

Global tourism remains at standstill, with every country imposing travel restrictions

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected almost every industry in the world, but none so much as travel and tourism.

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 100% of countries have travel restrictions in place. Out of all 217 destinations worldwide, 156 (72%) have completely closed their borders to international tourism. One-quarter of these destinations have had these restrictions in place for at least three months, and 40 percent have had them for at least two months.

While discussions are in place for possible gradual reopening measures, research has found that no destination has so far lifted or eased travel restrictions, so quite literally every destination in the world still has COVID-19 related travel restrictions for international tourists in place.

Essential industry

Tourism is a vital economic engine throughout the world, and UNWTO states that opening the world up to tourism again is essential to saving jobs and protecting livelihoods.

“Tourism has been the hardest hit of all the major sectors as countries lockdown and people stay at home. UNWTO calls on governments to work together to coordinate the easing and lifting of restrictions in a timely and responsible manner, when it is deemed safe to do so. Tourism is a lifeline to millions, especially in the developing world. Opening the world up to tourism again will save jobs, protect livelihoods and enable our sector to resume its vital role in driving sustainable development,” said UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili.

All regions

By region, UNWTO has found that 83% of destinations in Europe have introduced complete closure of borders for international tourism. In the Americas, this proportion stands at 80%, in Asia-Pacific it is 70%, in the Middle East it is 62% and in Africa it is 57%.

Responsible re-opening

UNWTO continues to work closely with international organizations, national governments and the private sector to address and support the responsible and timely recovery of tourism. Secretary-General Pololikashvili has addressed Ministers of the G20 and of the EU Commission in this regard within the past two weeks.