

Germany to lift travel warning for Europe from June 15

June 3 2020



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Germany will lift a blanket travel warning for European nations from June 15, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said Wednesday, as the continent further eases restrictions imposed to contain the coronavirus.

The Dutch government announced it will ease warnings against non-essential foreign [travel](#) from the same date.

And Belgium said its borders will reopen to travellers from the rest of the European Union, Britain and members of Europe's passport-free travel Schengen zone on June 15.

Dutch prime minister Mark Rutte said with summer holidays arriving, a dozen European countries would no longer advise against foreign travel.

The Netherlands would urge travellers to "pay attention to safety risks", he told a press conference.

He said he hoped Spain and France would accept foreign tourists from July 5.

Germany introduced an unprecedented [warning](#) against all foreign travel in mid-March. But with new infections sharply down, the government is looking for ways to restart the economy.

"We have decided today that the travel warning for the named circle of countries will not be continued but replaced by travel advice," Maas said, referring to EU nations, other Schengen countries and Britain.

The advice could still include warnings against travel to certain countries, such as Norway and Spain, which still have their own entry restrictions in place.

Germany will be watching contagion data very carefully, Maas added, saying that warnings could be reintroduced if new infections were to reach 50 per 100,000 people in a week in the country concerned.

Germany reported 342 new cases of the [coronavirus](#) on

Wednesday—down from more than 6,000 a day at the height of new infections in March.

Phased restart

The EU set out plans in May for a phased restart of travel this summer, with [border controls](#) eventually lifted and measures to minimise the risks of infection, like wearing face masks on shared transport.

Some countries have already started reopening their borders in a bid to revive the embattled tourism industry.

Italy reopened to travellers from Europe on Wednesday, and Austria is lifting restrictions in mid-June with Germany, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.

German tour operator TUI said it would resume flights to holiday destinations, with the first service scheduled for Portugal on June 17, according to news site Business Insider (BI).

However, Maas continued to urge caution.

"I know that this decision raises great hope and expectations but I want to say again: travel warnings are not travel bans, and travel advice is not an invitation to travel," Maas said.

He also warned Germany would not be repeating its costly effort to rescue stranded nationals from around the world in the first weeks of the pandemic.

In Berlin, residents were divided over whether lifting the travel warning was a good idea.

"If I fly somewhere, I will be afraid about coming back again because maybe it will get worse and they will close the borders again," said Berlin resident Regina.

Germany still has a travel warning in place for Turkey, Ukraine and the Western Balkans.

The government will review this after an expected European Commission decision next week on whether to extend entry restrictions for citizens of third countries, Maas said.

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Citation: Germany to lift travel warning for Europe from June 15 (2020, June 3) retrieved 28 March 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-06-germany-europe-june.html>

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