



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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European Union – Travel Ban Extended until 15 June

On 8 May, the European Commission (EC) invited¹ the Schengen member and associated states to extend the current travel ban for all non-essential travel to the European Union (EU) for another 30 days, until 15 June 2020.

The travel restrictions apply to the “EU+ area” which covers a total of 30 countries. It includes all Schengen states² including Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, and Romania and the four Schengen associated states: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.

WHY THIS MATTERS

In light of the implemented travel restrictions, it is important for third country nationals to cancel or reorganise for a later point in time their planned business trips and assignments to the EU, unless they hold a valid residence permit in one of the EU member states. Global mobility managers should adapt their mobility programmes in Europe taking into account these new measures.

Context

A temporary travel ban for all non-essential travel to the EU is in place since 17 March. The restrictions apply since 17 March and are due to come to an end on 15 May, but this period had been extended and now is due to come to an end on 15 June.

The purpose of these travel restrictions is to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 through travel to the EU.

While there are some EU and Schengen associated states taking their first cautious steps to ease social distancing measures within their territories, the overall objective of limiting the spread of the coronavirus via reduced social interaction remains.

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In spite of some stabilisation of the situation in the EU, lifting the travel restrictions from outside the EU is considered a risk in terms of a renewed increase of transmission of COVID-19, since the situations in many countries remain very fragile. This includes countries that normally have substantial travel to and from the EU. Recommendations are that any action taken in this regard should be gradual, with different measures being lifted in different phases.

Moreover, for the measures to continue to be effective the intention is that they should be implemented by all EU and Schengen states at all external borders of the EU+ area with the same end date and in a uniform manner. The EC encourages member states to extend their national measures already taken at the external borders. It is actually assumed that all states will also follow these EC guidelines.

Travel Restrictions across EU Recommended to 15 June

The Commission therefore invites the Schengen member states and the Schengen associated states to prolong the application of the travel restrictions on non-essential travel from third countries into the EU+ area by another 30 days, until 15 June 2020.

Any further prolongation of this period should be assessed in the coming weeks, based on the development of the epidemiological situation, both inside and outside the EU.

The scope of the extension of the temporary travel restrictions should be the same as set out previously. We refer to our GMS [Flash Alert 2020-077](#) (18 March 2020) and GMS [Flash Alert 2020-084](#) (20 March 2020) for coverage.

In order to limit the impact of the restrictions on societal functioning to the necessary minimum, member states are recommended not to apply the restrictions to specific categories of travellers with an essential function or need³.

KPMG NOTE

Considering the extended travel restrictions, it is important for third country nationals to either cancel or postpone their planned business trips and assignments to the EU. Exceptions apply to those already holding a valid residence permit in one of the EU member states. In addition, it is advisable for EU nationals and for EU residents to avoid any non-essential international travel.

Individuals wishing to enter the EU to live and/or to work, will experience delays in reviews of applications and possible cancellations of appointments at embassies, consulates, and visa application centres.

For more information, travellers to and from the EU during the pandemic can find a [Q&A](#) on the webpage the European Commission.

For news of what other countries are doing to combat COVID-19, see the dedicated GMS [Flash Alert website](#).

FOOTNOTES:

1 See “Communication on the restriction on non-essential travel to the EU” at:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/communication-restriction-non-essential-travel-eu_en

2 Schengen member states include: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

3 Essential functions are considered to include: health-care professionals, health researchers, and elderly care professionals; frontier workers (living in one EU member state and commonly working in another member state); seasonal workers in agriculture; transport personnel; diplomats, staff of international organisations, military personnel and humanitarian aid workers in the exercise of their functions; passengers in transit; passengers travelling for imperative family reasons; persons in need of international protection or for other humanitarian reasons respecting the principle of *non-refoulement*.

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Contact us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or the following professional with the KPMG International member firm in the Netherlands:



Heleen Snieders

Tel. + 31 88 909 3420

snieders.heleen@kpmg.com

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The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in The Netherlands.

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