

Vaccines and Digital Solutions to Ease Travel Restrictions

Madrid, Spain, 5 July 2021 - *The global vaccination rollout and increased adoption of digital solutions for safe travel should lead to a rise in international mobility over the weeks and months ahead, the latest data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) indicates.*

According to the newest edition of the Travel Restrictions Report from the United Nations specialized agency for tourism, as of 1 June, 29% of all destinations worldwide have their borders completely closed to international tourism. Of these, more than half have been completely closed to tourists for since May 2020 or longer, with the majority of these belonging to the Small Island Development States of Asia and the Pacific. In comparison, just three destinations (Albania, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic) are completely open to tourists, with no restrictions now in place.

Evidence-based measures and cooperation

One in three (34%) of all destinations are **partially closed**, and **36%** request a negative COVID-19 test result upon arrival, in some cases in combination with a requirement to quarantine. The data confirms the trend towards destinations adopting more nuanced, **evidence-and-risk-based approaches to restrictions** on travel, particularly in light of the evolving epidemiological situation and the emergence of new variants of the virus. Indeed, 42% of all destinations have introduced specific restrictions for visitors from destinations with variants of concern ranging from the suspension of flights and closing of borders to compulsory quarantine.

Additionally, since most of those destinations with the strictest measures have some of the lowest rates of vaccination, the data also indicates a **link between vaccination speed and easing of restrictions**. In comparison, those destinations that have higher rates of vaccination and where countries are able to work together on **harmonized rules and protocols** such as those being employed in the Schengen area of the European Union, are better-placed to allow tourism to slowly return.

“Governments are instrumental for the restart and recovery of tourism through collaboration, use of data and digital solutions”, says UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili.

Different paces

Regional differences with regards to travel restrictions remain. **70%** of all destinations in **Asia and the Pacific** are completely closed, compared with just **13% in Europe**, as well as **20% in the Americas, 19% in Africa and 31% in the Middle East**.

Assessing current requirements for **vaccinated passengers**, 17% of all destinations worldwide specifically mention vaccinated passengers in their regulations. In most cases, travel restrictions continue to apply to fully vaccinated passengers (who have received two doses of an approved vaccine), though in others, all restrictions are lifted. UNWTO expects that this will significantly evolve over the coming weeks.

The report indicates that the restart of global tourism will remain muted so long as governments continue to advise caution. Four of the 10 top source markets keep advising their citizens against non-essential travel abroad (these four generated 25% of all international arrivals in 2018).

Related Links:

[UNWTO Report: 10th Report on Travel Restrictions](#)

[UNWTO: COVID-19 Travel Related Restrictions](#)