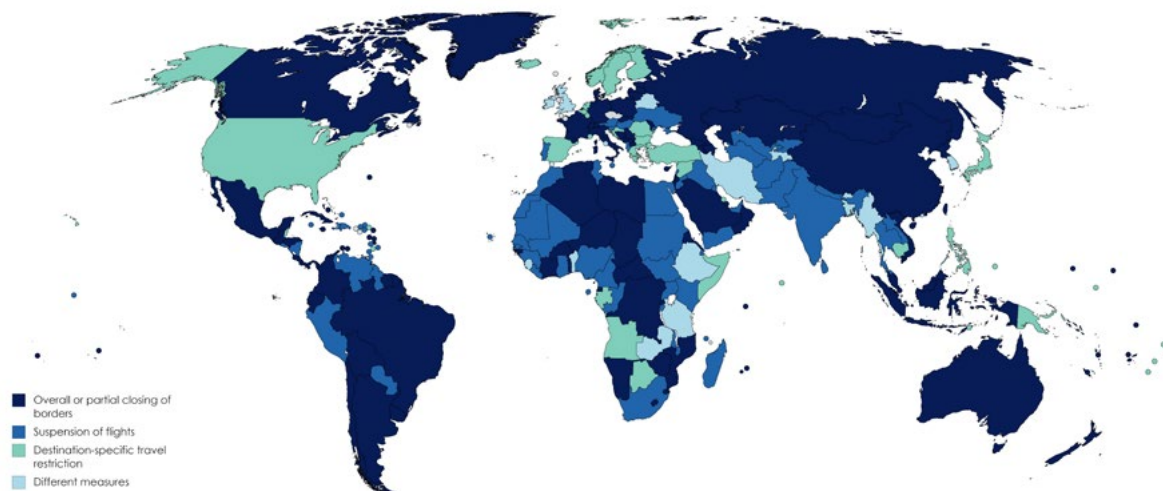
Source: Data compiled by UNWTO as of 20 April 2020, based on desk research from IATA Travel Centre, WHO Extranet and International SOS.

On 11 March 2020, when WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic, a total of 85 destinations had travel restrictions already in place. The declaration of the pandemic triggered a new wave of travel restrictions, which included the beginning of the implementation of such measures also in European countries. As a result, between 9 and 16 March 2020, an additional 38 destinations introduced travel restrictions, out of which 20 were from Europe, bringing the total to 119 destinations worldwide. By 24 March 2020, the number of destinations with restrictions more than doubled, from 85 to 181 destinations, an increase of 112%.

From 24 March to 20 April 2020, all remaining destinations introduced travel restrictions bringing the total to 217 destinations, representing 100% of destinations worldwide (Figure 3).

As of today, 180 destinations, i.e. 83% of all destinations worldwide have COVID-19 related travel restrictions now in place for more than four weeks. Out of these, 107 destinations, i.e. 49% of all destinations globally have closed their borders or suspended flights.

Figure 3 - Destinations with travel restrictions as of 20 April 2020



Source: Data compiled by UNWTO as of 20 April 2020.

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3.3 Categories of travel restrictions affecting tourists and travellers

At the beginning of the crisis two main categories of travel restrictions were observed, one directed at passengers coming from a country that had confirmed COVID-19 cases and the other one being the invalidation or suspension of visa.

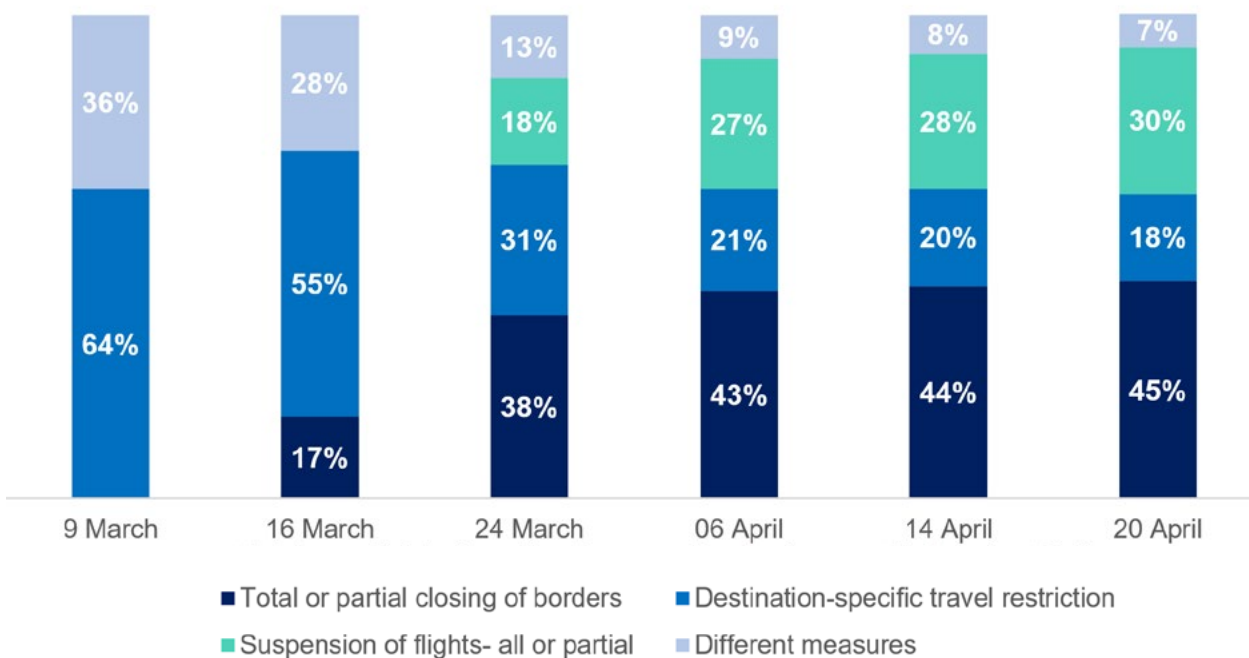
Over time additional measures were observed, such as the request for medical certificates upon arrival at a destination or the request for self-isolation or quarantine.

Once WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic, two new, more extreme categories of travel restrictions started to be applied, namely the complete and partial closure of borders and suspension of flights by governments. These two categories are, at the current date, used by the majority of destinations (75%) (Figure 4).

The four broad categories of travel restrictions under implementation in 217 destinations as of 20 April 2020 are as follows:

- o 97 destinations (45%) have totally or partially closed their borders for tourists - “Passengers are not allowed to enter”.

Figure 4 - Changes in type of travel restriction over time



Source: Data compiled by UNWTO as of 20 April 2020.

Note: Different measures include:

Visa: includes the invalidation of visa, destinations are no longer visa-exempt or visa cannot be obtained upon arrival any longer

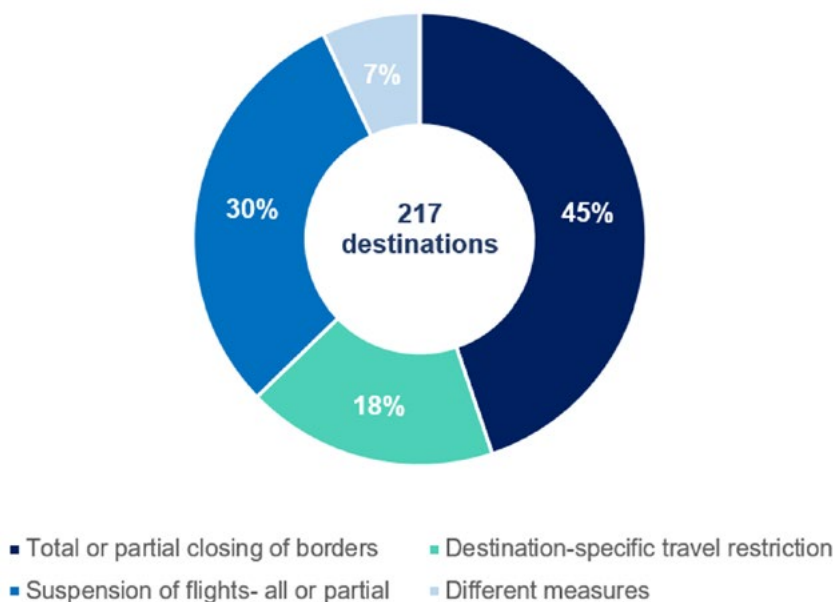
Regional: travel restriction directed at a region (sub-national) within a country, and not the whole country as such

Quarantine: quarantine or self-isolation requirement

Nationality: directed at a nationality

- o 65 countries (30%) have suspended totally or partially international flights - “all flights are suspended”.
- o 39 destinations (18%) are implementing the closing of borders in a more differentiated manner by banning the entry for passengers from specific countries of origin - “Passengers who have transited or been in x are not allowed to enter”.
- o The remaining 16 destinations (7%) are applying different measures, such as quarantine or self-isolation for 14 days or visa measures.

Figure 5 - Category of travel restrictions by destination with COVID-19 travel restrictions



Source: Data compiled by UNWTO as of 20 April 2020.

3.4 Regional analysis of travel restrictions

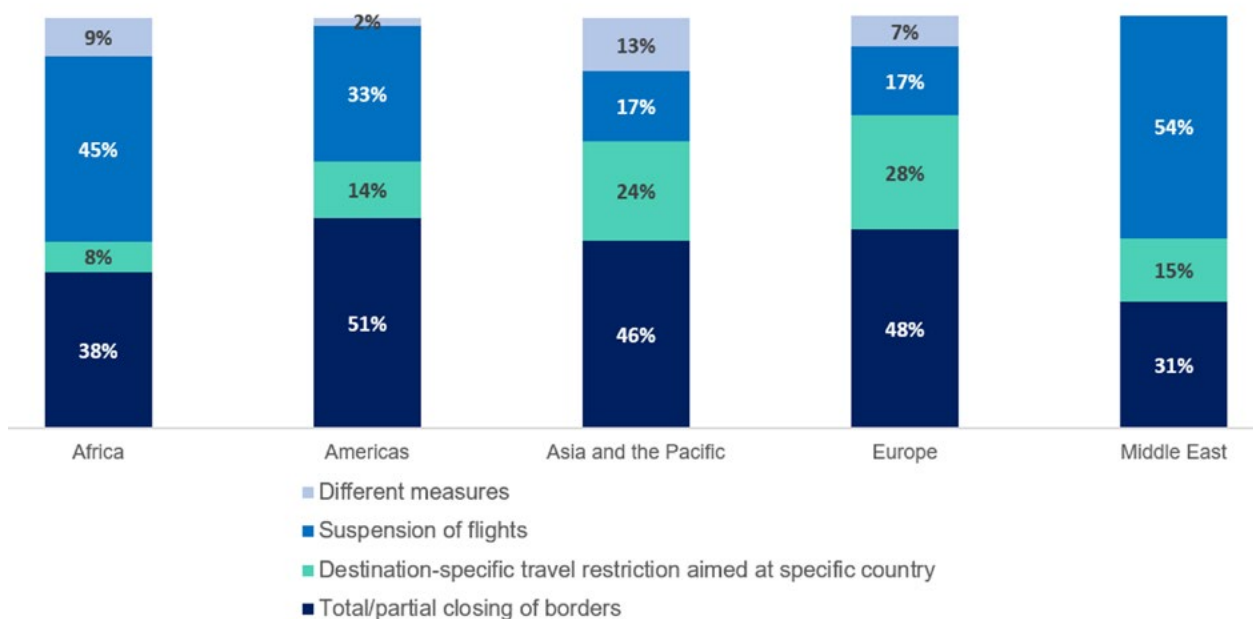
In the regions of the Middle East (54%) and Africa (45%) the measure of suspending flights prevails over other types of measures, while in the Americas (51%), Europe (48%) and Asia and the Pacific (46%), it is the closure of borders (total or partial) which is more dominant.

With regard to measures focusing on differentiated travel restrictions aimed at specific countries, it is in Europe where more of these measures are under implementation (28%) followed by Asia and the Pacific (24%) (Figure 6).

3.5 Lifting of travel restrictions

As of 20 April 2020, no destination has lifted a travel restriction introduced in the context of COVID-19.

Figure 6 - Regional breakdown of travel restrictions as of 20 April 2020



Source: Data compiled by UNWTO as of 20 April 2020.

Annex 1

Overview on the different categories and applying destinations as of 20 April 2020⁷

Total or partial closing of borders - “Passengers are not allowed to enter x”

Applied by 97 destinations (45% of all destinations worldwide).

Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Aruba, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bermuda, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo DR, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cote D’Ivoire, Cuba, Curaçao, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominica, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Fiji, France, French Guiana, French Polynesia, Georgia, Germany, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guinea Bissau, Honduras, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Korea DPR, Latvia, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Martinique, Mauritius, Mexico, Federated States of Micronesia, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Montserrat, Mozambique, Namibia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niger, North Macedonia, Oman, Panama, Poland, Qatar, Reunion, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, St. Maarten, Suriname, Switzerland, Taiwan Province of China, Togo, Tuvalu, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Zimbabwe.

Suspension of Flights- partially or totally - “All flights are suspended”

Applied by 65 destinations (30% of all destinations worldwide).

Afghanistan, Albania, Anguilla, Barbados, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Cayman islands, Comoros Islands, Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea (Rep.), Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, India, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Sao Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Sudan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Turks and Caicos Islands, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Virgin Islands British, Yemen.

Destination-specific travel restrictions aimed at passengers from specific countries - “Passengers who have transited or been in x are not allowed to enter x”

Applied by 39 destinations (18% of all destinations worldwide).

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Belize, Bonaire, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Croatia, Finland, Gabon, Greece, Iceland, Japan, Luxembourg, Maldives, Monaco, Nauru, Netherlands, Niue, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Romania, Saba, Samoa, Somalia, Spain, St. Eustatius, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Timor Leste, Tonga, Turkey, United States of America.

⁷ Some destinations apply more than one measure, in this case the measure affecting tourists most is used for the purpose of this analysis.

Quarantine or self-isolation related measures

Applied by 10 destinations (5% of all destinations worldwide).

Belarus, Benin, Ethiopia, Ireland, Puerto Rico, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Tanzania, United Kingdom, Zambia.

Visa measures - Visa are invalidated or no longer visa exempt or visa cannot be obtained any longer upon arrival

Applied by 5 destinations (2% of all destinations worldwide).

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Iran, Myanmar, Republic of Korea.

Regional (sub-national) specific travel restriction within a country - “Passengers who reside or visitors who have been in region x of a destination x in the past 14 days are not allowed to enter destination x”

Applied by 1 destination.

Macao SAR.

Annex 2

Overview on COVID-19 and pandemic measures, including travel restrictions

On 31 December 2019, a pneumonia of unknown cause was detected first in Wuhan, China and reported to the local WHO office. Four weeks later, on 30 January 2020 the WHO declared the outbreak of this virus, initially named 2019-nCoV, a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). At that stage WHO referred to 83 cases in 18 countries⁸ and did not recommend any travel or trade restriction. In a joint statement by UNWTO and WHO released on 26 February 2020, it was indicated that “Tourism’s response needs to be measured and consistent, proportionate to the public health threat and based on local risk assessment, involving every part of the tourism value chain”⁹

While from end of December 2019 until end of February 2020 China reported the largest amount of COVID-19 cases, by February 2020 the virus had already spread almost all over the globe. When WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic on 11 March 2020, 114 countries had reported 118,000 cases with Europe becoming the worst-affected region. As of 20 April 2020, there are worldwide reported 2 314 621 COVID-19 cases with 157 847 deaths.¹⁰

Based on the WHO Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response guidance document for governments¹¹, a variety of measures have been implemented worldwide in order to reduce the spread of the virus. These include individual measures, such as the promotion of hand and respiratory hygiene, as well as societal level measures, such as protocols related to social distancing which include the suspension

of school classes, adjusting work patterns, the reduction of unnecessary travel and overcrowding of mass transport systems as well as the development of frameworks for cancellation/restriction of mass gatherings.¹² Moreover, with regards to international travel, measures to “develop capacities for emergency public health actions at designated points of entry in accordance with International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) Annex 1 B.2.”, which include relevant control mechanisms for arriving and departing travellers, have been implemented.

Furthermore, additional provisions of the IHR¹³ have guided the introduction of measures. For instance, under Chapter III on special provisions for travellers, the treatment of suspected travellers when entering a destination is outlined, ranging from medical examination to providing the person with food and water.¹⁴ Also under IHR Article 43, it is stated that additional health measures shall be based on scientific principles, available scientific evidence and available specific guidance of WHO. In this context, the implementation of additional health measures that significantly interfere with international traffic, shall be reported to WHO within 48 hours, including the public health rationale and relevant scientific information. Significant interference means “refusal of entry or departure of international travellers, baggage, cargo, containers, conveyances, good, and the like, or their delay, for more than 24 hours”. The IHR stipulates that WHO shall share this information with other governments and request that the measure is reviewed within three months. Furthermore, WHO may request a government that implemented such measure to reconsider its application.¹⁵

8 World Health Organization (2020), *Statement on the second meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee regarding the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)*, 30 January 2020, available online at: [www.who.int/news-room/detail/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-\(2005\)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)](http://www.who.int/news-room/detail/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)).

9 World Tourism Organization, World Health Organization (2020), *Joint statement on tourism and covid-19: UNWTO and WHO call for responsibility and coordination*, 26 February 2020, available online at: https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-03/31012020%20Coronavirus_Feb_2020%20EN_3.pdf.

10 World Health Organization, *Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)*, Situation report 91, available online at: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronavirus/situation-reports/20200420-sitrep-91-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=fcf0670b_4.

11 International Health Regulations (2005), Third Edition, WHO, pp. 40-42, available online at: www.who.int/ihr/publications/9789241580496/en.

12 International Health Regulations (2005).

13 International Health Regulations (2005).

14 International Health Regulations (2005), pp. 23-24.

15 International Health Regulations (2005), pp. 29.



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