

EU reopens its borders to 14 nations but not to US tourists

30 June 2020, by Lorne Cook



In this Tuesday, April 7, 2020 file photo, a woman walks her dog on a Paris bridge, with the Eiffel tower in background, during a nationwide confinement to counter the COVID-19. The European Union announced Tuesday, June 30, 2020 that it will reopen its borders to travelers from 14 countries, but most Americans have been refused entry for at least another two weeks due to soaring coronavirus infections in the U.S. (AP Photo/Christophe Ena, File)

The European Union will reopen its borders to travelers from 14 countries, and possibly China soon, the bloc announced Tuesday, but most Americans have been refused entry for at least another two weeks due to soaring coronavirus infections in the U.S.

As Europe's economies reel from the impact of the coronavirus, southern EU countries like Greece, Italy and Spain are desperate to entice back sun-loving visitors and breathe life into their damaged tourism industries. American tourists make up a big slice of the EU market and the summer holiday season is a key time.

Citizens from the following countries will be allowed into the EU's 27 members and four other

nations in Europe's visa-free Schengen travel zone: Algeria, Australia, Canada, Georgia, Japan, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Rwanda, Serbia, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia and Uruguay.

absence of Americans also hurts the Louvre as the world's most-visited museum plans its reopening on July 6. Americans used to be the largest single group of foreign visitors to the home of the "Mona Lisa."

Sharmaine Shives, an American who lives in Paris, is yearning for the day when her countrymen and women can return to the clothing shop where she works on Saint-Louis island and drive away her blues at having so few summer visitors.



In this Monday, May 11, 2020 file photo, a waiter carries beers for customers sitting at a terrace bar in Tarragona, Spain. The European Union announced Tuesday, June 30, 2020 that it will reopen its borders to travelers from 14 countries, but most Americans have been refused entry for at least another two weeks due to soaring coronavirus infections in the U.S. (AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti, File)

"I hope that they can get it together and bring down their numbers as much as they can," she said of the United States.

"Paris isn't Paris when there aren't people who really appreciate it and marvel at everything," Shives added. "I miss that. Seriously, I feel the emotion welling up. It's so sad here."

A trade group for the biggest U.S. carriers including the three that fly to Europe—United Airlines, Delta Air Lines and American Airlines—said it was "obviously disappointed" by the EU decision.

"We are hopeful that the decision will be reviewed soon and that at least on a limited basis international traffic between the United States and the EU will resume," said Nicholas Calio, CEO of Airlines for America.

U.S. airlines hope the Europeans will give the U.S. credit if it implements steps such as temperature checks on passengers bound for Europe, which he said was discussed between U.S. government and EU officials.



In this Monday, April 6, 2020 file photo, moored gondolas are reflected on the water of the Gran Canal, in Venice. The European Union announced Tuesday, June 30, 2020 that it will reopen its borders to travelers from 14 countries, but most Americans have been refused entry for at least another two weeks due to soaring coronavirus infections in the U.S. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini, File)

Last year, United got 38% of its passenger revenue from international travel including 17% from flights between the U.S. and Europe, while Delta and American were slightly less dependent on those routes. Business travel on routes such as New York-London is highly profitable for all three.

In Brussels, EU headquarters underlined that the list "is not a legally binding instrument" which means the 31 governments can apply it as they see fit. But the bloc urged all member nations not to lift travel restrictions to other countries without coordinating such a move with their European partners.

Officials fear that such ad hoc moves could incite countries inside Europe to start closing their borders to each other again. Panic closures after the disease began spreading in Italy in February caused major traffic jams at crossing points and slowed deliveries of medical equipment.

Italy is still insisting on coronavirus quarantines for visitors from the 14 countries greenlighted by the European Union to visit. Health Minister Roberto



In this Tuesday, June 23, 2020 file photo, the pyramid of the Louvre museum is pictured before a visit ahead of its reopening next July 6, in Paris. The European Union announced Tuesday, June 30, 2020 that it will reopen its borders to travelers from 14 countries, but most Americans have been refused entry for at least another two weeks due to soaring coronavirus infections in the U.S. (AP Photo/Christophe Ena, File)

Speranza said Italy was taking the "line of caution" given its battle to contain the outbreak in the onetime epicenter of Europe's COVID-19 emergency.

In publishing its list, the EU also recommended that restrictions be lifted on all people wanting to enter who are European citizens and their family members, long-term EU residents who are not citizens of the bloc, and travelers with "an essential function or need," regardless of whether their country is on the safe list or not.

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