



Coronavirus: Commission proposes an updated framework for travel from outside the EU, prioritising vaccinated travellers, with strong safeguards

Brussels, 25 November 2021

The Commission is [proposing](#) today to update the Council recommendation on non-essential travel from outside the EU to simplify the framework and reflect recent developments. Priority will be given to vaccinated travellers. Member States should reopen systematically to those vaccinated with vaccines having completed the WHO emergency use listing process, in addition to reopening to those vaccinated with EU-approved vaccines as is the case today. As an essential safeguard, proof of a negative PCR test will always be required for all travellers who have been vaccinated with a WHO approved vaccine which is not approved by the European Medicines Agency, and for recovered travellers. The updates also introduce a time limit of 9 months for the acceptance of vaccination certificates after the primary vaccination series. This takes into account the guidance of ECDC regarding the administration of booster doses as of 6 months after completion of the primary vaccination series and provides for an additional period of 3 months to ensure that national vaccination campaigns can adjust and people can have access to the administration of boosters. The updates also include acceptance of vaccination certificates issued after an additional ("booster") dose. In addition, considering the increasing vaccination uptake worldwide, the Commission proposes to discontinue the list of countries from where all travellers are allowed regardless of vaccination status, as of 1 March next year. This proposal will now be considered by the Council.

In parallel, the Commission is also [proposing](#) today updates to the Council recommendation on free movement within the EU.

Further reopening to vaccinated and recovered travellers, subject to strong safeguards

Member States should continue welcoming travellers vaccinated with EU-approved vaccines. They should similarly as of 10 January 2022 **reopen to all those vaccinated with vaccines having completed the WHO emergency use listing process** (they are free to choose whether to accept such WHO vaccines under the current rules). This update will ensure simpler and more coherent rules across the EU, making it easier for vaccinated travellers to plan their trip.

Those who **recovered from COVID-19** within 180 days before their trip and have either an EU Digital COVID Certificate or a certificate deemed equivalent should also be able to travel to the EU as of 10 January 2022.

This comes with strong safeguards: travellers who have been vaccinated with a WHO approved vaccine which is not approved by the European Medicines Agency and recovered travellers should systematically show **proof of a negative PCR test** taken before departure. This will ensure that the reopening takes place safely, considering that the virus can sometimes break through immunity.

In addition, **all vaccinated travellers should have either completed their primary vaccination series less than 9 months ago or received an additional dose**. This would also apply as of 10 January 2022. The 9-month acceptance period takes into account the guidance of the [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#) (ECDC) on the administration of booster doses as of 6 months, and provides for an additional period of 3 months to ensure that national vaccination campaigns can adjust and people can have access to boosters.

Member States should accept non-EU vaccination and recovery certificates deemed equivalent to the EU Digital COVID Certificate. For countries where no such equivalence is in place, Member States can continue accepting, under their own national law, proof of testing and vaccination issued by non-EU countries, taking into account the need to be able to verify their authenticity, validity and integrity.

Lastly, the revised rules clarify that **children between 6 and 17** should be able to travel to the EU with a negative PCR test done before departure even if they are not vaccinated. Member States could require additional testing after arrival, quarantine or self-isolation. Test and vaccination are not required for children under 6.

Updated thresholds for lifting restrictions

Non-essential travel regardless of individual vaccination status is currently permitted from just over 20 countries with a good epidemiological situation. This list is decided by the Council on the basis of epidemiological criteria contained in the Council recommendation. The Commission is proposing to amend some of the current thresholds for including countries on the list as of 10 January 2022, and pending the application of the new and streamlined framework:

- **Small increase in the threshold of the 14-day cumulative COVID-19 case notification rate** (i.e. the total number of newly notified COVID-19 cases per 100 000 population) from 75 to 100. This means more countries could qualify for inclusion on the list. The adapted threshold would remain considerably below the current EU average, which is over 470.
- **Increase in the weekly testing rate** (i.e. the number of tests for COVID-19 infection per 100 000 population) **from 300 to 600**. This reflects the general increase in testing capacities and will help improve the reliability of data. The adapted threshold would also be below the current EU average, which stands above 5,000.

A streamlined approach as of 1 March 2022

In light of expected progress in vaccination campaigns worldwide, the Commission proposes a streamlined approach as of 1 March 2022, fully dependent on the status of the traveller, and not on the country of departure: Member States should allow in only **vaccinated, recovered or essential travellers**. The **list of countries in a sufficiently good epidemiological situation** from where all travel should be possible should be **discontinued**.

Frequent updates to the list have made it difficult for travellers to plan their journeys. The new rules will provide greater clarity and visibility for travellers and will make the system more workable. With the increasing vaccination uptake worldwide, it also makes sense to lift travel restrictions based on a person's status rather than based on the country they are coming from. This change would only take place as of 1 March 2022 to give non-EU countries the time to further increase their vaccination rates. It would also be dependent on a prior assessment of the vaccination situation outside the EU.

Background

EU Member States have agreed a common approach to travel to the European Union during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is set out in a Council recommendation. Under this approach, Member States have over the last months progressively reopened to vaccinated travellers. In addition to this, the Council also maintains and regularly updates a list of countries in a sufficiently good epidemiological situation from where all travel should be possible, regardless of vaccination status. Those who have an essential reason to come to Europe should also be able to travel. The categories of travellers with an essential function or need are listed in the Council recommendation (Annex II). EU citizens and long-term residents as well as their family members should be allowed to enter the EU.

The Council recommendation also includes an 'emergency brake' mechanism, allowing Member States to act quickly and in a coordinated manner to limit the risk of coronavirus variants entering the EU.

The Council recommendation covers all Member States (except Ireland), as well as the 4 non-EU states that have joined the Schengen area: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. For the purpose of the travel restriction, these countries are covered in a similar way as the Member States.

In its [conclusions](#) of 21-22 October 2021, the European Council called for further coordination to facilitate travel into the EU as well as free movement within the EU in light of the development of the epidemiological situation; and asked for a revision of the relevant Council recommendations.

The latest information on travel rules as communicated by Member States are available on the [Re-open EU website](#).

Next steps

It is now for the Council to consider this proposal. A first discussion is scheduled at a meeting of the Council's Integrated Political Crisis Response taking place this afternoon.

Once the proposal is adopted by the Council, it will be for Member States to implement the measures set out in the recommendation.

For More Information

[Proposal](#) for an amended Council recommendation on travel from outside the EU

[Factsheet](#) - Travel and health measures in the EU

Press contacts:

[Adalbert JAHNZ](#) (+ 32 2 295 31 56)

[Laura BERARD](#) (+32 2 295 57 21)

[Ciara BOTTOMLEY](#) (+32 2 296 99 71)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)