

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

15 March 2021

In brief

Below is a round-up of the most significant global updates on COVID-19 travel restrictions, travel corridors and quarantine measures as at 15 March 2021.

In detail

Global – Vaccination and Health Passport update

France announced the piloting of its own ‘vaccine passport’, an initiative separate from the EU’s ‘green pass’ (further details below). Interestingly, France had recently shown reluctance in supporting a globally aligned – and strictly implemented – ‘vaccination passport’ initiative, given the concerns with linking free movement to vaccinations. Providing greater options to travel to only those who are vaccinated may be challenged as a human rights violation of those who do not have access to the vaccine, given their country of citizenship and/or residence. We expect to hear more from France’s pilot and how it will be applied on a wider scale, over the coming month.

Thailand announced it is considering issuing and recognising vaccine certificates to help facilitate travel in and out of the country – a step signally the country’s intention to reopen their borders more widely to tourists, over the coming months. Thailand’s Health Minister also announced there were intentions to reduce quarantine for vaccinated foreign national visitors to seven days (from 14), a proposal that requires approval by the national committee, who will meet in late March 2021. In addition, Thailand is exploring further adjustments to its quarantine rules, particularly if a global standard for ‘vaccine passports’ is reached.

China and Thailand are also discussing bilateral electronic vaccine passports to form a travel bubble to support respective economic growth and tourism. Further considerations around easing Thailand’s entry and quarantine restrictions and further travel bubbles is expected to take place by April 2021.

PwC continues to monitor the updates around vaccination and health passports – and the impact on international travel, closely and updates are being recorded on the [PwC COVID-19 dashboard](#).

Americas

Brazil – Extension of immigration concession

The Brazilian authorities have confirmed that they have extended the deadline foreign nationals can seek to regularise their immigration status, where their documents expired, due to COVID-19, after 16 March 2020. The concession has been extended to 16 September 2021.

Foreign nationals seeking to utilise the concession must be in Brazil and seek to regularise their stay before 16 September 2021. Where a foreign national is still unable to leave Brazil during the period of extended stay, because of COVID-19 travel restrictions, they may potentially be able to seek an extension (although this is subject to the discretion and review of immigration control).

The takeaway – *Foreign nationals' documents that were issued by the Federal Police, including the Registro Nacional Migratorio (RNM) cards, expiring on or after 16 March 2020 will remain valid to 16 September 2021. This concession applies in specific circumstances and it is recommended that a PwC assessment is carried out to confirm eligibility requirements are met. As an example, there is a residency requirement, meaning that only foreign nationals who have resided in Brazil and who plan to regularise their status before 16 September 2021, will be able to benefit from the concession. Further, if a foreign national has been overseas for more than 30 days, the concession will not apply. Please do reach out to your PwC contact for a full assessment, if required.*

Europe

Finland – Extension of entry restrictions until 17 April

Finnish authorities confirmed on 11 March 2021 that they will be extending the country's current entry restrictions until 17 April 2021.

This comes after Finland's recent announcement to ease certain entry restrictions for residents of (and coming from) Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Rwanda, demonstrating the country placing epidemiology at the centre of its decision on border restrictions. All eligible travellers entering the country should ensure that they are aware of and meet Covid-19 testing and quarantine requirements.

The takeaway – *The internal border checks and external border restrictions will continue to be in place. Finland has consistently urged for strict restrictions to be in place, recently rejecting the European Commission's recommendation to start to ease restrictions in February 2021. Given that Finland has eased restrictions for residents of countries like Australia and Singapore – countries that have demonstrated a better control of the virus – highlights the Finnish government approach to border restrictions, and the importance placed on responding to the changeable global epidemiological situation.*

France – Eases restrictions on seven non-EU countries and commences pilot of 'vaccine passports'

France has eased several restrictions in place on travel to/from seven non-EU countries, namely: Australia, South Korea, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore and the UK. Arrivals from these countries no longer need to evidence that their purpose of travel is for 'essential and compelling reasons', a requirement re-implemented following evidence of new variants of COVID-19 earlier in the year. Travellers from these countries must continue to follow all other immigration, entry, pre-departure testing and quarantine requirements, as applicable.

The French Transport Minister announced on 11 March 2021, that French authorities will be piloting a 'vaccine passport' scheme for individuals travelling to France with carrier Air France. The pilot will be limited in scope initially, with phase one only applying to passengers on specific Air France routes from French overseas territories of Guadeloupe and Martinique. The scheme will not impact other travellers from across the EU, nor will it alter any of the currently applied entry restrictions, such as the ban on non-essential travel from outside the EU. All travellers will also continue to need to follow all pre-departure Covid-19 testing and registration requirements. The French 'vaccine passport' pilot takes a similar approach to the EU's 'green pass', which is being piloted by several countries across the bloc, however France's scheme remains separate to that of the EU.

The takeaway – France continues to respond to the global cases of Covid-19 (and evidence of new variants) meaning that requirements continue to be reviewed and updated regularly. Travellers are reminded to check the requirements ahead of travel, given the situation remains changeable.

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:

Global Mobility Services – United Kingdom

Sharan Kundi, *Partner*
sharan.kundi@pwc.com

Raj Mann, *Senior Manager*
raj.x.mann@pwc.com

Global Mobility Services – Global

Leo Palazzuoli, *Global Leader*
leo.palazzuoli@pwc.com

Alex Buchanan, *Global Immigration Network Driver*
alexandra.b.buchanan@pwc.com

Meet the [Global Mobility Services global leadership team](#)

Access the [PwC COVID-19 Mobility dashboard](#) for a global round-up of all currently announced travel restrictions and quarantine measures