

# EUROPEAN AIRLINES AND AIRPORTS CRITICIZE LACK OF COORDINATION IN BORDERS REOPENING



Last week, major European airlines and airports criticized the lack of coordination in the European Union on the reopening of external borders, despite the fact that the 27 member states had agreed a week ago on a preliminary list of 15 countries to reactivate non-EU traffic from July 1.

In a joint statement, the Airports Council International-Europe (ACI-Europe) and the lobby of A4E airlines have condemned the EU's decision, just a week after reaching a consensus on the list of authorized countries (which includes Morocco and China, but barred the United States, Cuba and Russia), saying to not follow the recommendations, but keep the reopening "extremely divergent".

**While the EU continues discussions, airlines and airports complain of a system made of "scraps", with travel restrictions and border controls that erode consumer trust because of little clarity and a lot of uncertainty on whether travelers can travel and where.**

In addition, they warn of the risk that these differences pose for the proper functioning of the Schengen borderless regions, since tourists that couldn't fly directly to a specific member state due to borders closure could indeed reach that country by flying to another European country first that isn't imposing the same restrictions.

In any case, the list announced by the EU is a consensus recommendation to the 27 member countries, but does not imply an obligation, so countries are free to apply stricter measures in their territory.

Furthermore, the list, which is supported by scientific and epidemiological data to include countries with a situation equal to or better than the EU average in terms of coronavirus cases, will be reviewed every two weeks to update their health situation.

The 15 countries authorized to resume travel with departure or destination in the European Union are Algeria, Australia, Canada, Japan, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Rwanda, Serbia, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay, Georgia and China; although in the case of China, the reopening is based on reciprocity.

**However, few hours after the announcement, several member states warned that they did not consider restarting traffic outside the European Union immediately, or at least did not agree with all the countries on the list.**

Belgium and Hungary continue to be closed, while other countries have begun to allow international flights. Germany, for example, made it clear that it has extended its green light to Hong Kong to China, and has also opened borders to 8 of the 15 countries in the list, but it demands reciprocity from Japan and South Korea, in addition to China. In Spain, the border reopening has also been gradual, waiting for other countries on the list who do not admit the arrival of Spaniards, such as Morocco or Algeria, under the basis of reciprocity.

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