

# Public health considerations for resuming international travel in the context of COVID-19

CAPSCA-EUR/08  
12 November 2020

# International Health Regulations (IHR 2005)

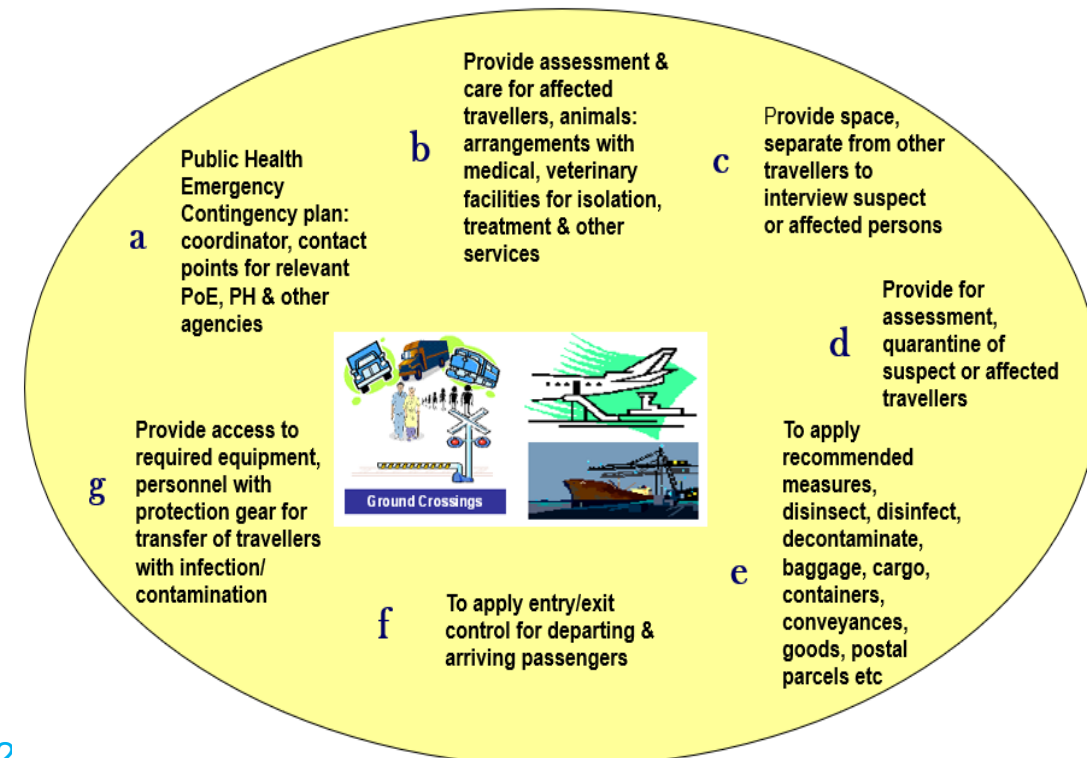
- The IHR (2005) are the **global governance mechanism for public health preparedness and response**.
- They entered into force on 15 June 2007 and are **legally binding** for all **196 States Parties**.
- The IHR (2005) enable countries to work together to **prevent, prepare for, respond, and recover from the international spread of diseases, while avoiding unnecessary interference with international traffic**.

**Core capacities** at Points of Entry for at all times and for responding to events that may **constitute a public health emergency of international concern**

Article 43 of the IHR (2005):

- ✓ States Parties implementing additional health measures that significantly interfere with international traffic shall **provide to WHO the public health rationale and relevant scientific information for it**.
- ✓ **WHO shall share this information with other States Parties** – weekly updated reports shared with National IHR Focal points via WHO restricted platform (*Event Information Site*).

## Capacity requirements for responding to potential PHEIC (emergency)

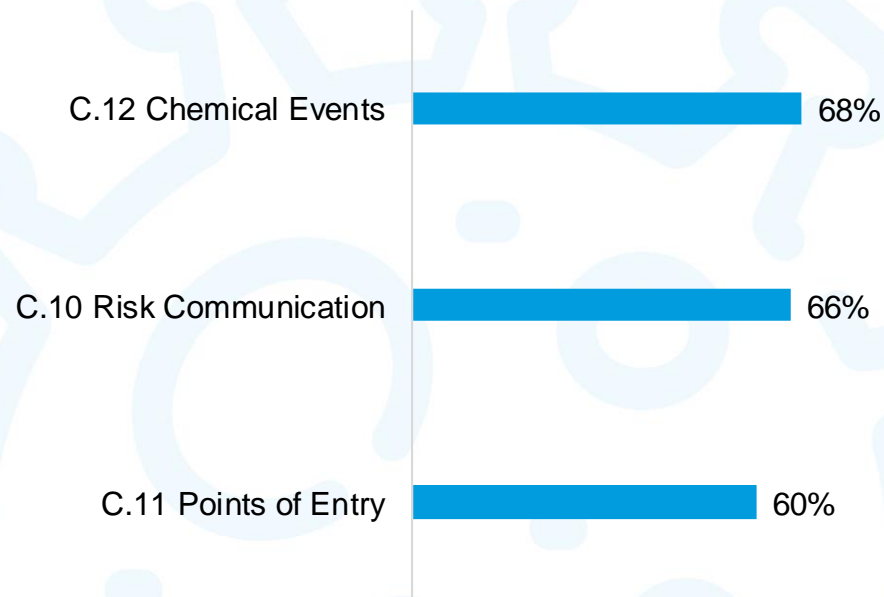


# States Party Annual Reporting 2019 Overview

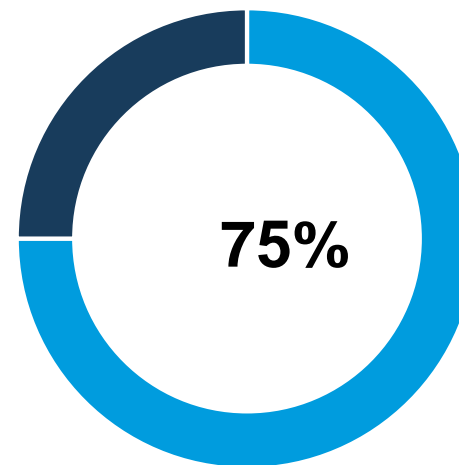
The SPAR (State Party Self-Assessment Annual Reporting) tool consists of 24 indicators for the 13 IHR capacities needed to detect, assess, notify, report and respond to public health risk and acute events of domestic and international concern.

95% of States Parties in the European Region reported in 2019

## Main challenges of the EURO region



## All capacities EURO average 2019



# IHR Capacity area 11

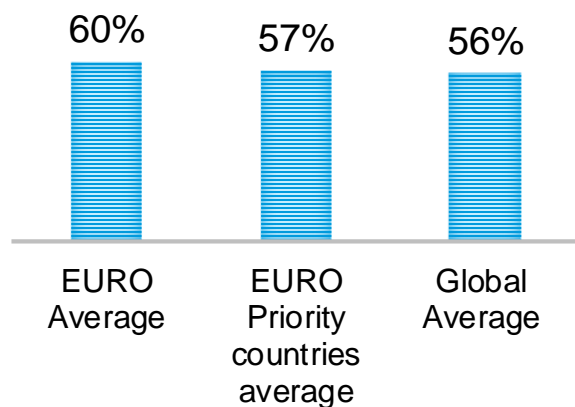
## Points of Entry 2019

C11.1. Core capacity requirements at all times for designated airports, ports and ground crossings

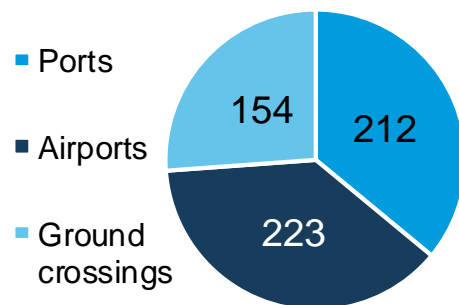
C11.2. Effective public health response at points of entry

Main challenge of the region.

- 6 States Parties reported level 0.
- 2 States Parties reported level 0 on one of the indicators.

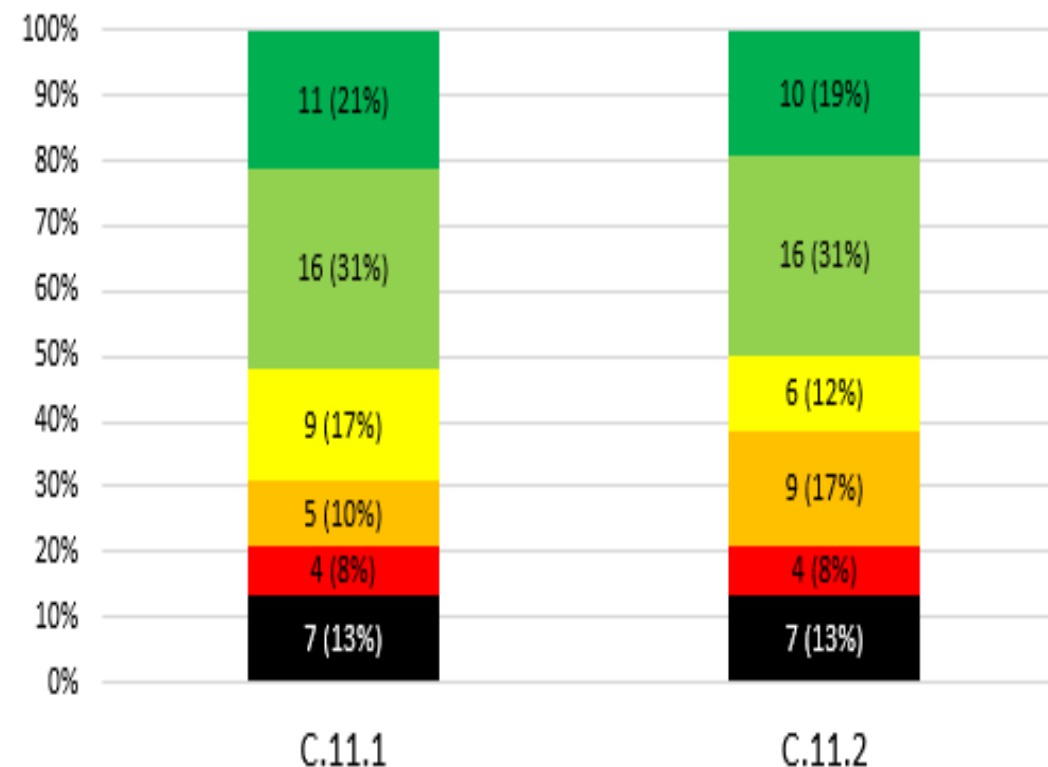


Number of Designated Points of Entry by type:



Number of States Parties per capacity level reported

■ No level ■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4 ■ Level 5



# WHO monitoring of Travel restrictions and entry requirements in the European Region in the context of COVID-19

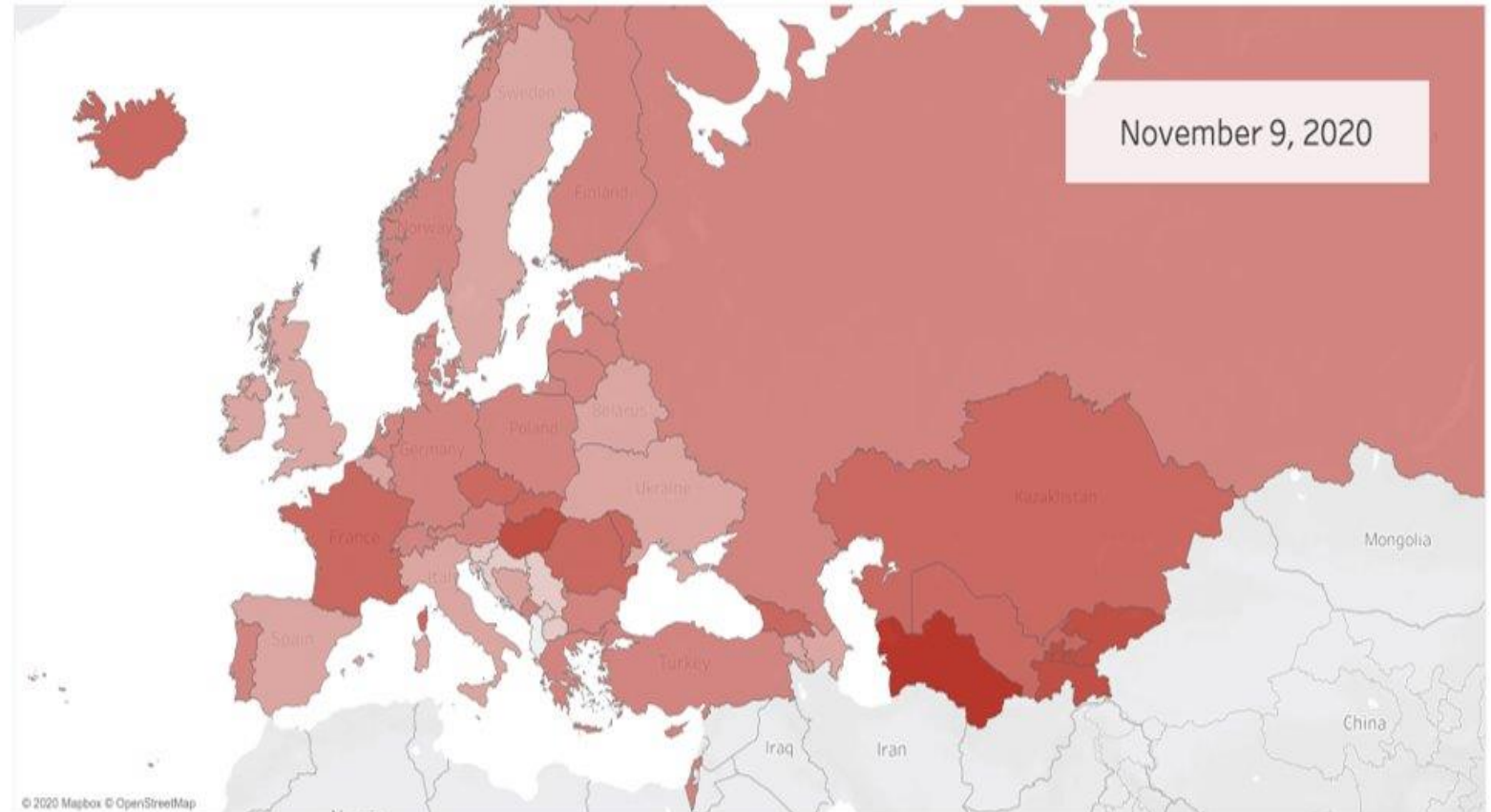
**Monitoring of public health and social measures**, and of international travel and trade restrictions that significantly interfere with international traffic (IHR article 43).

- **1624** travel and trade restrictions recorded and shared with IHR National Focal Points through the **Event Information Site (EIS)**
- **Most common restrictions:**
  - Flight/land border/sea restrictions
  - Visa restrictions
  - Quarantine upon arrival
  - COVID-19 test before, upon arrival and as follow up test

No restrictions

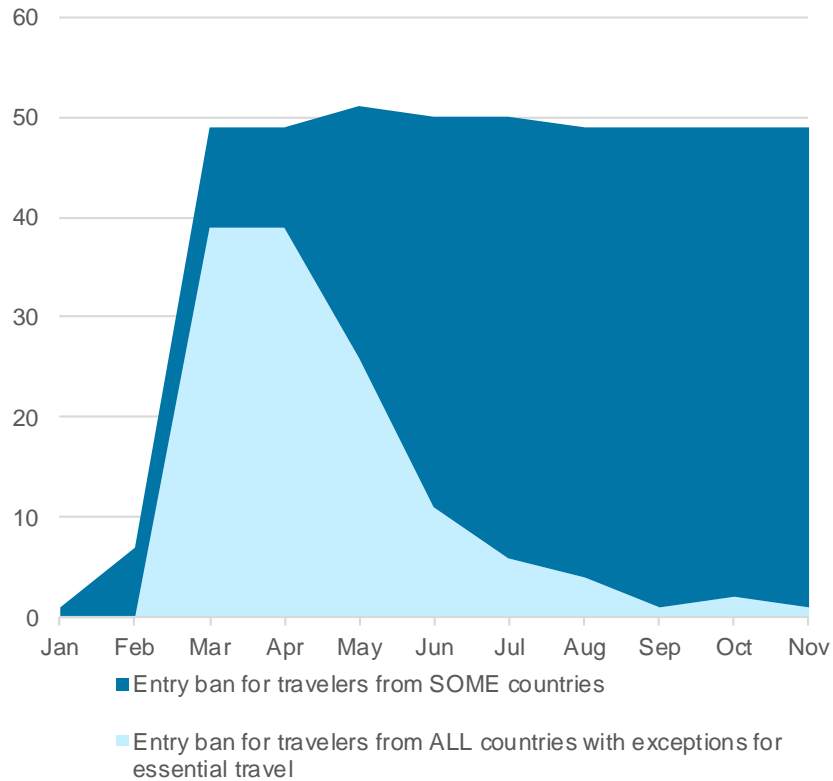
Closed to some countries and/or requirement to self-isolate or test for some countries

Closed to majority of countries and/or requirement to self-isolate or test for all countries, with exceptions for essential travel

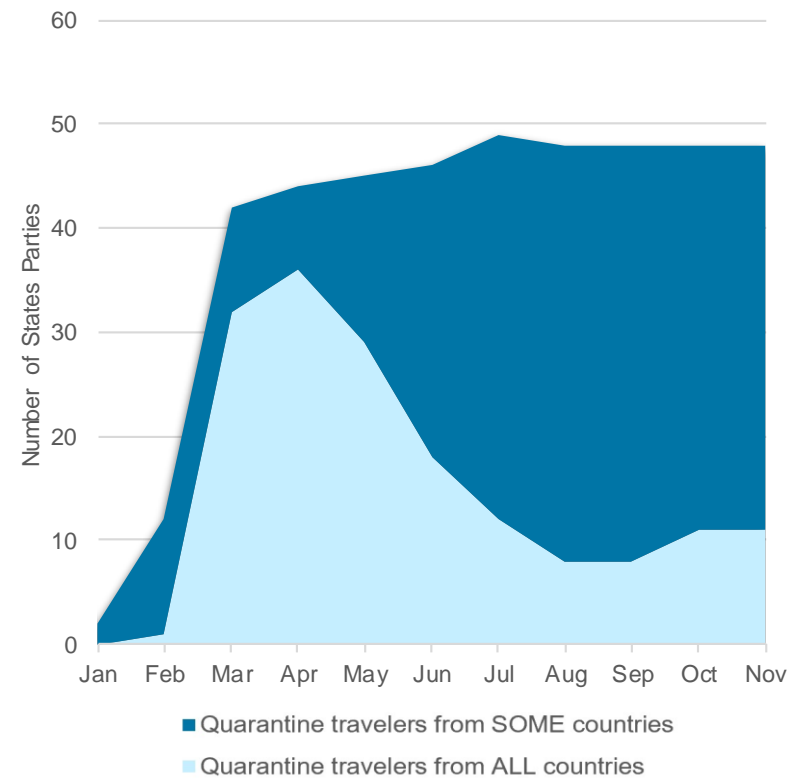


# Travel restrictions and entry requirements in the European Region in the context of COVID-19

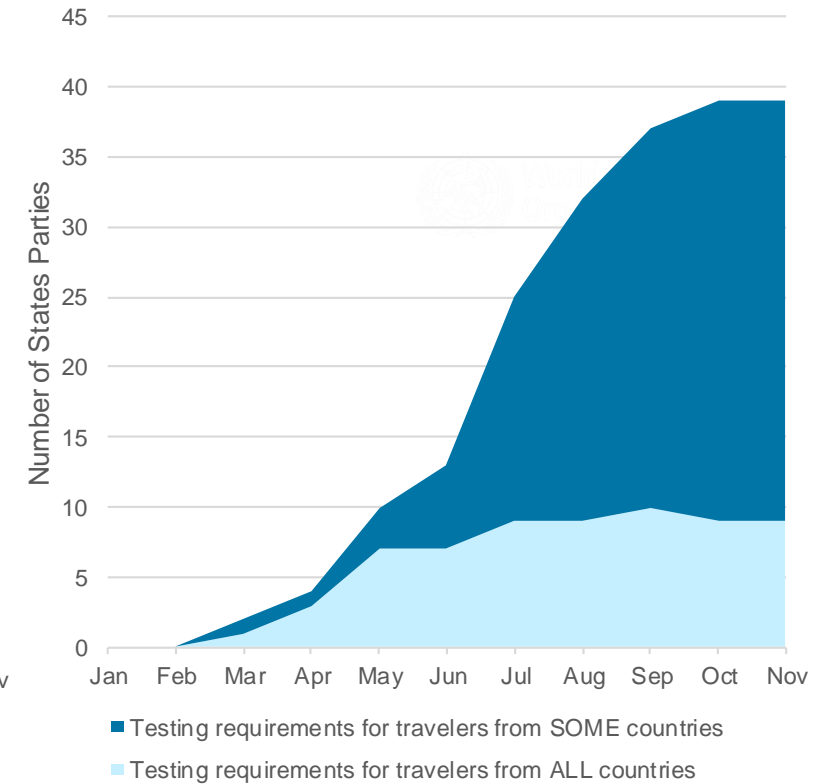
## Ban Entry



## Quarantine upon entry

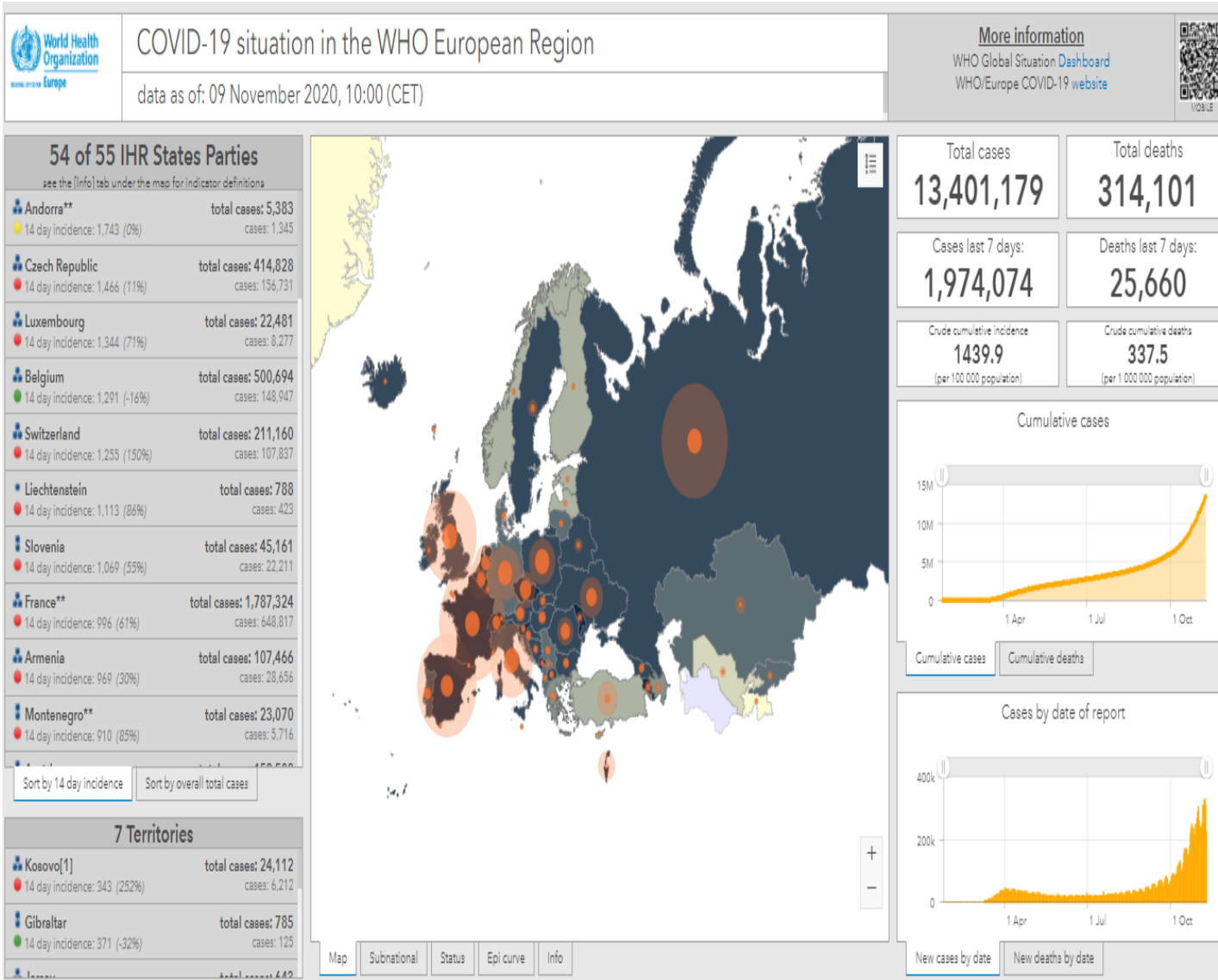


## COVID-19 Testing Requirement



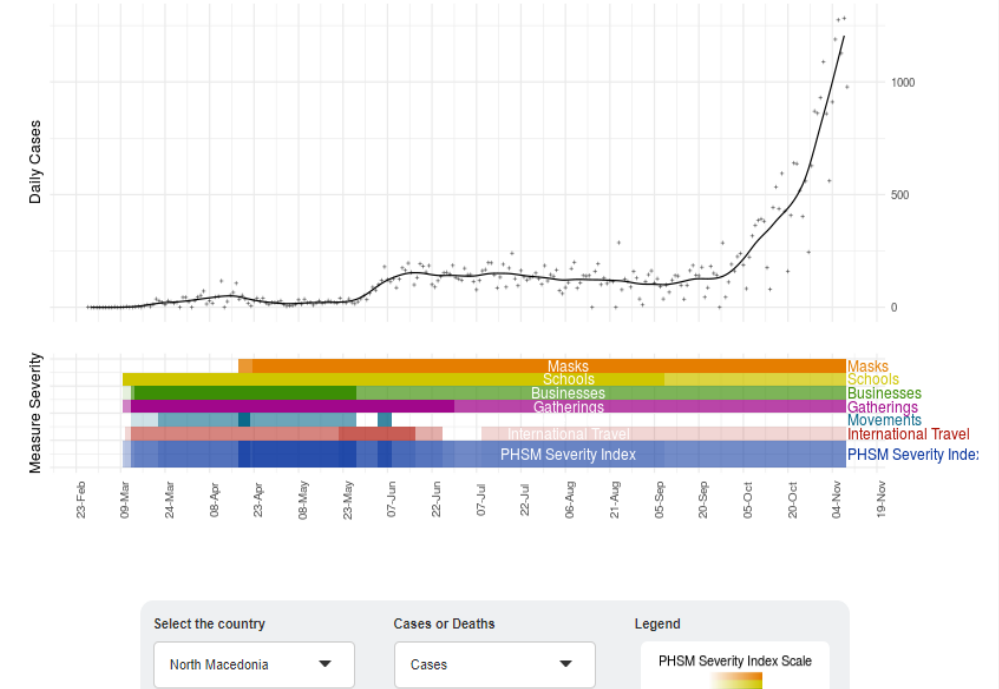
**Countries have moved from fully to partially implementing entry bans.** This adjustment has been implemented with **requirements for quarantine and testing requirement for specific groups of incoming travelers.** An **increasing use of testing as a requirement for entry** has been recorded across the European Region since the summer months.

# Country and Regional analysis of public health and social measures



## Country Analysis: Daily Cases and Deaths over Severity of Public Health and Social Measures (PHSM)

Last updated on the 9th of November 2020



Further information:

<https://who.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/ead3c6475654481ca51c248d52ab9c61>

# WHO key guidance documents on PoE in the context of COVID-19

## Guideline documents:

[Consideration of quarantine of contacts of COVID-19 cases](#)

[WHO public health considerations while resuming international travels](#)

[WHO guide to hygiene and sanitation in aviation](#)

[Travel advise and recommendations during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)

[Assessment tool for core capacity requirements at designated airports, ports and ground crossing](#)

[Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases or outbreak in aviation](#)

## WHO online courses on:

[Operational consideration for management of COVID-19 cases or outbreaks in aviation in the context of COVID-19](#)

[Management of ill travelers at points of entry-international airports, seaports and ground crossings-in the context of COVID-19](#)

## Simulation exercises:

Table-top exercises for airports in the context of COVID-19

Table-top exercise for **ground crossings** in the context of COVID-19

Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases or outbreak in aviation  
Interim guidance  
18 March 2020



### Background

This document is based on the evidence currently available about coronavirus disease (COVID-19) transmission (human-to-human, transmission primarily via respiratory droplets from, or direct contact with, an infected individual). It should be used in conjunction with WHO's Handbook for the Management of Public Health Events in Air Transport.<sup>1</sup>

The target audience is any authority involved in public health response to a public health event in aviation, including International Health Regulations (IHR) National Focal Points (NFP), health authorities at airports, local, provincial and national health surveillance and response systems, as well as civil aviation authorities, airport operators, aircraft operators, airports and airlines.

### Awareness of aviation personnel

Airport operators, aircraft operators, airlines, and airports should provide guidance to crew and ground staff on the recognition of signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Crew and ground personnel should be further reminded about measures to prevent transmission of COVID-19, including social distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, environmental cleaning, waste disposal, when and how to use a mask, avoidance of contact with people presenting respiratory symptoms, and seeking medical advice early if signs and symptoms develop.

Medical face masks should be reserved for persons with respiratory symptoms (and who can tolerate them) to avoid contamination to others.

Personnel should be trained on hand hygiene and how to put on and remove personal protective equipment (PPE). Personnel in close contact with symptomatic persons (e.g. when providing first aid) should wear a medical mask, eye protection (face shield or goggles), gloves, and gown.

WHO advice and technical guidance for COVID-19 is available on the [WHO website](#).

Advice for crew and ground staff working or staying in areas where local or community transmission is being reported:

- Be familiar with local protocols for the reporting and management of ill travellers and their possible contacts, in the context of COVID-19.
- Take precautionary measures to reduce the possibility of infection:
  - Avoid rush hours in public transport and use private transport when possible, minimizing

contact with other people while moving between the airport and ground transportation.

- Minimize time spent in public areas, applying social distancing whenever not on public by maintaining a distance of at least 1 metre (3 feet) from other people.

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub if hands are not visibly dirty.

- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.

- Self-monitoring: If you develop fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, immediately isolate yourself according to local health procedures, wear a mask, report the situation to your employer, and seek medical attention. The aircraft operator or airline concerned should report it to the local health authority immediately.

- If you develop fever, cough, and difficulty breathing during flight, discontinue your work duties as soon as it is safe to do so, inform other crew, and follow the measures required for a suspected case, as described in Global Surveillance for human infection with coronavirus disease (COVID-19).<sup>2</sup>

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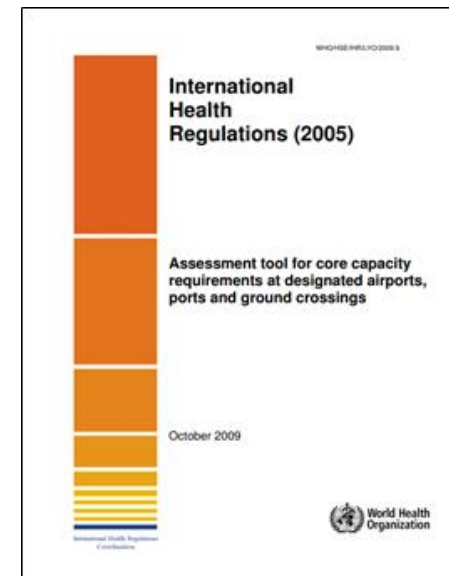
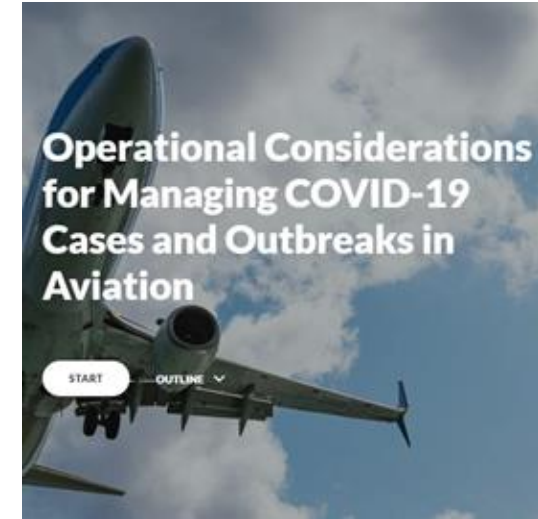
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Operational Considerations for Managing COVID-19 Cases and Outbreaks in Aviation  
(ADVANCED VERSION 1.01 - 16th April 2020)



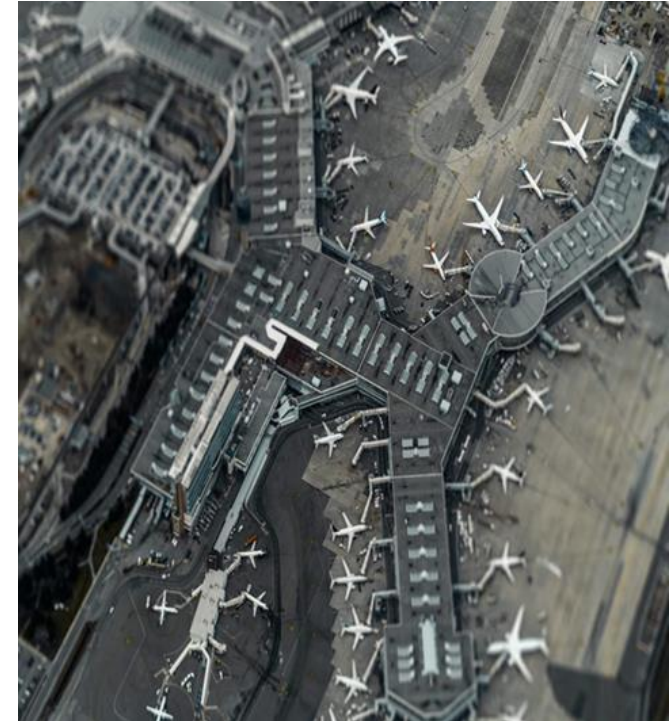
# WHO training material and checklist on aviation

## ***Trainings courses for Member States on PoE in the context of COVID-19:***

- Introduction to IHR on PoE
- Public health and social measures at PoE
- COVID-19 response on Points of Entry- COVID-19 response at airports:
  - Awareness of airport staff
  - Management of suspected cases
  - Reporting of an outbreak in an aircraft
  - Disembarkation of suspected cases
  - Identification and management of contacts
  - Cleaning and disinfection

## ***Self-assessment checklist for airports (not yet published)***

- General considerations
- Travelers before travelling
- Before boarding
- Training of crew and airport staff
- At the terminal
- On board of the aircraft
- Upon arrival
- Disinfection measures



# WHO face-to-face trainings on PoE in 2020

**4 face-to-face trainings:**  
Uzbekistan, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Republic of Moldova under implementation of strict public health and social measures

**2 virtual trainings:**  
Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan

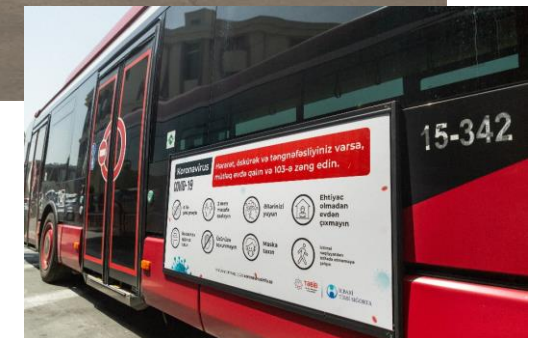
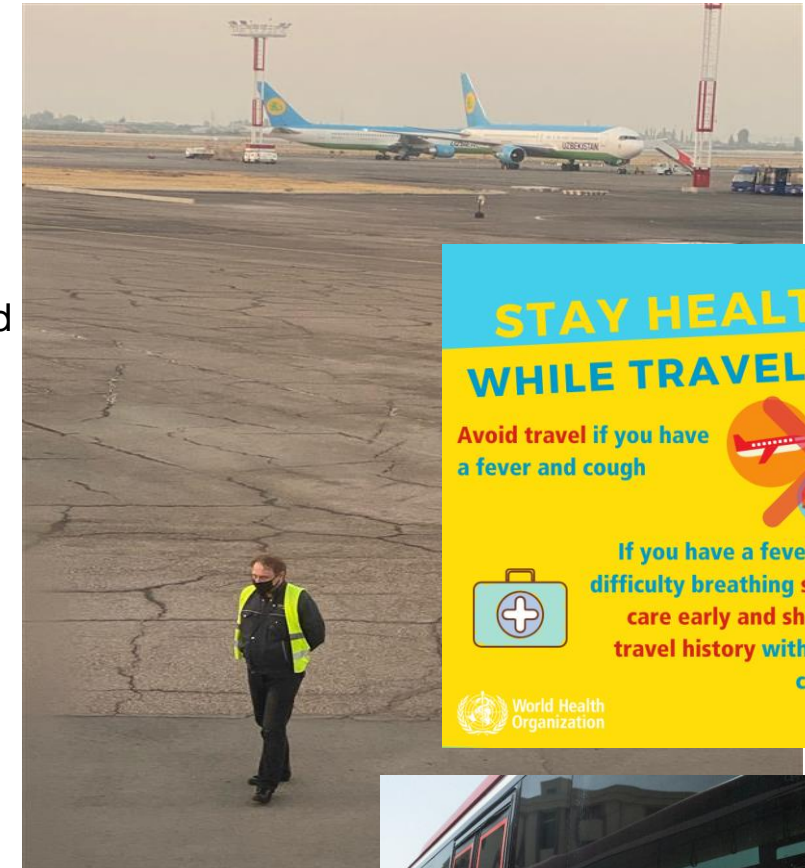
**4 Table-Top Simulation Exercises:** 2 for COVID-19 cases in aviation and 2 for COVID-19 cases at ground crossings.



# Measures implemented to safely resume travel across the European Region in the context of COVID-19

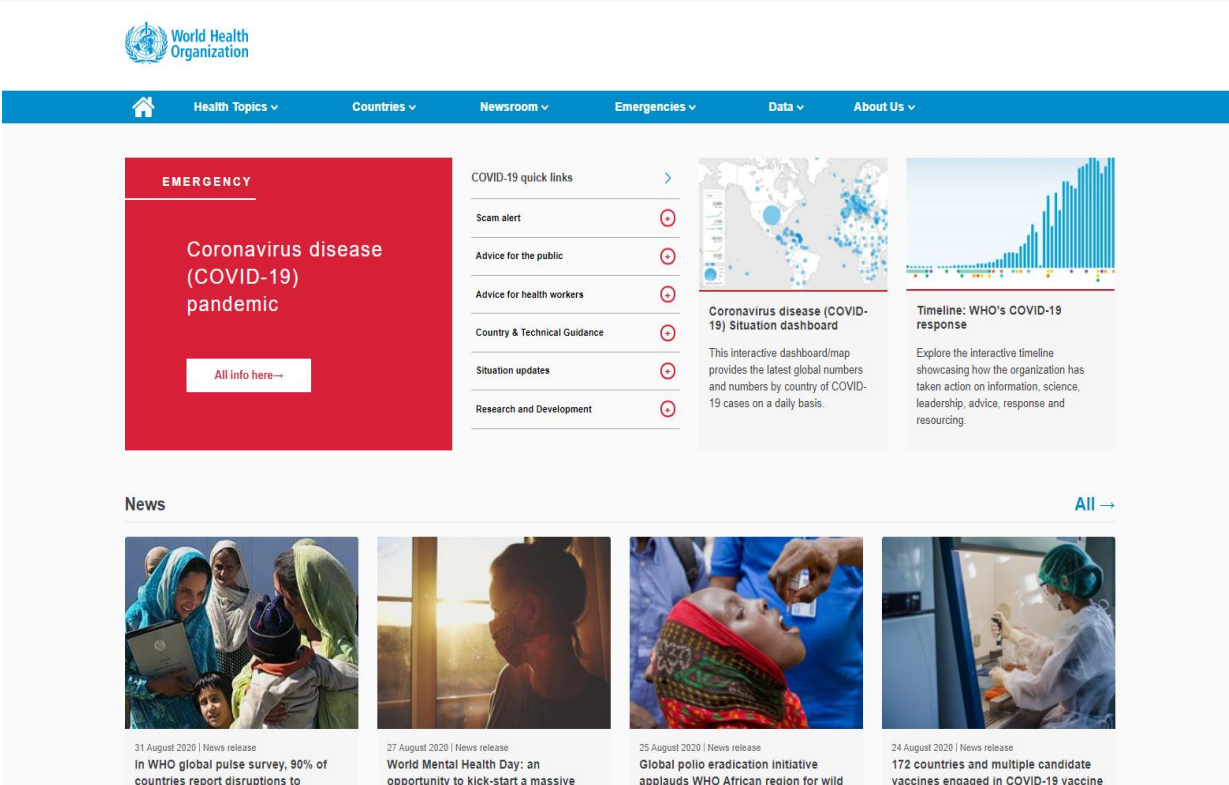
## Case finding strategies at POE

- **Entry and exit screening**
  - Checking for symptoms and interviewing
  - Temperature screening – not effective as a stand-alone measure
  - Follow up – medical examination and testing for symptomatic travelers and contacts
- **Testing**
  - Symptomatic travelers and identified contacts
  - Travelers from ‘high risk areas’
- **Contact tracing**
  - Use of passenger locator forms (PLF) and health declarations
  - Use of digital tools
- **Enhanced risk communication**
  - Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
  - Safe use of masks
  - Physical distancing
  - Advice to seek medical assistance



# Conclusion

- **Essential travel should always be prioritized.**
  - Health emergency and humanitarian response.
  - Essential cargo (medical, food and energy supplies).
  - Seafarers and diplomatic officers.
  - Repatriations
- **Travel measures should be contextualized and continuously updated based on regular risk assessments – there is no ‘one size fits all’.**
  - Epidemiological situation and transmission patterns
  - Public health capacities
  - Others
- **Medium-longer term: countries should designate their most relevant points of entry (POE) under the International Health Regulations (IHR) and report annually on their core capacities to prevent, detect, respond to the health emergencies.**



The screenshot shows the WHO website's emergency page for COVID-19. The page features a prominent red banner with the text "EMERGENCY" and "Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic", with a link "All info here-->". To the right, there is a "COVID-19 quick links" section with a list of links: "Scam alert", "Advice for the public", "Advice for health workers", "Country & Technical Guidance", "Situation updates", and "Research and Development". Further right, there are two main content blocks: "Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Situation dashboard" which includes a world map and a bar chart, and "Timeline: WHO's COVID-19 response" which includes a timeline graphic. Below these sections is a "News" section with four news items, each with a thumbnail image and a brief description: "31 August 2020 | News release: In WHO global pulse survey, 90% of countries report disruptions to...", "27 August 2020 | News release: World Mental Health Day: an opportunity to kick-start a massive...", "25 August 2020 | News release: Global polio eradication initiative applauds WHO African region for wild...", and "24 August 2020 | News release: 172 countries and multiple candidate vaccines engaged in COVID-19 vaccine".

# Thank you

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[schmidtt@who.int](mailto:schmidtt@who.int)

<https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19>

WHO COVID-19 technical guidance:  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>