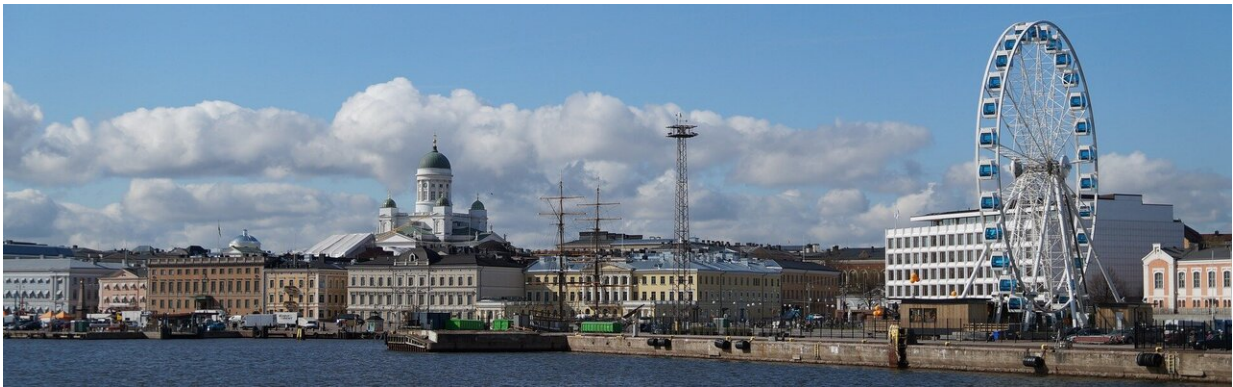


Finland opens borders to low-infection EU countries

June 23 2020



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Holidaymakers from 12 European countries with low virus infection rates will be allowed into Finland as of next month but tourists from Sweden will remain barred, ministers said on Tuesday.

Border restrictions will be lifted on July 13 for countries with fewer than eight new infections per 100,000 people over the preceding 14 days, Interior Minister Maria Ohisalo told a press conference.

The Schengen countries meeting the criteria are Germany, Italy, Austria, Greece, Switzerland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and Liechtenstein, she said.

In addition, Croatia, Cyprus and Ireland will be added to the green list.

Checks on travellers from Denmark, Norway, Iceland and the Baltic countries were already lifted last week but not from Sweden, which has seen a far higher rate of infection than anywhere else in the region.

Sweden has an [infection](#) rate of 118.2 per 100,000 people, Ohisalo said on Tuesday, while Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto underlined that the criteria for allowing entry was objective.

Officials will make a further assessment of whether other EU countries and the UK meet the criteria for entry by July 10.

Travellers from all countries in the Schengen passport-free zone are currently admitted to Finland if travelling for work, family or other essential reasons.

On Tuesday, the government also announced an end to the recommendation that over-70s avoid all unnecessary physical contact, which was introduced in March.

Families and Social Services Minister Krista Kiuru said the reproduction rate in Finland was believed to have fallen to between 0.4 and 0.8, which "allows the existing restrictions to be reconsidered".

The fact that 87 percent of Finland's 327 COVID-19 deaths have been among the over-70s "shows that following the recommendations has not been in vain," Kiuru said.

A recommendation for people to work from home will also cease on August 1, ministers said.

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