

Global Immigration: Weekly round-up of COVID-19 updates

24 May 2021

In brief

The **European Council** updated its recommendation on the gradual lifting of the temporary restrictions on non-essential travel into the EU from third countries. On 20 May 2021, the Council confirmed that Member States should in principle lift restrictions on non-essential travel for third country travellers who have received the last recommended dose of an EMA approved vaccine at least 14 days before arrival.

In addition, the recommendation is for Member States to consider reciprocity on a case-by-case, where restrictions are lifted. Once the EU digital green certificate regulation is adopted (likely June 2021), it will provide the basis for treating third country vaccination certificates equivalent to digital green certificates. Until then, Member States should accept third country certificates containing a minimum data set in order to authenticate validity.

Where the epidemiological situation of a third country/region worsens, Member States should adopt an emergency brake mechanism and reimplement temporary travel restrictions. However, this emergency brake should not be applied to EU citizens or residents. EU Member States can decide if and how they adopt the Council's recommendations and a country-specific assessment of entry requirements is still advised.

In other global news, the much-anticipated quarantine-free air travel bubble between **Singapore** and **Hong Kong**, set to open on 26 May 2021, has been suspended for a second time due to the increase in infections in Singapore. The air travel bubble was initially targeting a November 2020 rollout. However, it was suspended the first time due to a rise in infection rates in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong government has said that a further announcement on the air travel bubble would be made on or around 13 June 2021.

In detail

APAC

Brunei – Suspension of the Reciprocal Green Lane arrangement and update to entry restrictions for some nationals

From 20 May 2021, the Reciprocal Green Lane (RGL) arrangement with Singapore has been suspended. Travellers from Singapore are required to undergo self-isolation at a designated hotel facility. The period of quarantine will be determined by the Ministry of Health.

On 17 May 2021, foreign nationals who have been in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan or Sri Lanka are not permitted entry. This entry ban includes those who may have already obtained pre-entry approval to enter Brunei. This restriction follows the entry ban on travellers from India, effective 27 April 2021.

There also exists an exit restriction in Brunei for all travellers looking to travel to the Indian subcontinent. There are limited exemptions for diplomatic passport holders, armed forces and foreign nationals who have revoked or cancelled employment or dependent passes.

The takeaway – *Brunei Darussalam is increasing restrictions in order to mitigate the risk of community transmission of variants of concern from the subcontinent. Travellers looking to enter Brunei from Singapore should ensure they are aware of the suspension to the RGL and meet the pre-departure and on-arrival COVID-19 testing and quarantine requirements.*

Taiwan – Entry suspended for most foreign nationals

From 19 May to 18 June 2021 (subject to extension), only foreign nationals holding a valid Alien Resident Certificate (ARC) will be permitted entry. There are limited exemptions beyond this for Hong Kong/Macau Chinese nationals holding a valid TRC or Gold Card.

In addition, visa applications at TECO (the Taiwan overseas offices) are suspended during this period. Foreign nationals who have obtained a visa are advised to wait until after 18 June 2021 to enter, provided the visa remains valid for travel.

The takeaway – *Taiwan has enhanced its entry restrictions in order to mitigate the risk of infection. Foreign nationals with upcoming travel to Taiwan will be required to postpone, unless they hold a valid ARC or meet one of the other very limited exemptions. All eligible arrivals must continue to meet all pre-departure and on-arrival COVID-19 and quarantine measures.*

Japan – Updated entry restrictions for travellers from the Indian subcontinent

From 20 May 2021, all foreign nationals who hold residence status, but who have been in Bangladesh, the Maldives or Sri Lanka in the 14 days before the application for landing are subject to an entry ban. There are limited exemptions for those who hold Permanent Residence status, spouse of child of a Japanese national or resident, who departed Japan by 20 May with an intention to return to Japan. This will be considered under special exceptional circumstances (this exemption does not apply to those who have left Japan for these countries on or after 20 May 2021).

This entry ban follows a similar entry ban, effective 14 May 2021, on all foreign nationals with residence status who have been in India, Nepal and Pakistan in the 14 days before their application for landing. Similar exemptions apply as above.

The takeaway – *Japan has enhanced entry restrictions in order to prevent the spread of community transmission of variants of concern. Eligible travellers must ensure they continue to comply with all pre-departure and on-arrival COVID-19 testing and quarantine requirements.*

Singapore – Enhanced restrictions for travellers with a recent travel history to Taiwan

From 16 May 2021, Singapore citizens and permanent residents who have a recent travel history (last 21 days) to Taiwan will be required to spend 14 days in a dedicated Stay Home Notice (SHN) facility, followed by a further seven-day SHN at their place of residence. Additional COVID-19 PCR tests will be carried out on-arrival, on Day 14 and on Day 21 of their SHN period.

Short-term travellers holding an Air Travel Pass (ATP) with a travel history to Taiwan in the last 21 days will not be permitted entry to Singapore.

Pass holders with a recent travel history to Taiwan (21 days before arrival) will need to present a negative COVID-19 PCR test result taken within 72 hours before departure, take an on-arrival COVID-19 test, serve a 21 day SHN and undergo two COVID-19 tests during the SHN period.

The takeaway – *Singapore continues to review its restrictions in response to the global epidemiological position of the virus. As Taiwan has recently reported an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases, Singapore has increased restrictions. Those who are eligible to travel to Singapore, but have a recent travel history with Taiwan should ensure they meet all additional COVID-19 testing and SHN requirements.*

Europe

Russia – Lifting of some flight suspensions

From 25 May 2021, the suspension of flights between Russia and Iceland, Malta, Mexico, Portugal and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be lifted. In addition, additional flights will resume with South Korea, Finland and Japan.

The takeaway – *The Russian anti-Coronavirus crisis centre is monitoring the global epidemiological situation with the virus and has approved to resume and increase certain flights (as above). Travellers should continue to ensure they meet all entry requirements and COVID-19 testing and quarantine measures in place.*

Africa

Angola – Travel ban with India and Brazil extended

The Angolan authorities have extended the entry ban for travellers arriving from Brazil and India until 8 June 2021 (subject to further extension). Exemptions exist for Angolan citizens and residents.

The takeaway – *Similar to other countries in the region, Angola has implemented and extended entry restrictions on travellers from India and Brazil, countries with reports of variants of concern. Travellers arriving from these countries should ensure that they meet the exemption as well as all pre-departure and on-arrival COVID-19 testing and quarantine requirements.*

Ghana – Updated entry and exit requirements

Eligible arrivals to Ghana are now subject to additional COVID-19 measures. All eligible arrivals must continue to meet the pre-departure COVID-19 testing requirement and are subject to an on-arrival COVID-19 test at the airport. Those who receive a negative test result on-arrival, will be required to self-isolate at home for ten days. There are additional COVID-19 testing requirements, during the self-isolation period, for eligible arrivals from higher risk countries (with additional tests being taken on Day 3 and at the cost of the traveller).

In addition, all eligible arrivals must ensure they have created an account via the [Africa CDC website](#).

For those travelling out of Ghana, they will require a COVID-19 PCR test result that contains the Trusted Travel or Biomars code.

The takeaway – *Ghana has enhanced measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Those with up-coming travel in or out of Ghana should ensure they are aware of all additional measures.*

Zimbabwe – Update to entry and exit restrictions

All eligible arrivals from India will be subject to additional COVID-19 tests on arrival and be required to quarantine at a government designated quarantine facility, at their own cost.

All other eligible arrivals must continue to meet pre-departure and on-arrival COVID-19 testing requirements. Citizens and residents who are not symptomatic can home-quarantine. All other travellers will be required to quarantine in a government designated facility.

On exit from Zimbabwe, all travelers must obtain a negative COVID-19 certificate issued within 72 hours of departure.

The takeaway – *Zimbabwe has updated some of its entry restrictions for travellers. Eligible arrivals should be aware of the updated requirements. Returning residents and citizens should also ensure they follow all home self-isolation guidelines.*

Let's talk

For a deeper discussion of how this impacts your business, please contact your Global Mobility Services engagement team or one of the following professionals:

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