

# Government issues Red Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) on certain European countries (Schengen Area) and highlights public health risks under Red OTA on Egypt

In view of the health risks arising from the outbreak of the COVID-19 in Europe, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (March 13) issued the Red Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) on certain European countries (Schengen Area), including Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Principality of Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Republic of Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. Besides, the Government alerted the public about the outbreak of COVID-19 cases and associated health risks in Egypt under the Red OTA currently in force.

\* Schengen Area in Europe (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Principality of Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Republic of Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland)

In view of the persistent and rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Europe, the Government has decided to issue the Red OTA on the certain European countries, known as the Schengen Area, including Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Principality of Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Republic of Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, based on public health considerations.

\* Egypt

The HKSAR Government had issued the Red OTA on Egypt on August 29, 2014 due to safety concerns. In view of the persistent and rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Egypt in the past few days, the Government alerted the public about the outbreak of COVID-19 cases and associated public health risks in Egypt under the existing Red OTA. The existing Red OTA remains in force.

The Red OTA urges members of the public planning to travel to the aforementioned countries to adjust travel plans and avoid non-essential travel. In general, members of the public are advised to consider delaying all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

For those who are already in the aforementioned countries, they should:

- pay attention to announcements by local authorities;
- put on a surgical mask all the time;
- avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities and crowded places;
- avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms;
- wear a surgical mask and inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once if experiencing a fever or cough; and
- perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing.

If it is unavoidable to travel to the aforementioned countries, the public should pay close attention to the latest situation of COVID-19 and the corresponding travel health advice issued by the Department of Health (DH). If assistance is needed, they may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) at (852) 1868 or contact the Chinese Embassy in respective countries at their consular protection hotline listed below:

<b>Country</b>	<b>Consular Protection Hotline</b>
Austria	(43) 68120192638
Belgium	(32) 27632006
Czech Republic	(420) 728939951
Denmark	(45) 39460866
Egypt	(20) 2-27363556
Estonia	(372) 5114016
Finland	(358) 40 8677838
France	(33) 153758840
Germany	(49) 3027588551
Greece	(30) 6973730680
Hungary	(36) 30-6925414
Iceland	(354) 893 2688
Italy	(39) 3939110852
Latvia	(371) 26189539
Principality of Liechtenstein	(41) 79 3070937
Lithuania	(370) 68607740
Luxembourg	(352) 621546555
Malta	(356) 77739008
The Netherlands	(31) 0684557449
Norway	(47) 93066621
Poland	(48) 506957563

Portugal	(351) 963355431
Slovak Republic	(421) 949 693 619
Republic of Slovenia	(386) 030640601
Spain	(34) 699089086
Sweden	(46) 0763383654
Switzerland	(41) 0764959218

After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of any recent travel history and any exposure to animals, and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong.

The Food and Health Bureau will closely monitor the situation. Any updates will be issued through the media, the Government's "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html)), the DH's webpage ([www.gov.hk/ncv](http://www.gov.hk/ncv)) and the Security Bureau's OTA webpage ([www.sb.gov.hk/eng/ota](http://www.sb.gov.hk/eng/ota)). Any enquiries on health information on COVID-19 may be addressed to the DH's hotline at (852) 2125 1122 (operating daily from 8am to midnight).

In addition, Hong Kong residents are encouraged to use the online Registration of Outbound Travel Information service ([www.gov.hk/roti](http://www.gov.hk/roti)) to register their contact details and itinerary when outside Hong Kong. The information provided allows the DH and AHU of the ImmD to disseminate practical information to them through appropriate means, including SMS on mobile phones, on a timely basis when necessary.

Apart from the aforementioned countries, the Government also issued the Red OTA on Iran, Korea, as well as Hokkaido in Japan, in light of the persistent and rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in these countries/regions.