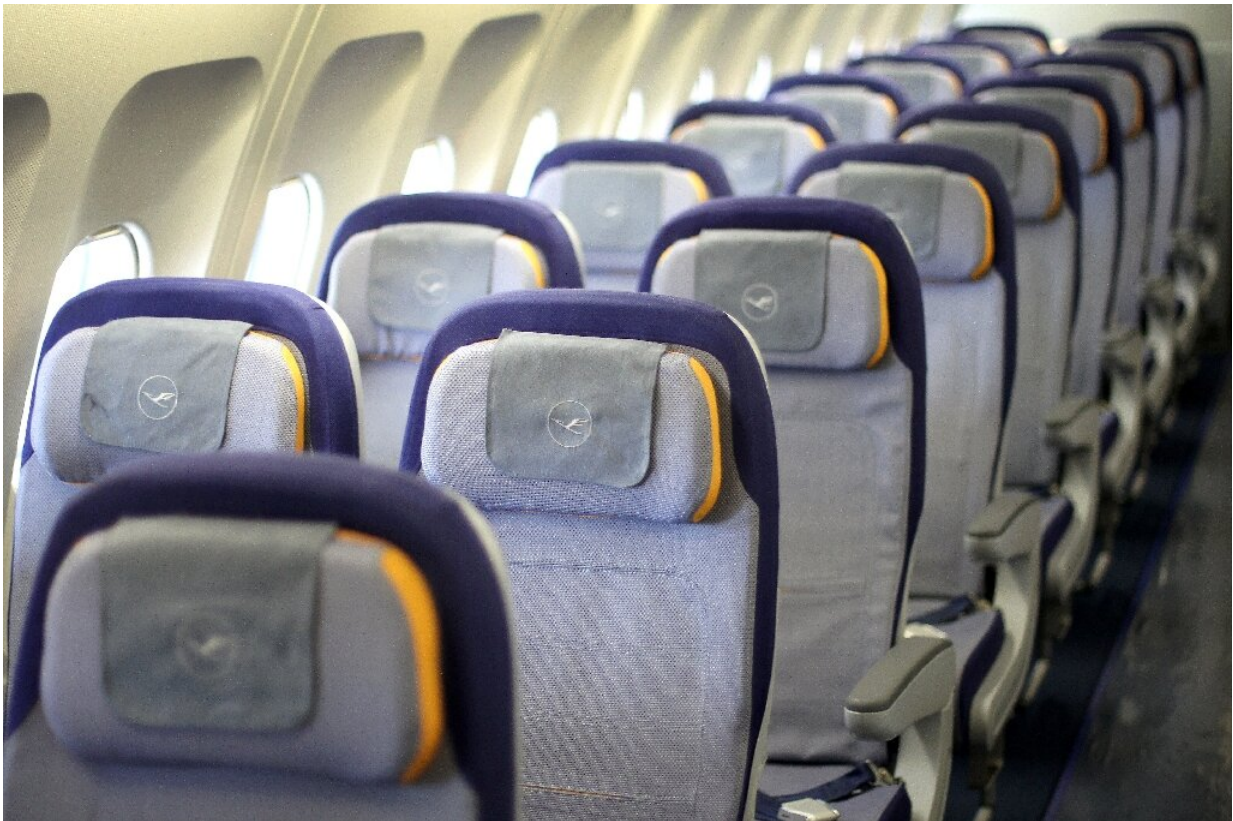


# UN agency rejects COVID vaccine as air travel prerequisite

March 12 2021

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New ICAO recommendations aimed at filling empty airline seats after a dismal pandemic year include opposing making Covid-19 vaccinations a prerequisite to boarding planes

COVID-19 vaccinations should not be required for international travel,

the UN civil aviation agency said Friday as part of updated pandemic guidelines for the air transportation sector.

The International Civil Aviation Organization Council's Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) issued six new and two amended recommendations to member states aimed, after a dismal year, at "restoring public confidence in air [travel](#) and getting passengers to fly again."

"After a 70 percent decrease in air traffic, international air transport can now see the light at the end of the tunnel thanks (in part) to these new recommendations and guidelines," said ICAO Council president Salvatore Sciacchitano.

"The Council," he said, "has also taken into account the latest position of the WHO, which specifies that proof of COVID-19 vaccination should not be made a condition for international travel."

The virus and severe travel restrictions imposed to fight its spread effectively grounded many commercial aircrafts over the past year.

But the gradual rollout of vast [vaccine](#) campaigns has given hope for a return to normalcy.

Earlier this month China launched a system of "virus passports"—or certificates of vaccination—to try to kickstart international travel.

It was hailed as the world's first virus passport—similar schemes are also under discussion in the United States and the EU—but is not mandatory.

"At such time as evidence shows that vaccinated persons would not transmit the SARS-CoV-2 virus or would present a reduced risk of transmitting the [virus](#), member states may exempt such individuals from

testing and/or quarantine measures in accordance with a state's accepted risk threshold (and) the COVID-19 situation," the ICAO said.

But it added, "vaccination should not be a prerequisite for international travel."

CART also urged vaccinating air crews as soon as possible, and the temporary lifting of restrictions to air cargo operations to facilitate the transportation of essential goods, supplies and COVID-19 vaccines.

Based in Montreal, the ICAO Council, meanwhile, said it would convene a high-level meeting in October "to muster the political will of states and obtain commitment towards a full recovery of international air transport."

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