

HENRY SMITH MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

26th March 2021

Dear Prime Minister

We are writing to you ahead of the publication of the Global Travel Taskforce report to urge you to introduce a risk-based approach to international travel that will allow its safe resumption, whilst also providing scope for public health protections when required.

The inclusion of international travel in your recent Covid-19 pandemic roadmap out of restrictions was very welcome. However, after over 12 months of struggle it is paramount that the restart of international travel provides for the opportunity for businesses in the aviation, travel and tourism industries to begin their long journey back to recovery.

We therefore urge you to introduce a risk-based approach to international travel, that allows for travel to low-risk nations with minimal or no restrictions but allows for the flexibility for restrictions on those nations where there remains a high risk, including those with variants of concern. A risk-based framework can ensure that the right balance is struck between reopening travel with minimal restrictions and making sure this can be done safely. It would also take into account the significant and welcome progress made in our vaccination programme. This approach must also ensure that Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice works in lock step with the risk-based framework, beginning with the removal of the current advice against all but essential travel.

Where continuing restrictions are required, we believe that the framework must ensure that these are practical and make best use of the significant progress made in recent months. In the case of testing and the test to release policy, it is clear that rapid testing must be introduced for international arrivals and that any test to release policy must keep quarantine periods as low as possible. We also urge the Government to ensure that the cost of testing is kept under review to ensure that it does not act as a disincentive to travel.

Alongside this, we strongly urge the Government to deliver on the commitment made in the Global Travel Taskforce's report published last November which called for Aviation and Tourism Recovery plans which would look at the longer-term challenges; challenges which remain and need to be addressed urgently.

The issues faced by the aviation, travel and tourism industries over the past year had been unimaginable prior to March 2020 and the impact continues to be felt across the economy. We therefore urge you to introduce a risk-based approach to international travel that will allow for the safe resumption of travel but will also provide the flexibility to guard against variants of concern and reflects our significant progress on vaccinating UK citizens.

As an island nation, we cannot fully recover from the devastating impacts of this pandemic without a thriving aviation and travel sector. As such we urge you to introduce measures that allow the safe restart of international travel from 17th May.

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Yours sincerely



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Steve Baker, Member of Parliament for Wycombe
Crispin Blunt, Member of Parliament for Reigate
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