

# IATA says momentum is growing as restrictions are lifted

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has released data that shows a growing momentum in the recovery of air travel as restrictions are lifted, with sharply improving ticket sales relative to 2019 figures.

- A sharp 11-percentage point increase for international tickets sold in recent weeks (in proportion to 2019 sales)
- In the period around 8 February (7-day moving average) the number of tickets sold stood at 49% of the same period in 2019
- In the period around 25 January (7-day moving average) the number of tickets sold stood at 38% of the same period in 2019
- The 11-percentage point improvement between the January and February periods is the fastest such increase for any two-week period since the crisis began

This jump comes as more governments announce a relaxation of border restrictions, with the world's top 50 air travel markets show growing access for vaccinated travelers.

- 18 markets (comprising about 20% of 2019 demand) are open to vaccinated travelers without quarantine or pre-departure testing requirements
- 28 markets are open to vaccinated travelers without quarantine requirements (including the 18 markets noted above). This comprises about 50% of 2019 demand
- 37 markets (comprising about 60% of 2019 demand) are open to vaccinated travelers under varying conditions (18 having no restrictions, others requiring testing or quarantine or both)

Relaxation of regulations have been announced in many of the world's most popular air travel markets including Australia, France, the Philippines, the UK, Switzerland, and Sweden among others.

According to IATA, momentum toward normalizing traffic is growing. "Vaccinated travelers have the potential to travel much more extensively with fewer hassles than even a few weeks ago," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General. "This is giving growing numbers of travelers the confidence to buy tickets. And that is good news! Now we need to further accelerate the removal of travel restrictions. While recent progress is impressive, the world remains far from 2019 levels of connectivity. Thirteen of the top 50 travel markets still do not provide easy access to all vaccinated travelers. That includes major economies like China, Japan, Russia, Indonesia, and Italy,"

IATA continues to call for:

- Removing all travel barriers (including quarantine and testing) for those fully vaccinated with a WHO-approved vaccine,
- Enabling quarantine-free travel for non-vaccinated travelers with a negative pre-departure antigen test result,
- Removing travel bans, and,

- Accelerating the easing of travel restrictions in recognition that travelers pose no greater risk for COVID-19 spread than already exists in the general population.

“Travel restrictions have had a severe impact on people and on economies. They have not, however, stopped the spread of the virus. And it is time for their removal as we learn to live and travel in a world that will have risks of COVID-19 for the foreseeable future. This means putting a stop to the singling out of the traveling population for special measures. In nearly all cases, travelers don’t bring any more risk to a market than is already there. Many governments have recognized this already and removed restrictions. Many more need to follow,” said Walsh.