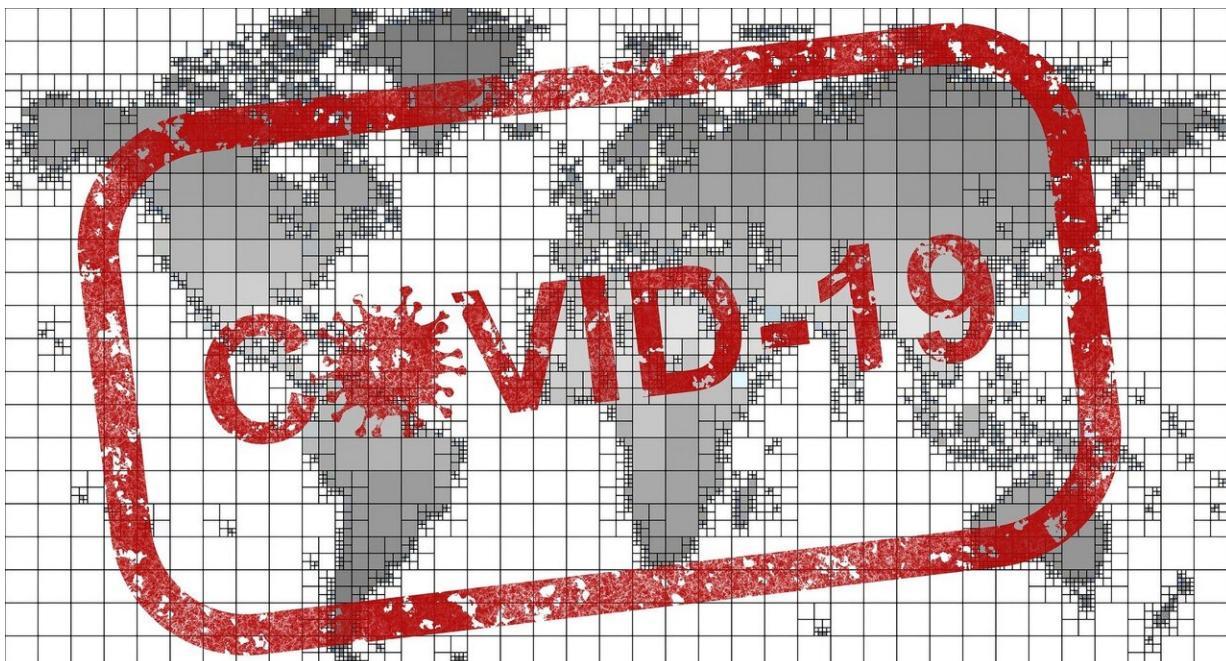


Ryanair, UK airports sue govt COVID over travel rules

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Irish no-frills airline Ryanair and Manchester Airports Group (MAG) are to launch Thursday a legal challenge against the UK government over its COVID traffic-light travel restrictions.

The [legal action](#) seeks greater transparency in how destinations are classified within the system, according to MAG, which manages

Manchester and London Stansted airports.

Britain's COVID risk system ranks destinations as green, amber or red, to determine quarantine and testing requirements when travellers return.

However, the recent reclassification of Portugal—from green to amber—sparked sector-wide anger.

The lawsuit is backed by a number of other airlines, MAG said.

"Recent developments suggest that the [government](#) is now unwilling to open up international [travel](#) by putting low risk countries on the green list," said MAG chief executive Charlie Cornish.

"For most countries, the traffic light seems to be stuck on amber for no obvious reason, despite having prevalence rates much lower than the UK."

He added that the government was not being "open" and needed to provide more clarity to enable the sector to plan ahead—and travellers to book with confidence.

Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary decried the system as a "complete shambles".

"This go-stop-go-stop policy is causing untold damage to the [aviation industry](#) and frustrating and upsetting millions of British families," said O'Leary.

"We call on Prime Minister Boris Johnson to explain the scientific basis behind this system that the government seem to make up as they go along."

-'Havoc' -

Under the current rules launched last month, Britons heading to low-risk "green" countries and territories simply take a virus test before and after they travel.

But those going to amber or red destinations must quarantine for 10 days after they return to Britain—in hotels for red-list arrivals—and take several COVID-19 tests.

The British government advises against travel to amber-listed countries unless for a limited number of exceptional reasons, which does not include holidays.

Meanwhile, only travellers who have British or Irish citizenship or residency rights can enter from red-list countries.

Earlier this month, the travel sector reacted with fury after Portugal was unexpectedly shifted from green to amber.

The move left no European nation on the green list.

The UK-based World Travel and Tourism Council declared last week that the government must scrap the system, which it says has "wreaked havoc" among consumers and businesses, adding this would save hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Meanwhile the government said Thursday that it will "consider the role of vaccinations" for inbound travel.

That could potentially open up travel to popular summer hotspots like Spain, France and Italy, which are all on the amber list.

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