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WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

9 MAY – 13 MAY 2022

MANDATORY WEARING OF FACE MASKS FOR AIR TRAVEL 'NO LONGER RECOMMENDED' IN THE EU

On Wednesday (11 May), the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) published an update to the health safety measures for air travel, relaxing the need to wear medical masks on board a flight.

The aforementioned update of the joint Aviation Health Safety Protocol takes account of the recent COVID-19 developments, more specifically the vaccination level, as well as naturally acquired immunity. Moreover, the lifting of restrictions in a majority of European countries has also affected the decision.

Along with the changes related to mask-wearing, the recommendations also include a relaxation of the more stringent measures on-air operations, which will help relieve the burden on the industry whilst keeping appropriate measures in place. Although the mandatory medical mask-wearing on flights is no longer recommended, the exact rules will be left to the discretion of each airline. Passengers are also encouraged to observe distancing measures in indoor areas, including at the airport, wherever possible.

The announcement will come into effect on the following Monday (16 May).

Source (in Polish): <https://www.easa.europa.eu/newsroom-and-events/press-releases/easaecdc-take-first-steps-relax-covid-19-measures-air-travel>

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION MEMBERS PASS RESOLUTION AGAINST RUSSIAN INVASION

On Tuesday (10 May), members of the WHO's European Region passed a resolution that might result in the closure of the office in Moscow and the suspension of meetings in the country in response to its aggression toward Ukraine. 43 representatives voted in favor, 3 were against (Russia, Belarus, Tajikistan), while 2 countries abstained.

Some have criticized this resolution, saying it does not go far enough. Reportedly, diplomats had eventually dropped efforts to suspend Russia from the WHO executive board due to legal procedures, although members could seek to freeze Russia's voting rights as a WHO member at a [major meeting](#) later this month.

According to the Minister of Health of Russia, the World Health Organization resolution that could result in the closure of Russia's regional office over Moscow's actions in Ukraine was "purely political".

Sources: <https://www.reuters.com/article/ukraine-crisis-who-vote-russia-idINL5N2X25O4>
<https://www.euronews.com/2022/05/11/uk-ukraine-crisis-who-vote>

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ANNOUNCED A €562 MILLION INCREASE FOR THE 2022 HORIZON EUROPE BUDGET

On 10 May the Commission adopted the amendment to the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2021-2022, increasing the budget by nearly €562 million.

The additional funds are redirected to further support EU Missions towards innovative solutions to green, health, and digital challenges and more actions to boost the European innovation ecosystem. The program's budget for 2021 and 2022 now reaches a total of nearly €16 billion

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the amendment also includes actions to support researchers previously active in Ukraine using a €25 million direct aid package of Marie Skłodowska-Curie (MSCA) grants. This will enable displaced Ukrainian researchers to continue their academic work in the EU Member States or in countries associated with Horizon Europe, as well as use the money to re-establish themselves back in Ukraine.

The amendment specifies that legal entities established in Russia, Belarus, or in non-government-controlled territories of Ukraine are not eligible to participate Horizon Europe program in any capacity.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_2843

Thank you for your attention!

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