

18.6.2020

Denmark to further re-open borders and ease travel advice

Effective 27 June, the Danish Government will implement a new model for opening the borders and easing travel advice for countries in the EU and Schengen area, as well as the UK. The model establishes a number of objective criteria, including a low number of infected persons, which will determine the countries for which the borders will be opened.

After a long period with entry restrictions and advising against all non-essential travels, Denmark is now taking further steps in the re-opening process. The re-opening is dependent on countries meeting certain objective criteria. Specifically, countries must have a low number of infected persons and meet a criterion still in development regarding their testing regimes. The borders will be open to citizens of countries that meet the criteria. Similarly, the travel advice will be eased for countries that meet the criteria, provided the country does not have significant entry restrictions in place for Danish travellers.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Jeppe Kofod says:

“I am pleased that we are now able to take a significant step toward normalisation and that Danes can now travel to more countries in Europe. We are in a much better place in Denmark than we had dared hope just a short time ago. Therefore, we can now ease the travel advice in a way that opens for most of Europe, moving from an orange to yellow risk level in the travel advice. We are doing this according to a new model based on objective health data, which ensures an automated process – also in the event that we must roll back the advice due to new waves of infection. It is crucial that we do not put our extensive efforts to fight COVID-19 at risk. It must be safe and prudent to travel abroad, and we must minimise the risk of bringing infection back into Denmark from abroad. The idea is that Danes should be able to travel – but COVID-19 should not.”

Minister for Justice Nick Hækkerup says:

“We are now opening the borders to many countries with whom we share close ties. This is good news for all of us, not least for those whose livelihood depends on cooperation between the EU countries. This is a major step, taken with caution to ensure that Danes may feel safe and secure.”

Minister for Health and Elderly Affairs Magnus Heunicke says:

“When we open the borders, it is absolutely essential that we do so in a responsible way. We have therefore developed a model that assesses each country on criteria relating to the current level of infection within the country. The epidemic is not over, and it is therefore important that we continue to closely monitor infections, including infection that comes in from abroad.”

The current entry restrictions will be replaced by a new model for opening the borders to the EU and Schengen area, as well as the UK, using objective criteria for the health situation in each country and guided by a principle of caution. A testing criterion currently under development by the authorities will also be implemented. For these countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark will revert to giving individual travel advice for each of these countries.

To be “open”, a country must have fewer than 20 infected persons per 100,000 inhabitants per week. Once a country is open, the threshold for changing the status to “quarantine country” will be 30 infected persons per 100,000 inhabitants. This policy is designed to prevent opening and closing because of minor fluctuations from week to week. Requirements will also be set for the countries’ testing regimes. Statens Serum Institut will prepare a weekly table of countries classified respectively as “open” or “quarantine country”.

The new model will take effect on Saturday, 27 June. A list of open and quarantine countries will be released on 25 June. Based on the selected criteria, however, it is already clear that the vast majority of countries in the EU and Schengen area, as well as the UK, will be open countries.

If the countries do not have significant entry restrictions on Danish travellers, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark’s travel advice will assign the risk level “yellow” to all open countries. This means that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark will no longer advise against non-essential travel, but instead encourage travellers to exercise extra caution and keep up to date. All travellers are also encouraged to follow the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark’s special travel advice for travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. Danes returning home from travel to yellow countries will not be advised to stay home for 14 days after returning to Denmark.

A special mechanism is being established for the Nordic countries. If a Nordic country does not meet the objective criteria for categorisation as “open”, the country will instead be subject to a regional scheme. In these cases, the Danish borders will be open for entry by persons residing in regions of the country that meet the criterion on the number of infected persons per week. Similarly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark’s travel advice will assign the risk level yellow to open regions and the risk level orange to quarantine regions.

There will still be a requirement of at least a 6-night stay for tourists entering Denmark, except for residents of Schleswig-Holstein in Germany, or Skåne, Halland or Blekinge in Sweden. If one of these regions is categorised as a quarantine region, residents will still be permitted entry to Denmark upon presentation of a negative test performed no later than 72 hours before entry.

Furthermore, a model is currently under development for a subsequent phase, in which the borders can be re-opened for tourists from certain third countries with a sufficiently developed testing

regime, reliable reporting, and where the general handling of the pandemic is comparable with the efforts of European countries.

Already on 27 June, however, the Government will expand certain worthy purposes, which currently only apply for EU and Schengen countries as well as the UK, to also apply for third countries. The expansion will cover boyfriends/girlfriends, grandparents and grandchildren, among others. However, it will be mandatory to present a negative test performed no later than 72 hours before entry into Denmark.

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