

U.S. Imposes Travel Ban to U.S. from Schengen Area Countries

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March 12, 2020 | **IMMIGRATION**

On March 11, 2020, President Trump issued a Presidential Proclamation expanding the existing travel ban to the U.S. The travel ban, which originally started with China and then was expanded to Iran, now includes the following Schengen Area countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. *(At this point, the ban does not include the United Kingdom.)*

While the ban for China and Iran is already in place, the Schengen Area ban is effective 11:59 PM EST on March 13, 2020 – it does **not** apply to foreign nationals on flights departing to arrive in the U.S. prior to the effective time and date.

The ban suspends the entry of most foreign nationals who have been in these countries at any point during the 14 days prior to their scheduled arrival to the U.S.

The ban does **not** apply to U.S. citizens or U.S. permanent residents, certain immediate family members of U.S. citizens or U.S. permanent residents, their spouses and children, as well as select others.

The ban **does** apply to most categories of nonimmigrants (visitors, foreign nationals with current employment visas who are abroad) with few exceptions, as well as immigrants (those who have completed their immigrant visa interviews abroad and are attempting to enter the U.S. with their immigrant visas).

Although touted as effective for only 30 days, the ban is technically effective until it is terminated by the President. The Presidential Proclamation also confirms that any foreign national who attempts to circumvent the ban by fraud or willful misrepresentation shall be a priority for removal by the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security.

Given the recency of the expanded travel ban, it is unclear how U.S. Embassies/Consulates abroad will be handling upcoming visa interview availability, scheduled visa interviews, visa issuance, etc. Earlier this week, the U.S. Embassy in Rome had already suspended routine visa services until April 3rd. In addition, it is very possible that there will be heightened scrutiny of foreign nationals entering the U.S. via land-border and seaports of entry. Entrants via these routes may also be denied entry now or in the near future and should expect inquiries into their recent travel histories.

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