



# GMS Flash Alert

## Immigration Edition

2021-054 | February 12, 2021



# France – COVID-19: Travel Restrictions to Enter France Reinforced

This *GMS Flash Alert* provides an update on travel restrictions applying to entry into France due to the COVID-19 situation.<sup>1</sup> (For prior coverage of travel restrictions, see [GMS Flash Alert 2021-003](#), 4 January 2021.)

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## WHY THIS MATTERS

These travel restrictions can have a considerable impact on travellers and globally mobile employees between France and other countries.

Travel has been restricted since April 2020 and a “compelling reasons regime” is applicable since 31 January 2021, at midnight.

These rules are updated regularly by the French government and so travellers and global mobility services must keep informed accordingly.

It is advisable that travellers – including mobile employees – consult with their travel agents and immigration counsel prior to making plans for travel to France.

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## Context

In the context of the COVID-19 health situation in France, access restrictions in respect of mainland France and its overseas *départements* and territories have been put in place.

## No Travel Restrictions for Travellers from EU Countries, PCR Testing

Passengers travelling from European Union (EU) member states, Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, and The Vatican can enter France.

However, for all types of travel (arrival by road, rail, air, or sea), travellers must show a negative "COVID RT-PCR" test carried out less than 72 hours prior to the departure to France. Road carriers, frontier workers, and residents of frontier living areas within a radius of 30 km from their homes are exempt from this obligation.

- Any traveller aged 11 years old or over must also complete a declaration of honour (*déclaration sur l'honneur*) certifying that:
  - he or she does not have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection;
  - he or she is not aware of having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the trip;
  - he or she accepts that a test or a biological virological screening test for detection of SARS-CoV-2 can be carried out upon his or her arrival on the national territory.
- Where a virology screening (RT-PCR) test cannot be conducted in the country of departure, the traveller may request a specific document known as "PCR Test Waiver" from the French embassy or consulate, subject to giving a compelling reason for travel (reserved for a restricted number of cases) and prior acceptance of:
  - a virological screening test for SARS-CoV-2 (antigen test) upon arrival;
  - 7-day isolation in one of the facilities designated by the French authorities, with presentation of proof of booking;
  - an RT-PCR virological screening test at the end of the isolation period – in countries where antigen tests are available, the "PCR Test Waiver" shall only be valid if supported by the result of such a test, carried out less than 72 hours before boarding and showing no COVID-19 contamination.
- Any traveller under the age of 11 must have a declaration of honour certifying:
  - he or she does not have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection;
  - he or she is not aware of having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the trip.
- Travellers arriving from a country of the European Union but who within 30 days of arrival have stayed in a country outside the European Union must follow the procedure applicable to travellers arriving from a country outside the European Area<sup>2</sup> (test PCR, compelling reasons, and quarantine of 7 days).

## Travel Restrictions from a Country outside the European Area

Travel to mainland France from all the countries except European Union member states, Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, and The Vatican remains strictly limited.

Travellers from these countries are now subject to the regime of compelling reasons (the indicative list of compelling reasons appears on travel certificates)<sup>3</sup>, whether they are French nationals or nationals of a member country of the

European Area (European Union, Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, and The Vatican), British nationals, or nationals of any other state. (See the travel certificates in the footnote 3.)

In authorised cases, all travellers are required to complete and hold a certificate indicating the reason for their trip.

**For French citizens and citizens of a country of the European Area**, compelling reasons are indicated on the certificate as follows:

1. A French citizen as well as his or her spouse (married, in a civil partnership, cohabiting partners upon presentation of documentary proof of cohabitation) and their children must show a:
  - health-related compelling reason considered to be an emergency;
  - compelling family reason which is a case of *force majeure*;
  - compelling professional reason that cannot be postponed.

They must:

- return to a main residence in France (valid only if departure from France was prior to 31 January 2021 or was justified by a compelling reason);
- transit in the international zone for less than 24 hours.

2. Citizens of the European Union, Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, and The Vatican, as well as their spouses (married, in a civil partnership, cohabiting partners upon presentation of documentary proof of cohabitation) and their children must show a:
  - health-related compelling reason considered to be an emergency;
  - compelling family reason which is a case of *force majeure*;
  - compelling professional reason that cannot be postponed.

They must:

- return to a main residence in France (valid only if departure from France was prior to 31 January 2021 or was justified by a compelling reason);
- transit in the international zone for less than 24 hours.

**For citizens from a country outside the European Union, compelling reasons are indicated on the certificate as follows** (some specific reasons are valid only for entry from the United Kingdom (which we note further below)):

1. A citizen of a third country who is a holder of a valid French or European residence permit or long-stay visa, who has his or her main residence in France or who is returning, in transit through France, to his or her main residence in a European Union country or equivalent (valid only if the travel abroad took place prior to 31 January 2021 or was justified by a compelling reason).
2. A British citizen and members of his or her family who are beneficiaries of the Agreement on withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic

Energy Community (valid only if the travel abroad took place prior to 31 January 2021 or was justified by a compelling reason).

3. A citizen of a third country holding a long-stay visa issued for the purpose of family reunion or reunification of refugee families, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, and stateless persons.
4. A health or research professional contributing to the fight against COVID-19 or recruited as an associate trainee.
5. A third-country citizen with a "Talent Passport" long-stay visa.
6. Student moving to France for the second semester of the academic year as part of a higher education institution program or a researcher moving to France at the invitation of a research laboratory, for research activities imperatively requiring his or her physical presence.
7. Land, sea, and air transport sector workers or transport service providers, including drivers of vehicles carrying goods intended for use in the territory, as well as those who are only in transit, or travelling as passengers returning to their home base or for training purposes.
8. A foreign citizen working for a diplomatic or consular mission, or an international organisation with its headquarters or an office in France, as well as his or her spouse and their children or a foreign citizen of a third country staying in France for a compelling professional reason under a mission order issued by the country of origin.
9. A citizen of a third country in transit in the international zone for less than 24 hours.

Categories regarding travel from the United Kingdom:

1. British civil servants discharging their duties, and persons working for the border police and customs officers.
2. Staff working for the Channel Tunnel (particularly for operational, maintenance and safety missions) or cross-Channel facilities.
3. Cross-border workers.

Furthermore, for all types of travel, travellers must show a negative "COVID RT-PCR" test carried out less than 72 hours before the departure to France.

➤ Any traveller aged 11 years old or over must also complete a declaration of honour certifying that:

- he or she does not have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection;
- he or she is not aware of having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the trip;
- he or she accepts that a test or a biological virological screening test for detection of SARS-CoV-2 can be carried out on his or her arrival on the national territory;
- he or she undertakes upon his or her honour to remain in isolation for 7 days upon arrival and do a new PCR-Test after 7 days.

- Where a virology screening (RT-PCR) test cannot be conducted in the country of departure, the traveller may request a specific document known as "PCR Test Waiver" from the French embassy or consulate, subject to giving a compelling reason for travel (reserved for a restricted number of cases) and prior acceptance of:
  - a virological screening test for SARS-CoV-2 (antigen test) upon arrival;
  - 7-day isolation in one of the facilities designated by the French authorities, with presentation of proof of booking;
  - an RT-PCR virological screening test at the end of the isolation period – in countries where antigen tests are available, the "PCR Test Waiver" shall only be valid if supported by the result of such a test, carried out less than 72 hours before boarding and showing no COVID-19 contamination.
- Any traveller under the age of 11 must have a declaration of honour certifying:
  - he or she does not have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection;
  - he or she is not aware of having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the trip;
  - he or she undertakes upon his honour to remain in isolation for 7 days upon arrival.

*A specific note regarding travellers from France to a country outside of the EU: they must provide a certificate of travel with overriding reasons (family, health, or professional) to the authorities when they leave the country. Regarding travel to an EU country: it is not recommended for the moment.*

## FOOTNOTES:

1 See "Informations Coronavirus - Covid-19" at: <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/le-ministere-et-son-reseau/actualites-du-ministere/informations-coronavirus-covid-19/> .

2 European Area: European Union, Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, and The Vatican.

3 For the website of the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministère de l'Intérieur*), see <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/L-actu-du-Ministere/Certificate-of-international-travel> .

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*\* Please note the KPMG International member firm in the United States does not provide immigration or labour law services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.*

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

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