

NO MUTUAL VACCINE RECOGNITION SLOWING DOWN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM



Numerous vaccines against Covid-19 are available on the market. However, not all of them are equally accepted by governments around the world. And this represents a significant problem in view of the potential resumption of international tourism.

This was highlighted by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). Specifically, the organization fears that tourists may be turned away at the borders because the countries do not have a common list of internationally recognized and approved vaccines.

Lack of International Coordination

In this context, the WTTC referred to several cases of **British tourists who were turned away at the border with Malta because they had been administered the Indian Covishield batch of the AstraZeneca vaccine**. The organization notes, however, that the vaccine is chemically identical to the one made in the UK.

Some travelers have also been prevented from boarding their flights due to the lack of vaccine recognition. The WTTC is thus of the opinion that the lack of international coordination to agree on a list of approved vaccines is another major obstacle in resuming international travel.

This is despite the fact that most vaccines have been approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) or by strict regulatory authorities such as the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency in the UK, the Food and Drug Administration in the USA or the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

“Mutual vaccine recognition of all the types and batches is essential if we are to avoid further unnecessary and harmful delays in resuming international tourism,” said Virginia Messina, senior vice president of the WTTC.

Russia Hoping for a Solution

In the meantime, some countries have also expressed themselves on the matter. For example, Russia hopes to resolve the issue of mutual vaccine recognition with the European Union, as announced last week by the press secretary of Vladimir Putin Dmitry Peskov.

“The topic is on the agenda now. We hope that in the mode of dialogue with the EU it will be possible to discuss this topic and come to some decisions. So far, unfortunately, there are no concrete results,” he said.

For their part, the EU has also expressed the desire for dialogue via the ambassador in Moscow Markus Ederer.

At the beginning of the month, the ambassador said that the EU has offered Russia to discuss the

possibility of joining the COVID certificate program and discuss the possibility of mutual recognition of vaccines.

Nevertheless, European countries are somewhat divided on the issue. Italy, for example, prefers to wait for the Russian vaccines to receive certification by EMA. Until then, the country is reluctant to independently recognize these vaccines.

On the other hand, Hungary is negotiating with Russia about mutual recognition of Covid-19 vaccination certificates. In this context, the Hungarian foreign minister has said that both countries are looking to lift all restrictions on the entry of tourists, with Hungary awaiting the decision of the Russian government.

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