



CORONAVIRUS: CONSULAR SUPPORT TO EU CITIZENS IN THIRD COUNTRIES

Consular protection is a core competency of European Union Member States, but in the context of the Coronavirus outbreak the EU has stepped in.

HR/VP Josep Borrell, supported by the European External Action Service, the European Commission and Delegations to the EU around the world, is in the lead to coordinate the work with Member States and help EU travellers stranded in third countries to safely reach their homes.



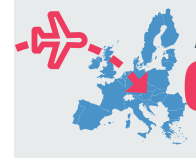
Over
600,000

Estimated number of EU citizens who **needed to be repatriated** due to travel restrictions linked to the Coronavirus



More than
590,000

Estimated number of EU citizens who have **safely reached their homes**



Around
60,000

EU citizens repatriated under the **European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)** through over **270 flights**

How are we helping?



Consular toolkit:

Package of practical information for EU citizens in third countries on options for return and advice on how to handle travel restrictions around the world.



Practical arrangements:

EU Delegations coordinate with EU Member states in the repatriation of citizens, including assistance on preparing the list of citizens on commercial flights and on flights organised by EU governments (some of those under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism). They may also assist the registration process and coordinate the boarding.



Airspace:

EU Delegations are in touch with local authorities to keep normal air operations (commercial and charter flights) open as long as possible.



Transit:

with major transit hubs closing down, the EU is in contact with governments at local and national level to get extensions or exceptions.



Visas:

A growing number of Europeans risk overstaying their visa while waiting for a return option. The EU is helping seek waivers or simplified extension procedures.



Facilitation:

EU Delegations provide overall support to facilitate effective departure of tourists (liaison with host authorities, hotels, air transport companies ...).

How does it work?



Citizens get in touch with their embassy, consulate or EU Delegation for assistance.



When possible, citizens are **repatriated via commercial flights**.



When this option is no longer possible, EU Member States can activate the **EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)**, which coordinates and co-finances up to 75% of the special transport assets mobilised for repatriation.



The **European Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)** of DG ECHO, together with the EEAS and EU Member States, steps in to respond to the needs.



Non-EU citizens can also benefit from this assistance.



On 27 March, the Commission proposed to make some **extra €45 million available from the EU budget** to help Member States repatriate EU nationals.

