



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Finland – COVID-19: Changes in Travel Restrictions

On 18 August 2020, the Finnish government announced further travel restrictions concerning its internal as well as external borders. The internal border controls were reintroduced for the travel between Finland and the following countries: Iceland, Greece, Malta, Germany, Norway and Denmark. Restrictions on external border travel were reinstated for traffic into Finland from Ireland, Cyprus and San Marino, as well as Japanese residents travelling from Japan. Also, travel across Finland's land borders into the country from Sweden and Norway is permitted for the residents of the border communities.

The new restrictions that entered into force on 24 August 2020, were based on current developments with respect to the epidemic as the number of COVID-19 cases in the named countries has increased since the last assessment. (For prior coverage, see GMS [Flash Alert 2020-351](#), 10 August 2020.) Further decisions on restricting flights from North Macedonia will likely follow.¹

WHY THIS MATTERS

The reintroduced travel restrictions and border controls mean that holiday/pleasure trips from Iceland, Greece, Malta, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Ireland, Cyprus, San Marino and Japan are no longer allowed. In the case of Japan, only return travel and other essential travel to Finland are allowed. For the other listed countries, employees arriving from these countries will have to prove the reason for their stay in Finland (e.g., proof of employment). This could cause inconvenience and may require a change of plans for travellers between Finland and certain countries. Travellers should make sure they are in compliance with the new rules.

Employment-based travel within the Schengen area's internal borders is still allowed; however, individuals need to carry proof of employment.

Updated Travel Restrictions as of 24 August

The government has reintroduced internal border controls for travel between Finland and the following countries: Iceland, Greece, Malta, Germany, Norway and Denmark. Restrictions on travel across Finland's external borders have been reintroduced for travel from Ireland, Cyprus, San Marino and for Japanese residents from Japan.

Traffic across land border crossing points between Finland and Sweden and between Finland and Norway will be facilitated between local border communities. Travellers must be able to demonstrate that they reside in the territory of the border community. In this case, self-isolation is not required. This concession for local border communities only considers daily errands and does not apply to holidays in another country, and more extensive travel in the territory of another country is not permitted.²

Other restrictions on entry remain unchanged.

KPMG NOTE

Flights arriving from Skopje in North Macedonia may soon be restricted. The Finnish Transport and Communications Agency is independently preparing a decision on the possible suspension of flights.³

Allowed Border Traffic

As of 24 August, based on the current development of the epidemic, travel to Finland is expected to be possible for the following groups of travellers⁴:

- Finnish nationals and their family members;
- Nationals of European Union (EU) and Schengen countries residing in Finland and their family members;
- Those coming from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania;
- Those coming from Italy, Slovakia, Hungary, and Liechtenstein;
- Those coming from Vatican City;
- Those coming from Georgia, New Zealand, Rwanda, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia and Uruguay;
- Third-country nationals who have a valid residence permit granted by the Finnish authorities.

Travel will also be permitted in the following cases:

- Travel across other Schengen internal borders for employment or commission-related commuting;
- Travel from Ireland, Cyprus, San Marino, Andorra, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Croatia, Monaco and Romania for work and other essential purposes;

- Essential travel in order to work and other essential traffic (as defined and substantiated);
- Residents of local border communities on the land borders between Finland and Sweden, and Finland and Norway for daily errands.

Border Checks, Documents, Quarantine, and Protective Measures

The purpose and requirements of a work trip based on an employment relationship or an assignment are determined during the border check. During border checks, the person on a work trip may be asked to present documents to verify that the entry requirements are fulfilled. Such documents may relate to information on the employment relationship and assignment. Other essential travel is assessed on a case-by-case basis based on information gathered during the border check.

Self-quarantine is recommended for those arriving in Finland from countries subject to internal and external border controls. However, if there is a reason to suspect that a person has been exposed to the coronavirus, authorities may issue a personal 14-day quarantine order to a person arriving from a high-risk area. The decision to quarantine a person is made by the physician responsible for infectious diseases in the municipality or hospital district. COVID-19 tests (health checks) are to be performed on travellers at border-crossing points. Tests are generally voluntary; however, a regional state administrative agency may order mandatory testing.

KPMG NOTE

Keeping the Virus under Control

Quarantine and other protective measures must be considered when travelling to Finland even in the case of employment-based travel from the countries where border controls or travel restrictions are in place. Joint responsibility is borne by every Finnish resident and every person visiting Finland to make sure that the COVID-19 epidemic does not accelerate uncontrollably. (For prior coverage and more information on the protective measures, see [GMS Flash Alert 2020-357](#), 18 August 2020.)

Regular Review by the Authorities of the Situation

It is important to note that the authorities regularly update the list of countries based on developments in each country's epidemic situation. The Finnish government will review the rules on border restrictions in two weeks' time. Restrictions may also be reintroduced if the epidemic situation in a given country significantly deteriorates.

The KPMG International member firm in Finland continues to monitor these matters closely.

FOOTNOTES:

1 19 August 2020 [News release](#) (in English) from the government: "Government tightens travel restrictions at internal and external borders."

2 20 August 2020 [New release](#) (in English) from the government: "Restrictions on entry into the country to be tightened again at internal and external borders."

FOOTNOTES continued:

3 19 August 2020 [News release](#) (in English) from the government: “Government tightens travel restrictions at internal and external borders.”

4 See (in English) “[Guidelines for border traffic during pandemic from 24.8.2020](#)” on the website of the Finnish Border Guard.

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Contact us

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* Please note that KPMG LLP (U.S.) does not offer immigration services or labour law services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.

The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in Finland.

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