



COVID – 19 RELATED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS A GLOBAL REVIEW FOR TOURISM

THIRD REPORT AS OF 8 MAY 2020





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Prepared by
UNWTO
Sustainable Development of Tourism Department



Acknowledgments

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Table of Contents

1. Key Facts.....	2
2. Introduction.....	3
3. Adjusted methodology for more detailed information on travel restrictions.....	4
4. Overview on COVID-19 related Travel Restrictions as of 27 April 2020.....	5
4.1 Volume and severity of travel restrictions.....	5
4.2 Evolution of travel restrictions over time.....	5
4.3 Categories of travel restrictions affecting international tourists.....	6
4.4 Regional analysis of travel restrictions.....	7
4.5 Lifting of travel restrictions.....	8
Annex 1 Overview on the different categories and applying destinations as of 27 April 2020	9
Annex 2 Overview on COVID-19 and pandemic measures, including travel restrictions.....	11

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Destinations with complete closure of borders to international tourism as of 27 April 2020	5
Figure 2 Number of confirmed cases and destinations with COVID-19-related travel restrictions	6
Figure 3 Category of travel restrictions by destination with COVID-19 travel restrictions	7
Figure 4 Regional breakdown of travel restrictions as of 27 April 2020	8

1. Key Facts

- **100% of destinations worldwide** continue to have COVID-19 related travel restrictions in place.
- **25% of all destinations worldwide** have travel restrictions in place for at least a **3-month period** and about **40% for at least a 2-month period**.
- There are currently **156 destinations worldwide** that have **completely closed** their borders **for international tourism**.
- From a regional point of view, the destinations that have completely closed their border represent:
 - 57% of destinations in Africa
 - 80% of destinations in the Americas
 - 70% of destinations in Asia and the Pacific
 - 83% of destinations in Europe
 - 62% of destinations in the Middle East
- The following categories of COVID-19 related travel restrictions are being applied across destinations worldwide (total destinations = 217):
 - **Complete or partial closure of borders:** 166 destinations (76%) have completely or partially closed borders:
 - Out of these, **94% (156 destinations)** have **completely closed** borders for international tourists including air, sea and land border. Some exemptions are usually made for nationals, residents, commuters, diplomats and for essential travel purposes.
 - The remaining **6% (10 destinations)** have **partially closed** borders, resulting in a significant reduction of the entry points to access their destinations.

Figure A – Type of travel restriction by destination with COVID-19 travel restrictions



Source: Data compiled by UNWTO as of 27 April 2020¹.

¹ The maps elaborated by UNWTO are for reference only and do not imply any judgement on the legal status of any territory, or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

2. Introduction

- **Suspension of flights:**
26 destinations (12%) have suspended completely or partially international flights.
- **Destination-specific travel restriction:**
9 destinations (4%) are implementing the closing of borders in a more differentiated manner by banning the entry for passengers from specific countries of origin.
- **Different measures:**
The remaining 16 destinations (8%) are applying different measures, such as quarantine or self-isolation for 14 days, visa measures, or requesting a medical certificate upon arrival.
- **As of 27 April 2020, no destination has lifted or eased a travel restriction.**

This is the third issue of a series of reports on COVID-19 Related Travel Restrictions – A Global Review for Tourism, aimed at providing an overview and analysis on the implementation of travel restrictions by governments as one of the means to address the global health crisis of COVID-19.

These reports are updated on a regular basis to support mitigation and recovery efforts of the tourism sector, providing a global overview of the measures in place and analysing them from a tourism perspective. With a view to supporting the responsible and successful implementation of exit strategies through which countries are planning the gradual recovery of their tourism sector, the reports also aim at identifying critical issues and best practices of COVID-19 related travel measures and their implications on tourism.

The monitoring of travel restrictions is carried out from the standpoint of travel facilitation for tourism purposes (i.e. focusing on temporary visitors/tourists) and does not take into account measures that are directed to residents, diplomats and other categories of travellers. In addition, these reports do not consider travel advisories issued by governments for their respective citizens/residents.

This work is carried out by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Sustainable Development of Tourism Department (SDT) that, *inter alia*, monitors visa policies around the world since 2008 and produces the Visa Openness Reports, which focus on entry requirements for tourism purposes.²

² World Tourism Organization, Travel Facilitation reports, available online at: www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/travel-facilitation.

3. Adjusted methodology for more detailed information on travel restrictions

All reports in this series are based on desk research carried out since the end of January 2020. They contain the results of monitoring all travel restrictions that have been implemented during this period.³

Official websites that provide such information, in particular the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Travel Centre⁴, the World Health Organization (WHO) Extranet, the International SOS travel restrictions data⁵ and the online platform of the World Food Programme (WFP) on global travel restrictions⁶, are reviewed on a regular basis.

For the first two reports in this series, the IATA Travel Centre was the main source of information and the other databases were consulted for destinations that were not featured on the IATA website. For this third report, in order to gain a better understanding and more detailed insights, UNWTO analysed further the measures implemented by destinations, looking especially into the distinction between complete and partial closure of borders.

In addition, clarifications were sought in the category of suspension of flights. For this purpose the collected information was revalidated, in order to understand whether in the case of suspension of flights, international tourists could still enter the destination by crossing a land or sea border.

The category of visa measures was also further redefined, in order to better assess if changes of visa policies would be eventually restricting tourists from entering a destination.

To ensure the accuracy of the exercise, both information from IATA and SOS International

were collected and compared and subsequently validated. Where necessary, the WFP Travel Platform and governmental websites were consulted. This additional step allowed to obtain more detailed information for each destination and a more comprehensive understanding on the measures currently in place which are of relevance for international tourism.

The data reported in this third edition is based on this adjusted methodology.

³ Disclaimer about Information Accuracy: Although every effort has been made to provide complete and accurate information, UNWTO cannot make warranties as to the accuracy of content deriving from the consulted websites. If inaccuracies are observed, please revert to sdt@unwto.org. As changes in travel restrictions are occurring very fast, changes after the time of this publication may impact on the accuracy of the information.

⁴ IATA Travel Centre, available online at: <https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/>.

⁵ International SOS is a medical and travel security services company, for more info on Travel restrictions, flight operations and screening see: <https://pandemic.internationalsos.com/2019-ncov/ncov-travel-restrictions-flight-operations-and-screening>.

⁶ World Travel Restrictions - UN World Food Programme, available online at: <https://unwfp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/db5b5df309ac4f10bfd36145a6f8880e>.

4. Overview on COVID-19 related Travel Restrictions as of 27 April 2020

4.1 Volume and severity of travel restrictions

For the first time in history, all destinations worldwide (217 destinations) have imposed travel restrictions, out of which 72% (156 destinations) have completely closed their borders for international tourism (Figure 1).

25% of all destinations worldwide (more than 50) are having travel restrictions in place for at least 3 months, and 40% (more than 80 destinations) for at least 2 months.

While some destinations have started to lift national lockdown and quarantine measures, no destination has yet lifted or eased its international travel restrictions.

4.2 Evolution of travel restrictions over time

With the spread of COVID-19 cases in an increasing number of countries, the number of travel restrictions has also grown (Figure 2). When on 30 January 2020 the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a Public Health Emergency of

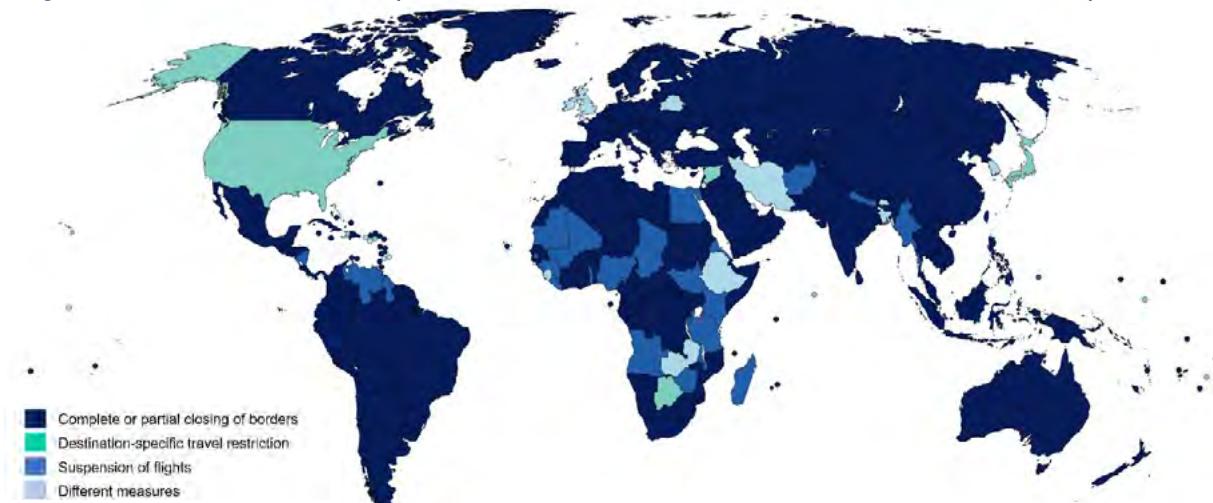
International Concern (PHEIC), 11 destinations had already implemented travel restrictions directed at travellers coming from China and prohibiting their entry into the destination. One week later, on 7 February 2020, this number had grown to 52 destinations. By then, 24 destinations worldwide had reported confirmed cases of COVID-19.

On 11 March 2020, when WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic, a total of 85 destinations had travel restrictions in place. After the declaration of the pandemic, a new wave of restricting entry into destinations was triggered, this time mainly in the European region. As a result, between 9 and 16 March 2020, an additional 38 destinations introduced travel restrictions, out of which 20 were from Europe, bringing the total to 119 destinations worldwide.

Two weeks after the declaration of the PHEIC, the number of destinations with restrictions more than doubled, from 85 to 181 destinations.

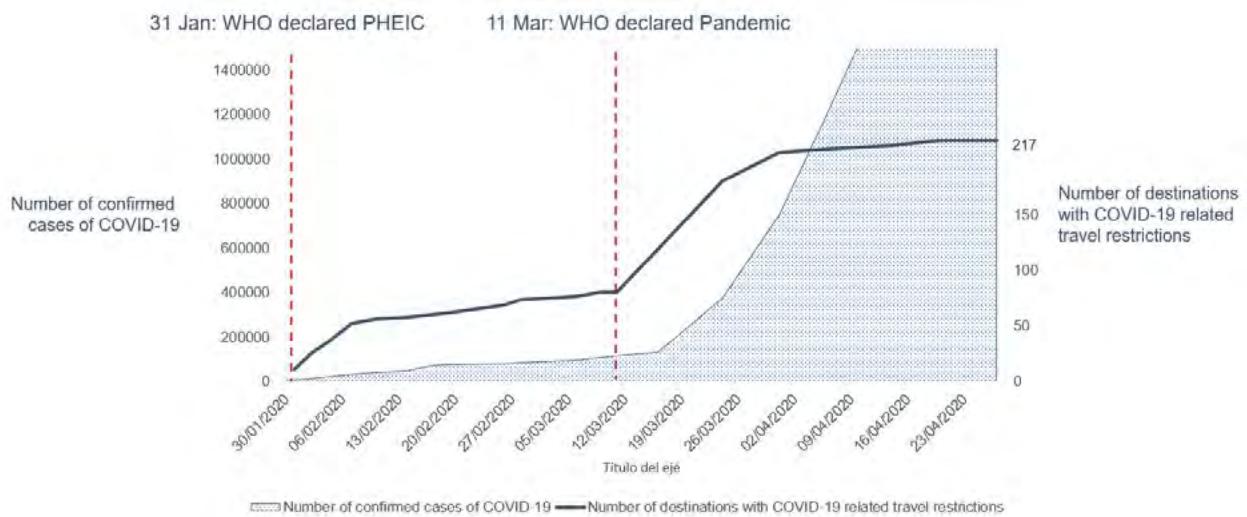
From 24 March to 20 April 2020, all remaining destinations introduced travel restrictions bringing the total to 217 destinations, representing 100% of destinations worldwide.

Figure 1 - Destinations with complete closure of borders to international tourism as of 27 April 2020



Source: Data compiled by UNWTO as of 27 April 2020.

Figure 2 - Number of confirmed cases and destinations with COVID-19-related travel restrictions



Source: Data compiled by UNWTO as of 27 April 2020.

For more than two weeks 100% of all destinations worldwide are having currently travel restrictions in place.

4.3 Categories of travel restrictions affecting international tourists

At the beginning of the crisis two main categories of travel restrictions were observed, one directed at passengers coming from a country that had confirmed COVID-19 cases (destination-specific travel restriction) and the other one being the restrictions of visa.

Over time additional measures were observed, such as the request for medical certificates upon arrival at a destination or the request for self-isolation or quarantine.

Once WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic, two new, more extreme categories of travel restrictions started to be applied, namely the complete and partial closure of borders and suspension of flights by governments.

These two categories are, at the current date, used by the majority of destinations worldwide (88%).

The following categories of COVID-19 related travel restrictions are being applied across destinations worldwide (total destinations = 217):

- Complete or partial closure of borders:

166 destinations (76%) have completely or partially closed borders - “Passengers are not allowed to enter”.

- Out of these, **94% (156) have completely closed borders** for international tourists including air, sea and land border. Some exemptions are usually made, *inter alia*, for nationals, residents, commuters, diplomats and for any essential travel reasons.
- The remaining **6% (10 destinations) have partially closed borders**, resulting in a significant reduction of the entry points to access their destinations.

Figure 3 - Category of travel restrictions by destination with COVID-19 travel restrictions

Source: Data compiled by UNWTO as of 27 April 2020.

- **Suspension of flights:**

26 destinations (12%) have suspended completely or partially international flights - “All flights are suspended”.

- **Destination-wide travel restriction:**

9 destinations (4%) are implementing the closing of borders in a more differentiated manner by banning the entry for passengers from specific countries of origin - “Passengers who have transited or been in x are not allowed to enter”.

- **Different measures:**

The remaining 16 destinations (8%) are applying different measures, such as quarantine or self-isolation for 14 days, visa measures, or requesting a medical certificate upon arrival.

4.4 Regional analysis of travel restrictions

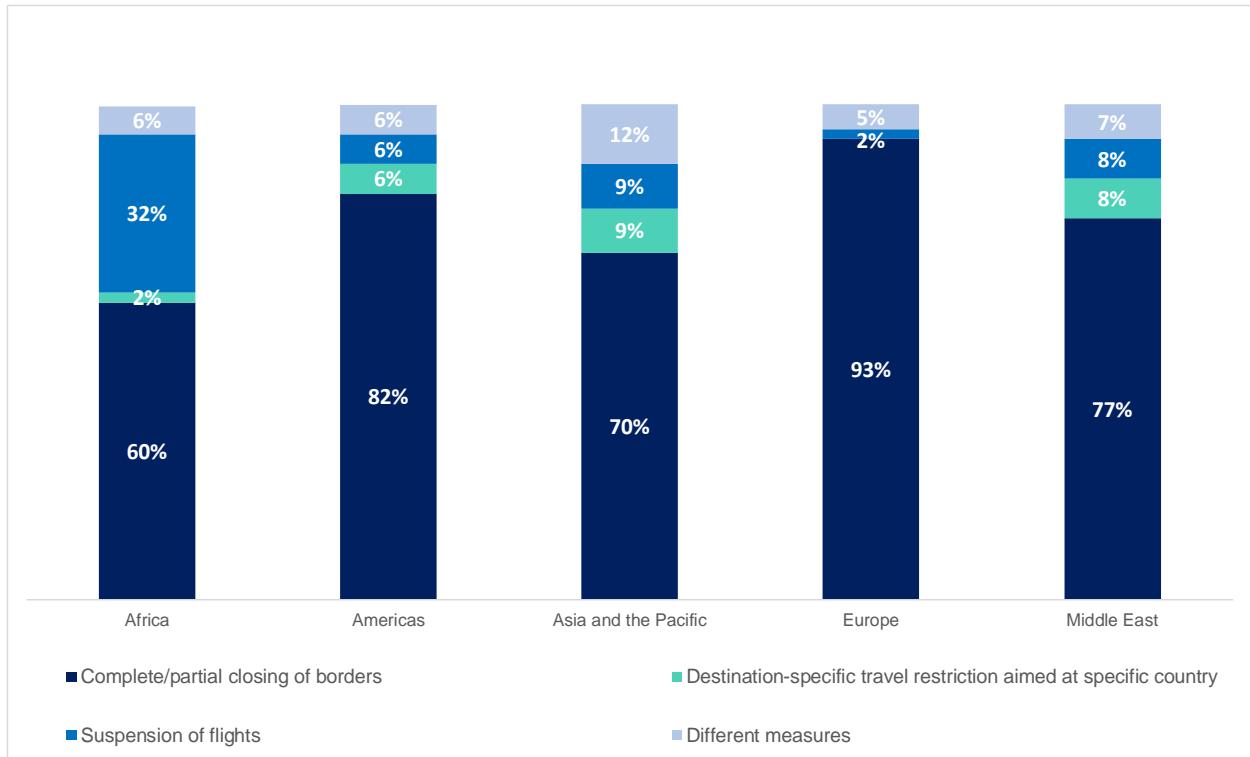
In all regions the measure of applying complete or partial closure of borders prevails. This is the most common measure in Europe (93%), Americas (82%), Middle East (77%), Asia and the Pacific (70%), and Africa (60%) (Figure 4).

The measure of suspension of flights is by far the second most used one in Africa (32%), Asia and the Pacific (9%), the Middle East (8%), Americas (6%), and Europe (2%).

Destination-specific travel restrictions are used only by few destinations, most of them in Asia and the Pacific (9%), the Middle East (8%), Americas (6%) and Africa (2%). In Europe, no destination has opted for this particular measure.

Different measures like suspension of visa, requesting medical certificates or self-quarantine upon arrival are used most in Asia and the Pacific (12%), while in the other regions they are little used (5-7%).

Figure 4 - Regional breakdown of travel restrictions as of 27 April 2020



Source: Data compiled by UNWTO as of 27 April 2020.

4.5 Lifting of travel restrictions

As of 27 April 2020, no destination has lifted a travel restriction introduced in the context of COVID-19.

Annex 1

Overview on the different categories and applying destinations as of 27 April 2020⁷

Complete or partial closing of borders

Applied by 166 destinations (76% of all destinations worldwide).

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Aruba, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bermuda, Bolivia, Bonaire, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cayman Islands, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros Island, Congo, Congo DR, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cote D'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Curaçao, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Fiji, Finland, France, French Guiana, French Polynesia, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guinea Bissau, Honduras, Hong Kong SAR, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Korea DPR, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Martinique, Mauritius, Mexico, Federated States of Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Montserrat, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Reunion, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saba, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri

Lanka, St. Eustatius, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan Province of China, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Turks and Caicos, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Virgin Islands British, Yemen.

Suspension of flights- partially or completely

Applied by 26 destinations (12% of all destinations worldwide).

Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea (Rep.), Guyana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Palau, Slovenia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

Destination-specific travel restrictions aimed at passengers from specific countries

Applied by 9 destinations (4% of all destinations worldwide).

Botswana, Haiti, Japan, Maldives, Nauru, Niue, St. Kitts and Nevis, Syrian Arab Republic, United States of America.

Quarantine or self-isolation related measures

Applied by 9 destinations (4% of all destinations worldwide).

Barbados, Belarus, Ethiopia, Ireland, Puerto Rico, Sierra Leone, St. Vincent and Grenadine, United Kingdom, Zambia.

⁷ Some destinations apply more than one measure, in this case the measure affecting tourists most is used for the purpose of this analysis.

Visa measures - Visa are invalidated or no longer visa exempt or visa cannot be obtained any longer upon arrival

Applied by 5 destinations (2% of all destinations worldwide).

Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Iran, Republic of Korea.

Regional (sub-national) specific travel restriction within a country - “Passengers who reside or visitors who have been in region x of a destination x in the past 14 days are not allowed to enter destination x”

Applied by 1 destination.

Macao SAR.

Medical certificate before arrival

Applied by 1 destination.

Kiribati.

Annex 2

Overview on COVID-19 and pandemic measures, including travel restrictions

On 31 December 2019, a pneumonia of unknown cause was detected first in Wuhan, China and reported to the local WHO office. Four weeks later, on 30 January 2020 the WHO declared the outbreak of this virus, initially named 2019-nCoV, a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). At that stage WHO referred to 83 cases in 18 countries⁸ and did not recommend any travel or trade restriction. In a joint statement by UNWTO and WHO released on 26 February 2020, it was indicated that “Tourism’s response needs to be measured and consistent, proportionate to the public health threat and based on local risk assessment, involving every part of the tourism value chain”⁹.

While from end of December 2019 until end of February 2020 China reported the largest amount of COVID-19 cases, by February 2020 the virus had already spread almost all over the globe. When WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic on 11 March 2020, 114 countries had reported 118,000 cases with Europe becoming the worst-affected region. As of 27 April 2020, there are worldwide reported 2,878,196 COVID-19 cases with 198,668 deaths.¹⁰

Based on the WHO Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response guidance document for governments¹¹, a variety of measures have been implemented worldwide in order to reduce the spread of the virus. These include individual measures, such as the promotion of hand and respiratory hygiene, as well as societal level measures, such as protocols related

to social distancing which include the suspension of school classes, adjusting work patterns, the reduction of unnecessary travel and overcrowding of mass transport systems as well as the development of frameworks for cancellation/restriction of mass gatherings.¹² Moreover, with regards to international travel, measures to “develop capacities for emergency public health actions at designated points of entry in accordance with International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) Annex 1 B.2.”, which include relevant control mechanisms for arriving and departing travellers, have been implemented.

Furthermore, additional provisions of the IHR¹³ have guided the introduction of measures. For instance, under Chapter III on special provisions for travellers, the treatment of suspected travellers when entering a destination is outlined, ranging from medical examination to providing the person with food and water.¹⁴ Also under IHR Article 43, it is stated that additional health measures shall be based on scientific principles, available scientific evidence and available specific guidance of WHO. In this context, the implementation of additional health measures that significantly interfere with international traffic, shall be reported to WHO within 48 hours, including the public health rationale and relevant scientific information. Significant interference means “refusal of entry or departure of international travellers, baggage, cargo, containers, conveyances, good, and the like, or their delay, for more than 24 hours”. The IHR stipulates that WHO shall share this information with other governments and request that the measure is reviewed within three months. Furthermore, WHO may request a government that implemented such measure to reconsider its application.¹⁵

⁸ World Health Organization (2020), *Statement on the second meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee regarding the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)*, 30 January 2020, available online at: [www.who.int/news-room/detail/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-\(2005\)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)](http://www.who.int/news-room/detail/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)).

⁹ World Tourism Organization, World Health Organization (2020), *Joint statement on tourism and covid-19: UNWTO and WHO call for responsibility and coordination*, 26 February 2020, available online at: https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-03/31012020%20Coronavirus_Feb_2020%20EN_3.pdf.

¹⁰ World Health Organization, *Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)*, Situation report 91, available online at: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronavirus/situation-reports/20200427-sitrep-98-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=90323472_4

¹¹ International Health Regulations (2005), Third Edition, WHO, pp. 40-42, available online at: www.who.int/iris/publications/9789241580496/en.

¹² International Health Regulations (2005).

¹³ International Health Regulations (2005).

¹⁴ International Health Regulations (2005), pp. 23-24

¹⁵ International Health Regulations (2005), pp. 29.

