



Managing international migration under COVID-19

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This brief assesses migration policy reactions by OECD countries in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It reviews the introduction and development of short-term policy responses from March to early June and identifies some of the possible forthcoming medium and longer-term challenges to migration management arising from this global health crisis.



Impact of COVID-19 on migration policies: key findings

- In most OECD countries, travel bans have been put in place quickly to prevent importing new COVID-19 cases with the exception of few countries, such as Mexico, which have taken no specific measure. However, in most cases, nationals and long-term residents have been able to come back home except in a few countries which have imposed stricter measures such as Colombia.
- By end May 2020, most OECD countries imposed a quarantine period – of typically 14 days – for people allowed to enter with the exception of a few countries such as Sweden. Self-quarantine is the norm but some countries impose stricter rules with geolocalisation applications (Korea) or quarantine at the port of entry (Australia).
- A number of exemptions to the travel bans have been put in place notably to cross border workers, seasonal workers and health professionals.
- Migration and asylum offices as well as consular services abroad have been closed to public for one to three months in most countries and backlogs of applications quickly increased. Some countries have facilitated online applications or email communication. Return and resettlement activities have *de facto* been suspended in most countries.
- For those unable to leave as a result of the pandemic, most OECD countries have offered blanket relief measures or the possibility to remain. One country, Italy, is undertaking a potentially large-scale regularisation in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. Employment restrictions for migrants have also been eased in many countries to enable less or more hours worked, reduced wages or change of employer.
- Most OECD countries offer access to treatment for COVID-19 for all categories of migrants. Some countries like France or Belgium already offered free universal access to health care prior to the crisis. Others like Portugal have temporarily regularised migrants in an irregular situation to ensure full access.
- In the medium term a number of issues with respect to migration management will arise linked to the management of backlogs, attractiveness for international students and highly-skilled migrants, adoption of new health criteria in migration management and the adjustment of returns and humanitarian assistance operations.
- Experiences from previous economic crises, suggest that the economic downturn associated with the COVID-19 pandemic may have disproportionate and long-lasting negative effects on the integration of immigrants and their children unless appropriate support measures are in place.
- In the context of a severe economic recession and increasing challenges for maintaining social cohesion, support for proactive migration policies may also risk decline.

All OECD countries responded promptly to the COVID-19 pandemic by taking action to restrict international movements. However, the extent to which borders have been sealed and immigration services disrupted in the past three months has varied across countries. Many countries have also put in place exemptions for specific categories of migrants in essential sectors and have taken provisional measures for those unable to leave because of the pandemic. Going forward, the health crisis will affect migration management with backlogs, new health requirements and changing skills needs. It may also have lasting negative effects on the socio-economic integration of immigrants. This brief covers five main issues: overall travel restrictions; exemptions to travel bans – notably for workers in key sectors; concessional measures facilitating stay and access to health care; disruption of migration services; and longer term impacts of the health crisis on migration management and lessons learnt.



1. Travel restrictions and re-entry of nationals and permit holders

The first and foremost measure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic was the closure of national borders and enforcement of worldwide entry bans. As of 1 May 2020, almost all OECD countries¹ have put in place restrictions on the admission of foreigners, although almost all still accept nationals returning from abroad – albeit often subject to a mandatory quarantine period. Most OECD countries also accept the return of legal permanent residents, as well as of their spouses and immediate family members (see Annex A). A few countries, however, extend restrictions even to these categories, such as Colombia, Japan (exceptional circumstances will be considered / except special permanent resident) and Hungary (for non-EU permanent residents)². Canada, while restricting the entry of non-family members, has however recently enlarged its definition of immediate family to include parents and step-parents (until 30 June).

At least two OECD countries (Japan and Korea) have decided to suspend the validity of previously issued visas, while a number of OECD countries still allow all valid visa or short-term residence permit holders (i.e. not only permanent residents) to enter or re-enter. These include, inter alia, Ireland, Portugal, France, Greece, Canada, the United States, Chile, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom and the Czech Republic. Poland accepts all valid work permits, including seasonal workers. Israel and Italy still accept business trips.

In most OECD countries, travel bans have been put in place to prevent importing new #COVID-19 cases

On 16 March 2020, the European Commission adopted a Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council ([COM\(2020\)115](#)), calling for a temporary restriction on non-essential travel to the EU in view of COVID-19 for an initial period of 30 days. The recommendation was subsequently extended until 15 June 2020. The Commission followed with [guidance](#) on the implementation of such restrictions, on the facilitation of transit arrangements for the repatriation of EU citizens and on the effects on visa policy.

Most OECD countries, with the notable exception of Sweden, Switzerland (for those without symptoms), Mexico and the United Kingdom (until 8 June), have imposed quarantine measures for people arriving from abroad, at least from most affected countries of origin. The Czech Republic required a medical certificate to avoid quarantine. In most cases, the quarantine is for 2 weeks but it has been limited to 7 days in Slovenia and 10 days in Norway or Switzerland (for those with symptoms). At the beginning of May, a number of European countries – including Belgium, France, Italy and Spain – remained under strict lockdown for the entire resident population, as well as any persons admitted from abroad. By mid-June, many countries in Europe will start to relax the quarantine requirement for selected (mostly neighbouring) countries with a gradual phasing out for all international travellers.

2. Exemptions to travel bans and special measures

In Europe (in line with the March Council communication) and in other OECD countries, there are exemptions to the travel ban for incoming health care workers (see below) and other essential workers, such as those who are responsible for the transport of goods. Exceptions also exist for holders of residence

¹Notable exceptions are notably Mexico and Ireland.

² Detailed information on travel restrictions are compiled by the **International Air Transport Association** <https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/international-travel-document-news/1580226297.htm>.



permits and their family members, persons travelling for imperative family reasons such as funerals or the provision of emergency support. Other categories, such as diplomats, staff of international organisations, humanitarian aid workers, freight transportation workers or passengers in transit are also generally not subject to restrictions, though the latter are sometimes required to provide a medical certificate.

Because of the role of #migrants in key sectors, many exemptions have been applied, notably in health, agriculture and transport

The situation of **cross-border workers** is more complex and varies from country to country. The number of land entry points may be limited (e.g. Hungary, Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic) or mobility restricted to essential cross-border workers (e.g. between Mexico, United States and Canada; or in the Netherlands with neighbouring countries for example) or those with a permanent contract (Finland). In some cases, restrictions imposed by neighbouring countries limit movements (e.g. Argentina and Peru for Chile, Poland for Germany). In a few cases, medical certificates are required (e.g. Lithuania). In Europe, the European Commission has expressed some concerns about restrictions on cross-border movements and has issued [guidelines](#) concerning the exercise of the free movement of workers during COVID-19 outbreak, which cover cross-border workers, seasonal workers and short-term postings within the EU.

A number of countries have taken special measures for **seasonal agricultural workers**. In most cases, these enable people with limited work permits – in terms of work rights or duration – to remain in their host country to work. This is the case notably for seasonal worker programme and Pacific labour scheme participants in Australia, and for seasonal workers in agriculture in Greece, Israel (until end May), as well as in Italy, Norway, the Czech Republic and the United States. In some countries, facilitations are mostly administrative, allowing employers to delay the recruitment or to offer longer contract duration (e.g. Canada, Belgium). In a few countries, facilitations have been made to allow categories of migrants who were previously forbidden to work to do so, notably in agriculture. This is the case, for example, in Belgium for asylum seekers in the first four months of their application (they may work also in other sectors), in Spain for youth without work rights aged 18 to 21, and in Ireland for international students. In Austria, foreigners who already reside in the country but who do not have the appropriate working rights are entitled, under certain conditions, to submit an application for a visa for the purpose of exercising a seasonal or harvesting activity. In Greece, an exceptional fast-track procedure, in place until 30 June 2020, allows employers to hire, under certain conditions, third country citizens in an irregular situation already residing in the country, to help address urgent labor needs in agriculture. In Germany, after an initial suspension, the entry of foreign seasonal workers was reauthorised in April and May for a total of 80 000 persons – predominantly Romanian and Bulgarian citizens. Similarly, Greece re-authorized, on 1 May 2020, the entry of seasonal workers from non-EU countries exempted from entry visa requirements, such as Albania, upon an employer's request lodged before 30 June 2020. Given the absence of commercial flights, charter flights from these countries have been organised; this is also true for seasonal agricultural workers to the United Kingdom. The Czech Republic reinitiated admission of seasonal workers on 11 May 2020.

A number of countries have also taken action to mobilise the **migrant health workforce**. In addition to the fact that this group is generally exempted from entry bans, and that expedited processing of work visas for this group is in place, a few countries or subnational governments decided to³:

³ Information on policy changes in specific US States was compiled by the OECD Secretariat based on publicly available information.



- (i) facilitate the temporary licencing of doctors with foreign medical degrees (e.g. Ontario and British Columbia in Canada, New Jersey in the United States and Italy);
- (ii) facilitate recruitment in the national health services (e.g. Chile and Spain);
- (iii) reduce the requirements in terms of postgraduate training to be able to practice (New York, Massachusetts and Utah in the United States);
- (iv) expedite current applications for the recognition of foreign qualifications of health professionals (e.g. Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Spain);
- (v) allow foreign-trained health workers in non-medical occupations in the health sector (e.g. France).

The United Kingdom has decided that doctors, nurses and paramedics with visas due to expire before 1 October 2020 will have them automatically extended for one year.

3. Concessional measure facilitating stay in the territory and access to health care

As immigration services are closed in many OECD countries and movements are restricted, it has proved difficult for migrants to renew their visas, to apply for status changes or simply to leave the country. In these circumstances, a number of OECD countries have offered **blanket relief measures or the possibility to remain**. These include, with varying conditions, Chile, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Denmark, Estonia and the United Kingdom. Other countries still require formal applications but the possibility to remain is generally granted notably to those who cannot return home (Sweden, Finland, Korea, New Zealand) or exceptional extensions have been granted to certain types of visa holders.

One OECD country, Italy, is undertaking a potentially large-scale regularisation programme as a result of the COVID pandemic. Applications will have to be filed between 1 June and 15 July within one of the following streams: (i) temporary 6-month permit for foreigners whose permit expired after 31 October, if they prove they were in Italy at 3 March 2020 and worked previously in the sectors identified in the decree; (ii) new employment contracts or regularisation of current illegal employment in the sectors identified in the decree and presence prior to 3 March 2020 with a fee of EUR 500.

Temporary concessional measures were necessary for #migrants in most countries during the pandemic

Employment restrictions have been eased in some cases to respond to the changes wrought by the pandemic. Special concessions for holders of temporary visas include the removal of maximum number of hours students may work (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Ireland), or allowing the possibility of telework (Austria, Belgium, Denmark). In Germany, a no-interest loan of 650 EUR monthly paid to university students through March 2021 is also available to international students. A few countries have also loosened the rules to change employer, reduce hours, or work for a lower wage if the change in employment conditions is COVID-related (e.g. Australia, Austria, Canada, Czech Rep, United Kingdom). In the United States, USCIS introduced temporary policy changes regarding the full-time work requirement for H-1B foreign medical graduates and the provision of telehealth services by those H-1B foreign medical graduates.

Finally, in line with [WHO guidance](#) on prevention and control of coronavirus disease for refugees and migrants, most OECD countries offer access to treatment for COVID-19 for all categories of migrants. Some countries, like France or Belgium, already offered free universal access to health care. Others, like Portugal, have temporarily regularised all migrants in an irregular situation to ensure full access. In most



OECD countries, necessary medical treatment may not be denied to anyone, although treatment may be subject to payment.

4. Adapting service delivery during the pandemic

Issuing new visas

The closure of consular services all around the world has led to a **de facto suspension of the issuance of new visas and permits abroad** for most OECD countries. However, about half of OECD countries still process visa or permit applications in the country, notably for acquisition of permanent/long-term residence or renewals, while others only process applications on an exceptional basis. The United States decided in late April to suspend, until the end of June, processing of pending immigrant applications, and to review by the end of May conditions for the issuance of new non-immigrant visas.

Even in countries still processing **visa applications**, immigration offices are closed or operating under restricted access to the public, leading to delays. In-person meetings and interviews, biometric appointments and medical checks are generally suspended. Options for online or postal applications have however been developed in a few countries. Canada decided that no application in progress would be closed or refused because of documents missing due to COVID-19. One country, Chile, recently moved towards 100% digital issuance of visas (already the practice in Australia, for example) which enables continuity in services.

Other activities (asylum, resettlement, expulsions)

Although there remains a large number of people seeking asylum who are in need of international protection, the number of illegal crossings at OECD borders has decreased. In Europe, according to Frontex, there were 4 650 illegal entries in March compared to 6 200 in February, with a much sharper drop in the central Mediterranean). Similarly, in the United States, apprehensions and inadmissible entries at the Southwest border were down from February to March (from 36 500 to 33 900) and in sharp decline compared to the previous year (76 500 and 103 700 respectively). According to the US administration, record low numbers reflect the effectiveness of their policies.

In theory, **asylum applications are still processed** in most OECD countries. The European Commission issued [guidance](#) on the implementation of relevant EU provisions in the area of asylum and return procedures and on resettlement, which aims at ensuring the continuity of procedures as much as possible while fully ensuring the protection of people's health and fundamental rights.

Most OECD countries have, however, postponed personal interviews and only process pending applications. Some countries are exploring alternative ways to conduct interviews remotely through the use of videoconferencing (e.g. United Kingdom, Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden), while others allow the lodgement of applications for international protection and/or conduct the preliminary admissibility examination via postal mail or online or by e-mail (e.g. Germany, Canada). A number of EU countries are only processing priority cases, such as families. Canada and the United States have also announced temporary and reciprocal measures where they will now return those who attempt to make an asylum claim between official ports of entry along the land border, and at air or marine ports of entry (with some exemptions).

UNHCR has compiled a [guide](#) with practical recommendations and good practices to address protection concerns in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Two situations are considered: (i) the continuation of asylum procedures with adaptation to prevent COVID-19 transmission and adaptation of procedures (e.g. the decision by Austria and Switzerland that COVID-related no-shows or non-co-operation do not entail any consequences for the asylum-seekers); or (ii) suspended asylum procedures with backlog



management with decision preparation to prepare for resumption (e.g. Netherlands). UNHCR encourages and supports transfer from reception and identification centres into individual accommodation, notably for the most vulnerable (e.g. in Greece).

In view of the unfolding COVID-19 situation, a number of OECD countries have also released people from detention centres and avoided new placements, including new arrivals, in closed facilities. This is the case for example in Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Furthermore, because of travel restrictions, most countries have also **suspended resettlement**. UNHCR and IOM temporarily stopped resettlement operations, and national resettlement programmes have been suspended in Canada, New Zealand, and all EU countries. Refugee resettlement travel to the United States has also generally been suspended, with very limited exceptions for individuals in urgent circumstances. On-site missions and interviews by governments have been halted. To give an order of magnitude of the disruption, March and April saw IOM cancel more than 800 resettlements concerning 9 000 individuals, while fewer than 15 operations (for about 100 individuals) took place. Nonetheless, this did not prevent relocation of Unaccompanied Minors (UAM) from the Greek islands. A number of EU Member States and Switzerland have committed to transfer 1 600 UAM from Greece as part of a relocation scheme organised by the EC and the Greek authorities, with the support of UNHCR, IOM and EASO. The first 60 UAM arrived in Luxembourg and Germany mid-April. Switzerland also accepts requests for UAM from Greece with extended family ties in Switzerland, and around 20 UAM arrived in Switzerland mid-May.

Forced returns have also been affected. While a number of countries have signalled increasing interest and requests for voluntary return programmes, under the current situation OECD countries face practical difficulties in carrying out return activities to countries of origin, including due to the reduced availability of staff and of commercial flights, but also to the closure of borders or restrictive entry measures introduced by origin countries. In Europe, forced returns are very limited from all countries, though most EU Member States did not formally stop forced returns. The United States still operates deportation flights, notably to countries of the Northern Triangle (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador), but at reduced scope. In the first half of April, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement conducted about 3 000 removals compared with 18 000 in the month of March. Some countries of origin are notably requesting that returnees be tested for COVID-19 to help contain the spread of the virus.

5. Medium-term impacts in terms of migration management and integration

A number of factors suggest that observed gradual exits from lockdowns in most affected countries will not lead to a quick return to “business as usual” in terms of migration management:

- Consular services abroad may remain inaccessible for some time.
- Backlogs may appear in the processing of visa applications for most categories of migration.
- Backlogs may also appear for asylum applications due to the limited mobility of persons and pause on operations during the pandemic.
- Pending work authorisations may become ineligible due to changes in the labour market situation – either because the employer no longer needs the worker, or because a weaker post-pandemic labour market leads to more restrictions on recruitment from abroad.
- Students may have been unable to complete their studies within the period foreseen by their visa.
- Migrants, regardless of their status (temporary visitor, student or worker), may have been unable to depart and overstayed their visa, making them ineligible for further extensions.
- Those who benefited from a temporary, pandemic-related extension of their visa, may find themselves in an uncertain situation at the end of the shutdown, with limited prospects for return.



- Highly skilled potential migrants may reconsider their options and cancel or delay their migration projects. Similarly, firms may be less inclined to sponsor intra-corporate transfers and international placements.
- Return operations are likely to remain complicated by restrictions in countries of origin for many months to come.
- Resumption of resettlement is also likely dependent on various factors, including border restrictions, flight availability, the capacity of migration offices and international partners. This raises concerns regarding the increased vulnerability of refugees if operations remain suspended or delayed for a long time.
- Lastly, the disruption of settlement services, as well as their adjustment to a combination of virtual settings and in-person services with physical distancing, may have longer-term negative impacts on the integration prospects of recently arrived immigrants.

Furthermore, migrants may be particularly hard hit by the direct and indirect economic consequences of COVID-19 related shutdowns, as they are more likely to hold temporary contracts and tend to be concentrated in sectors more sensitive to fluctuations in the business cycle (construction, retail services) or disproportionately exposed to shutdowns (hospitality, domestic services). Migrants may also be disproportionately impacted by COVID/health concerns themselves due to higher proportions working in sectors with high COVID exposure, or their inability to maintain physical distancing: essential services in grocers, cleaners, health care and long-term care home assistance, food processing, etc. On the other hand, the position of migrants working in the medical and care sector might improve, since COVID-19 has emphasized the labour shortages in this sector in some countries and several countries facilitated or fast-tracked recognition of foreign health professionals. That notwithstanding, for many resident migrants the consequences are likely to be severe.

- Many migrants may struggle to stay in compliance with the terms and conditions of their residency permits because of the pandemic. Some may have become eligible for social assistance. They may have lost a job on which their residence was contingent, or had to change employer or sector.
- Migrants may have more difficulties meeting the criteria for family reunification and fulfilling requirements for naturalisation or even the renewal of their permits.
- Migrants with lawful residence may need increasing economic and social support especially if they cannot access general measures envisaged to support more vulnerable workers and families.
- Migrants may have pre-existing vulnerabilities due to poorer language skills, lower digital literacy, lower socio-economic status, previous trauma and underlying mental health wellness, inadequate housing, and lower social capital. The pandemic and its impacts on society and the economy may exacerbate these vulnerabilities, including susceptibility to higher stress at home and financial precariousness, which may increase their risk for abuse or violence, especially gender-related.
- Remittances sent back home may be severely reduced.

How might COVID-19 fundamentally change migration overall?

In the medium-term, responding to these challenges will not be easy and will require needs and policies to be anticipated and adapted in a timely manner. Coordination between OECD countries will also be important to avoid decisions in one country having unexpected consequences on others. Going forward, the COVID-19 crisis is likely to have also long-lasting impacts on migration management and integration policies – both positive and negative.

First, a number of questions may arise regarding how to ensure the safe and efficient management of migration. This could be the case, for example, for short-term and seasonal labour market needs, for



programmes aimed at attracting foreign talents, including international students, or for fulfilling pledges, commitments and obligations in terms of humanitarian migration, notably through resettlement and relocation. In the case of international students, for example, the pandemic may have long-lasting effects on students' behaviour and school/country choice, notably if universities are switching to mainly online courses. Likewise, with fewer resources and more limited opportunities to fund study through work, high-cost international education choices may become less attractive.

Associated with this, it is important to recognise the bigger question of how COVID-19 may fundamentally change migration overall. In the context of a severe economic recession and increasing challenges for maintaining social cohesion, not only may the need for international recruitments may be reduced; support for proactive migration policies may also be affected. Further, the hiring of high-skilled individuals and firms on international mobility and travel may evolve, impacting business trips, intra company transfers, or international studies and cultural exchanges.

Second, experiences from previous economic crises, suggest that there might be disproportionate and long-lasting negative effects on the integration of immigrants and their children unless appropriate support measures are in place.

Thirdly, long-term effects may also affect the intention to emigrate from less developed countries because of the effect of the global economic downturn and reduced remittances adding to the anticipated migration pressure and increasing anxiety in public opinion of host countries. This may be even reinforced by the fact that certain alternative (non-OECD) destinations for labour migration, such as in the Gulf region, have been hard hit by the parallel economic shock of the economic downturn and the low oil prices.

Lastly, there might be opportunities to streamline digital visa applications and to use technology better in migration and integration management more generally. For example, the development of online language and civic classes in integration programmes during the COVID crisis may provide new opportunities. These new developments must, however, be considered as additional resources rather than substitutes for regular integration programmes especially for the most vulnerable migrants, the illiterate or persons with limited internet access. Similarly, virtual meetings for citizenship or asylum applications were used in a few countries but attention should be paid to the fairness and efficiency of these digital processes.

In this context, the OECD will continue supporting Member countries in monitoring emerging trends, exchanging information and identifying good practices in migration management and integration to inform the formulation and implementation of policies at national level.



Annex A. Main measures taken by OECD countries on migration management from March to May 2020

Table A A.1. Measures taken in OECD countries on exemptions of entry ban, March to May 2020

	Exemptions of entry ban for ...			Cross border workers and truck drivers are allowed to enter
	Long-term or permanent resident	Immediate family members of Nationals (of other nationals)	other permit holders (except special concessions)	
Australia	Yes	Yes	People with a compassionate or compelling reason, must apply online for an exemption from the Australian Border Force	Exemption to entry ban for New Zealanders subclass 444
Austria	Yes	Yes (EU & EEA and CHE)	Yes but need a medical certificate confirming negative test for SARS-CoV-2 within last four days	Yes
Belgium	Yes	Yes	All permits > 3 months	Yes, fiscal adjustments for telework
Canada	Yes	Yes and now also include parents and step parents (until 30 June)	Yes for all valid work or study permits as defined by Quarantine Act order.	Non-essential cross border movements are restricted
Chile	Yes	Yes	Visa-in-process receipt issued in Chile	Yes but Peru and Argentina have increased restrictions
Colombia	No	No	No	No, all borders are currently closed (truck can unload within 8 km)
Czech Rep.	Yes	only EU family members	No, EU nationals are allowed to enter for short business trips or study, but only with an up-to-date negative test	Yes with some restrictions
Denmark	Yes	EU passport holders showing Danish Health card	Yes, if the purpose for entering is deemed worthy by the Danish police	Yes, if the purpose for entering is deemed worthy by the Danish police
Estonia	Yes	Yes	Yes, Latvian, Lithuanian and Finnish citizens for employment or study reason, diplomats, humanitarian grounds.	Yes.
Finland	Yes	Yes	No	Yes, restricted to people with a permanent employment contract
France	Yes	Yes (EEA, United Kingdom and associated Schengen countries)	All valid permits	Yes



	Exemptions of entry ban for ...			Cross border workers and truck drivers are allowed to enter
	Long-term or permanent resident	Immediate family members of Nationals (of other nationals)	other permit holders (except special concessions)	
Germany	Yes	Yes (EEA, United Kingdom and associated Schengen countries)	No	Limited to some border crossing points with Austria, Denmark, France, Luxembourg and Switzerland. Yes with others
Greece	Yes	Yes (EU and EEA)	All valid residence permits	(Cross border workers: N/A) Truck drivers can enter.
Hungary	Only EEA and Swiss LTR	No	ROM and BLG on a pre-designated route	Yes in designated border crossing points with some restrictions on distance
Iceland	Yes	Yes	..	..
Ireland	No restriction to people with a valid visa or residence card			Yes
Israel	Yes	No	Business travel and special authorisations	No
Italy	Yes	Yes (EEA, United Kingdom and associated Schengen countries)	Passengers traveling on business.	Yes, special lanes and crossings dedicated to cross border workers
Japan	Exceptional circumstances considered / except special permanent resident	Yes	Previously issued visas (depending on the date and place of issuance) may be invalidated	N/A
Korea	Yes	No	Previously issued visas are suspended but short-term (C4) and long-term Employment Visas remain valid	No
Lithuania	Yes	Yes	All valid residence permits	Yes, but from 8 April 2020 truck drivers with clear symptoms will not be allowed to continue on.
Latvia	Yes	..	Foreign citizens by private vehicle from other Schengen member countries was still allowed	Yes
Luxembourg	Yes	Yes (EEA, United Kingdom and associated Schengen countries)	All valid residence permits	Yes
Mexico	No restriction imposed			Non-essential cross border movements are restricted
Norway	Yes	Yes (EEA and CHE)	All valid permits	Yes
Netherlands	Yes	Yes (EEA, United Kingdom and associated Schengen countries)	Long-stay visa, including persons with a temporary residence permit (Machtiging Voor Voorlopig Verblijf – MVV).	Only in crucial sectors with a special vignette
New Zealand	Yes	Yes on same flight	No	N/A
Poland	Yes	Yes, only with residence card or working in Poland	Work permits (incl. seasonal work permits)	Yes with some restrictions



	Exemptions of entry ban for ...			Cross border workers and truck drivers are allowed to enter
	Long-term or permanent resident	Immediate family members of Nationals (of other nationals)	other permit holders (except special concessions)	
Portugal	Yes	Yes (EEA, United Kingdom and associated Schengen countries)	All valid permits	Yes with some restrictions
Slovak Republic	Yes	Yes (EU)	No	Yes, but some conditions apply to cross-border workers, with special conditions for health-care workers
Slovenia	Yes	Yes (EU)	No	Yes, but some conditions apply to cross-border workers, with special conditions for health-care workers
Spain	Yes	Yes (EEA, United Kingdom and associated Schengen countries)	all permits > 3 months	Yes
Sweden	Yes	Yes (EEA, United Kingdom and associated Schengen countries)	No	Yes
Switzerland	Yes	Yes (EU and EEA)	L, B, C, Ci, G	Yes
Turkey	No	No	No	..
United Kingdom	Yes	..	Yes	..
United States	Yes	Yes	Yes	Non-essential cross border movements are restricted

Table A A.2. Continuity of immigration services from March to May 2020

	Issuing new (long-term or short-term) residence permits (onshore or offshore)	Processing of asylum applications continues	Resettlement Continues	Forced returns continue
Australia	Yes (delays and medical checks are impacted)	Yes	Onshore only	Yes for voluntary unescorted removals
Austria	Onshore processing (in writing) but immigration offices are closed. Consulates offer no service to the public	Yes	N/A	Very limited
Belgium	Only processing pending cases onshore cases. No visa application offshore	Yes, online since 6 April	No	Very limited
Canada	Yes for both permanent and temporary (no case closed or refused due to lack of document)	In-person hearings take place but some claims are processed based on paper	On a case by case for people in urgent need of protection	No
Chile	Yes (all applications are now 100% digital)	..	N/A	No
Colombia	Yes for LTR in country only	Yes by email only	N/A	Very limited
Czech Rep.	No with some exceptions	Yes	N/A	No
Denmark	Yes	Yes	No	Any forced returns, with exception of those that the Danish Police consider to be socially critical, are postponed until further notice
Estonia	Yes.	Yes	No	If it is possible.



	Issuing new (long-term or short-term) residence permits (onshore or offshore)	Processing of asylum applications continues	Resettlement Continues	Forced returns continue
Finland	No with some exceptions	No work certificate and no interview	No	No until 1 June 2020
France	No with some exceptions	Yes	No	Very limited
Germany	No with some exceptions	In written form only	..	Very limited
Greece	Processing pending applications, with some exceptions. TCNs required to apply for an initial residence permit during the period that Immigration Services are closed to the public, may do so without sanctions or penalties, until 30 September 2020 at the latest. From 18 May 2020, Immigration Services start providing services to the public again.	Pending and electronic app. for the renewals. From 18 May the Asylum Service starts providing services to the public again	N/A	Very limited
Hungary	No with some exceptions	..	N/A	..
Ireland		..	..	..
Israel	Yes for LTR (onshore and offshore) but delays are expected. No for short term residence permits with some exceptions.	Yes	No	Very limited
Italy	No with some exceptions	No.	Continues in a limited manner	Very Limited
Iceland	No with some exceptions (with major delays)	..	No	Very limited
Japan	Yes	..	..	..
Korea	Yes but suspension of visa free regime for 90 countries	..	..	Yes
Lithuania	Yes onshore but not offshore.	..	No	No
Latvia	No	..	N/A	No
Luxembourg	No	Yes, with the exceptions of interviews and Dublin transfers	N/A	No
Mexico	Yes	..	No	Very limited
Norway	Yes. However, most people granted a residence permit after 20 April and onwards cannot travel to Norway until further notice.	Yes. (Interviews were temporarily suspended until 1st April)	No	Very limited
Netherlands		..	..	..
New Zealand	Applications for some visa categories now being processed for applicants already in New Zealand	..	No until end April at least	Very limited
Poland	Yes onshore but not offshore	..	N/A	Readmission and return are still being carried out but may be limited due transport capabilities (in most cases it is only possible to bring foreigners by land to the border of a neighbouring country)
Portugal	Yes	..	No	Very limited
Slovak Republic	No with some exceptions	..	..	..
Slovenia	No with some exceptions	Stopped for 1 month and resumed on 9 May	N/A	Very limited
Spain	No with some exceptions for long stay visas	Yes	No	No
Sweden	Yes for LTR	Yes	No	Very limited



	Issuing new (long-term or short-term) residence permits (onshore or offshore)	Processing of asylum applications continues	Resettlement Continues	Forced returns continue
Switzerland	Yes (since 11 May, applications submitted prior entry ban are processed. For applications submitted after entry ban: some exceptions). As of 11 May family reunification is possible for Swiss, EU and EEA nationals and to all as of 8 June. Activity back to normal on 8 June for EU and EEA nationals.	Yes	No	Very limited
Turkey	No, appointments rescheduled to June	..	..	..
United Kingdom	No with some exceptions	..	No	Removal centres are closed to visitors
United States	No for permanent residence permits until end June, except investors (EB5) and health care professionals	..	Suspended, with exceptions in urgent cases	Yes

Table A A.3. Measures taken in OECD countries on special concessions for holders of temporary visas, March to May 2020

Special concessions for holders of temporary visas		
	Extension for those unable to leave	Others
Australia	Application required	- The 40 hour limit on international students working in supermarkets is lifted (until 1/05), aged care, and nursing. - Reduced hours or layoffs due to COVID19 do not affect work permit validity if the reduced income is in line with collective bargaining agreements and enough for the individual to support themselves.
Austria	Application to be submitted in writing	- Min. salary requirements can be pro-rated if employees are (partially) unemployed (not applicable to Blue and Red-White-Red cards). - Telework is possible
Belgium	Application by email. Those unable to renew are temporarily tolerated	Up to end June, asylum seekers (hosted by the employer) can work immediately (instead of after 4 months previously).
Canada	Application required. Those whose status has not yet expired are to apply online to extend their stay in Canada. People with expired status visas by less than 90 days can apply to restore their status if they meet criteria and pay a restoration fee.	International students may begin their classes while outside Canada (without affecting eligibility for the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program).
Chile	Yes	
Colombia	No	No
Czech Rep.	Possibility to remain	Migrant workers who have lost their job (e.g. in the automobile industry) may be authorised to change employer and sector
Denmark	Those unable to renew permits are temporarily tolerated. Departure deadlines are extended 2 months from the decision date	Foreign nationals with approved permits can start work from their home country
Estonia	Extended 10 days after the end of COVID-19 emergency period	
Finland	Exceptional permits may be issued for those unable to return home, subject to self-sufficiency	Until the end of October, people with valid residence permit can change employer or field of employment.
France	90 days extension	
Germany	Possibility to remain	



Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Validity of national entry visas expiring between 11 March and 31 August 2020 is extended until 30 September 2020. - Validity of residence permits (LTR or STR) expiring until 30 June 2020 is extended until 31 December 2020. - The validity of asylum applicants' cards that expire by 31 May 2020 is prolonged for a period of 6 months. 	
Hungary	Extended 45 days after the end of the state of emergency, except for short term entry visas.	No
Iceland		
Ireland	Automatically renewed for up to 4 months for those with permits expiring.	Student visa holders can now work 40 hours a week until further notice. Persons unemployed due to COVID-19 can receive COVID-19 pandemic unemployment benefits.
Israel	Automatically renewed until 30 June 2020 with the exception of tourist visas which are only extended in special circumstances.	
Italy	Permits expiring between 31/01 and 15/03 are extended until 31 August 2020 Italy is considering a regularisation for people who can demonstrate they were in the country before 8 March 2020 and are employed in specific sectors (agriculture, livestock, animal husbandry, fisheries and fish-farming, domestic services and Long term care)	
Japan	App required. Extension of the period of stay with the status of residence of "Temporary Visitor" unable to return.	
Korea	Registered aliens and overseas Korean residents are automatically extended to 30/05. B-1&2 or C-3&4 visas holders who are unable to leave Korea can get a 30 days extension.	
Lithuania	Possibility to remain but expected to depart at the end of the quarantine period	
Latvia	People with a permit expiring on 13/03 can remain. Grace period runs 30 days beyond the end of the emergency period.	
Luxembourg	Short and long term permits expiring from 1 March are automatically renewed until the end of the state of emergency. TCN not subject to visa requirements can remain legally for the duration of the crisis.	
Mexico	Application required	
Netherlands	Overstay will not have consequences for future visa applications (no re-entry ban)	Start-up Visa or self-employed residence permit are now allowed to request the 'Temporary Bridging Measure for Self-employed Professionals'
New Zealand	Foreigners with temporary permits expiring from 2 April can get an interim visa online	
Norway	No, however, being unable to leave the country before a permit expires, will not have any consequences in the current situation.	Seasonal workers: The validity of the permit may be extended until 31st December 2020. Application is required.
Poland	Yes, 30 days extension	A new provision allows foreigners to work under conditions other than those specified in regulations for the different types of permits, without the need to obtain new permits, change them or enter new declarations in the register.
Portugal	Expiring documents are valid until 30 June.	
Slovak Republic	Authorisation to stay up to 30 days after the end of the emergency period. 90 days extension of Schengen visa validity. 60 days extension after the termination of the contract for employment permits. 30 days extension after the exams for international students.	Renewals of temporary residence for the purpose of business will not be obliged to meet the requirement of minimum income/profit for this year.
Slovenia	Possibility to remain and extension of permits until 9 July	



Spain	Expiry periods have been suspended (Royal Decree 463/2020). All work and residence permits will be extended automatically for six months after the state of emergency has ended. Long-term stays and visas will likewise be extended for three months.	
Sweden	Application required but will generally be granted (free of charge for short term visas)	
Switzerland	Application required	
United Kingdom	Temporary permits expiring between 24 January and 31 July are extended until 31 July.	Employers can complete a right to work check via video Employers of Tier 2 or Tier 5 workers may reduce their salaries to the amounts payable under the provisions of the economic stimulus pack
United States	Application required. In some cases timely filed extension applications may be granted for up to 240 days while an extension request is pending.	Limited public charge flexibility; I-9 remote document inspection policy; DOL extends some Labour Condition Applications and PERM labour certification deadlines; E-verify interim measures; Electronic PERM approvals; Reduced hours or pay may be possible under certain conditions for some non-immigrant visas (e.g. H-1B) but may require a new LCA.

Table A A.4. Additional measures in OECD countries for agricultural and health migrant workers, March to May 2020

	Other specific measures (exemption of travel ban, new programmes, Recognition of foreign qualification, working conditions) for	
	Foreign agricultural workers	Foreign health workers
Australia	Seasonal worker programme and Pacific Labour Scheme participants unable to go home can stay, continue working and change employer Working Holiday Makers who are working in critical sectors (e.g. agriculture, aged or health care) will be exempt from the 6 month work limitation with one employer and eligible for a Temporary Activity (subclass 408) visa	International students studying relevant medical courses will be exempt from the usual 40-hour per fortnight work limit
Austria	Seasonal workers in the field of agriculture and forestry and foreign health workers are not subject to the entry ban. They can enter via bus or train. They have to practice self-quarantine for 14 days. If they do not have a place to practice self-quarantine they will be provided with a place to stay. The self-quarantine ends early if a medical certificate proving, that there is no infection with COVID-19, is submitted	
Belgium	Foreign agricultural workers in the country can - work up to 130 days in agriculture (65 before) - work up to 200 days (100 before) in the fruit growing sector (max 1/3 of the foreign workforce) No application of the rule preventing those who have been working in agriculture in the past 180 days to work as seasonal workers	Exemption to the entry ban
Canada	Exemption to travel ban include seasonal workers. 2 weeks recruitment period waived for the next 6 months of employers in agriculture and food processing. Extension of max contract duration from 1 to 2 years. Mandatory 14-day quarantine period upon entering Canada, before they can start working.	Exemption to travel entry ban to persons permitted to work in Canada as a student in a health field, or a licensed health care professional with proof of employment in Canada. Recognition of foreign qualifications is a provincial competency
	International students already in Canada are allowed to work full-time (beyond 20 hours) in federally recognised essential services until Aug 31 (health care, critical infrastructure, or the supply of food or other critical goods)	
Chile	No	In the emergency period, the Chilean NHS can hire foreign health workers without qualifications recognised in Chile
Colombia	No	Measures are currently under review
Czech Rep.	No	No
Denmark	..	Foreign workers with health professional background are urged to sign up for voluntary non-paid work. Priority processing for those close to full recognition.
Estonia	Government prolonged period of the short-term employment up to 31.07.2020	Exemption to the entry ban



	Other specific measures (exemption of travel ban, new programmes, Recognition of foreign qualification, working conditions) for	
	Foreign agricultural workers	Foreign health workers
Finland	1500 seasonal workers have been authorised to enter Finland in a first phase.	Exemption to the entry ban
France	Measures are currently under review	Exemption to the entry ban
Germany	In March strict restrictions applied to seasonal and harvest workers from selected EU countries. In April and May the government allowed 40 000 workers per month, notably from Romania	Landers (the competent authority) have prioritised recognition of occupations in demand. Some have granted temporary permission to practice, under certain conditions, to medical doctors if they have not yet passed all necessary exams (e.g. language) required for recognition.
Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Automatic 6-month extension of work permits granted on an exceptional basis to migrants in an irregular situation - for employment in agriculture to cover urgent needs - Exceptional fast-track procedure until 30 June 2020 for hiring migrants in an irregular situation in agriculture to cover urgent needs - Employers wishing to hire a TCN in seasonal rural work, who is exempted from entry visa requirement, may lodge an application by 30 June. 	Exemption to the entry ban, on condition of immediate inclusion in the National Health System.
Hungary	No	No
Iceland		
Ireland	No, but measures are currently considered to facilitate employment of EEA laid off workers and students to work in agriculture.	Expedite processing of foreign health care professionals as practicable without any alteration to the standards required.
Israel	Automatic extension of maximum period of stay of temporary agricultural foreign workers until 30 May 2020, subject to online registration of employment by authorised farmers.	Easing of certain procedural restrictions concerning employment of foreign home based caregivers.
Italy	Facilitation of stay of seasonal workers whose permit expires.	Facilitation of employment for foreign health workers with foreign qualifications
Japan	As for the technical intern trainees, etc. who got dismissed in Japan due to the impact of the new-type coronavirus infection and have difficulty in their training, the Immigration Services Agency provides support for their re-employment in 14 specified industrial fields including agriculture and allows them to stay in Japan up to one year.	No
Korea	No	No
Lithuania	No	Facilitated measures for the recognition of foreign qualifications in the health care sector
Latvia	No	No
Luxembourg	No	Yes. Health care professionals are examined with priority regarding Recognition of Foreign Qualifications
Mexico	No	No
Netherlands		
New Zealand	Work visa holders with employer-specific work visas already employed in essential services will be able to vary their hours and be redeployed to do other roles within their current workplace. They can also perform their current role in a different workplace. International students employed in an essential services role will be able to work longer hours for their current employer.	
Norway	TCN seasonal workers in agriculture, forestry and fishing currently in Norway will be renewed. Seasonal workers (agriculture/fruit and vegetable sector): From the 12th May 2020 is this group exempted from the entry ban	Exemption to the entry ban
Poland	No	No
Portugal	No	No
Slovak Republic		
Slovenia		Exemption to the entry ban but no other specific measure



	Other specific measures (exemption of travel ban, new programmes, Recognition of foreign qualification, working conditions) for	
	Foreign agricultural workers	Foreign health workers
Spain	All procedures for seasonal workers are suspended for 2020; this prevents the more than 11500 Moroccan workers expected to come to Spain from arriving. Young people between 18 and 21 years of age who are third-country nationals in a regular situation (students, asylum seekers) are automatically allowed to work until 30 September.	Exemption to the entry ban and expedite applications for the recognition of foreign qualifications and current applications for residence and work permits in health sector. Spain is promoting the hiring of at least 500 foreign trained health workers (mostly already in the country); 380 were recruited in first 10 days
Sweden	Not specifically mentioned as a exempted category by the extended temporary entry ban but some groups of seasonal workers are now deemed essential and allowed to enter Sweden	Exemption to the entry ban
Switzerland	Exemption to the entry ban for essential workers (including in health for EU/EFTA and third countries nationals and food processing for EU/EFTA nationals). Regarding recognition of foreign qualifications, physicians with a job offer already in Switzerland receive priority processing.	
United Kingdom	No special programme but charter flights with seasonal workers have been organised by UK employers from central and eastern Europe, notably Romania	Visas expiring by 1/10 are extended for 12 months
United States	H-2A petitioners with a valid temporary labour certification can now start employing certain foreign workers who are currently in the United States and in valid H-2A status immediately after USCIS receives the H-2A petition, but no earlier than the start date of employment listed on the petition. Additionally, H-2A workers are now allowed to stay beyond the three-year maximum allowable period of stay in the United States.	Changes regarding the full-time work requirement for H-1B foreign medical graduates and the provision of telehealth services by those H-1B foreign medical graduates

Table A A.5. Access to treatment for COVID-19 for migrants in an irregular situation in OECD countries

	Do migrants in an irregular situation have access to free health care if they contract COVID-19?
Australia	The decision to charge Medicare ineligible patients remains a matter for each State and Territory Government. Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia decided to waive out-of-pocket expenses for Medicare ineligible patients for COVID-19 related diagnosis and treatment.
Austria	Only absolutely necessary medical treatment may not be denied to anyone, otherwise a claim to treatment exists in principle only for persons who are compulsorily insured in Austria
Belgium	Yes
Canada	Access to health care and the provision of health care services is determined by provincial and territorial health authorities. Provincial and territorial governments have put in place special provisions to ensure that all residents have access to testing and treatment for COVID-19.
Chile	Yes
Colombia	Emergency health care is granted to any citizen regardless their status.
Czech Rep.	Migrants in an irregular situation infected by COVID-19 will be provided with appropriate health care but may have to reimburse.
Denmark	..
Estonia	Yes. Access to emergency health services.
Finland	Yes
France	Yes
Germany	Yes
Greece	Yes, free access when urgently admitted for hospitalisation and full access to minors (under 18).
Hungary	All persons, irrespective of status, have free access to the necessary treatment related to COVID 19.
Iceland	
Ireland	No cost but access to test may be difficult
Israel	Yes



Italy	Access to emergency health services
Japan	..
Korea	Testing for COVID-19 available for everyone, including migrants in an irregular situation. Fees for testing/treatment same as for citizens. No requirement to provide identity for testing. Government suspended in January 2020 the requirement for medical facilities to report migrants in an irregular situation to immigration office.
Lithuania	Yes
Latvia	No
Luxembourg	Yes
Mexico	Yes
Netherlands	
New Zealand	..
Norway	Access to emergency health services
Poland	No confirmed contracted foreigner in a guarded centre yet. But, in case of a foreigner who has contracted the virus, appropriate sanitary services should be informed and examinations carried out.
Portugal	Yes
Slovak Republic	..
Slovenia	Access to emergency health services
Spain	Yes
Sweden	Access to emergency health services
Switzerland	Yes
United Kingdom	..
United States	..

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