

CORONA CAUTION: GERMANY EXTENDS TRAVEL WARNING FOR OVER 160 COUNTRIES



The federal government of Germany has extended the travel warning for tourists because of the Coronavirus pandemic for more than 160 countries outside the European Union until August 31. However, exceptions can be made for individual countries where the spread of the virus is sufficiently contained.

The assessment should take into account the development of the number of infections, the performance of the health systems, test capacities, hygiene rules, return travel options and security measures for tourists. **The cabinet made the decision last week in Berlin. The tourism industry called for differentiated travel advice instead of a general extension.**

Foreign Minister, Heiko Maas, said that the travel warning will be updated again before September. "There, and only there, where the overall package of positive pandemic development will be sufficient, it will be able to go back earlier from a travel warning to just travel advice," he said. Travel warnings to around 200 countries in the world were issued on March 17.

EU Is Safe

Last week, the federal cabinet decided to lift the travel warning for 31 European countries. These include Germany's 26 partner countries in the EU, Great Britain, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein. For 29 countries, the cancellation will take place on June 15. Meanwhile, for Spain and Norway later, because entry restrictions still apply there.

In the future, there will only be the so-called travel information for these countries. These will provide information about country-specific risks. Eventually also recommendations not to travel. This could be the case with the UK where there is still a 14-day quarantine requirement for all travelers.

For the other countries, the travel warning is initially valid until August 31. This also includes the main travel destinations for Germans, above all Turkey as the third most popular destination. The federal government justified this step with the fact that travel restrictions and quarantine regulations could be reintroduced in the countries outside the EU "without any advance notice and with immediate effect".

Because of such sudden measures, many German tourists were stranded abroad in March. 240 thousand were brought back to Germany in a week-long campaign. The federal government wants to avoid the repetition of such a scenario.

Moreover, the government also continues to strongly advise against cruises. Several cruise ships had difficulties finding a port to enter in March due to infections on board.

Mixed Responses to Measures

There have been somewhat mixed responses to these measures taken by the German government. The travel association DRV described the decision as "not proportionate" because it essentially cut

off 160 countries.

"The pandemic is subsiding in many countries around the world. Accordingly, the situation in the 160 countries to which the travel warnings relate is very different," argued DRV President Norbert Fiebig.

"Many states are implementing hygiene and security protocols. This also applies to cruises that implement safety concepts at the highest level," he added. At the same time, he pointed out that in the event of a crisis, the organizers brought package tourists back.

The managing director of the FTI Group, Ralph Schiller, criticized the government's decision "**to continue to deprive tour operators and travel agencies in Germany of a large part of the economic basis and is also a major setback for many affected destinations.**"

On the other hand, the manager of DER Touristik, Ingo Burmester, welcomed the foreign minister's announcement that individual evaluations would be carried out based on a catalogue of criteria.

"We are convinced that some travel destinations, including Turkey, can welcome holidaymakers safely in a timely manner," said the CEO of the Central European branch.

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