

# Global Mobility Restrictions Overview

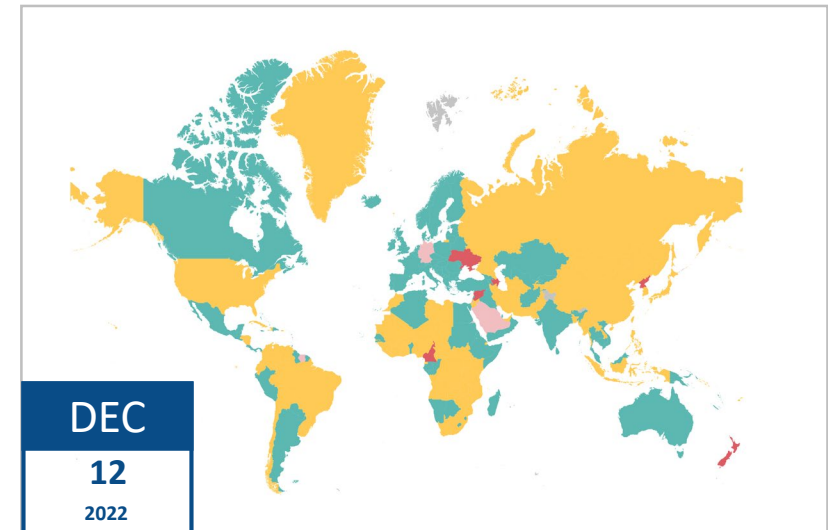
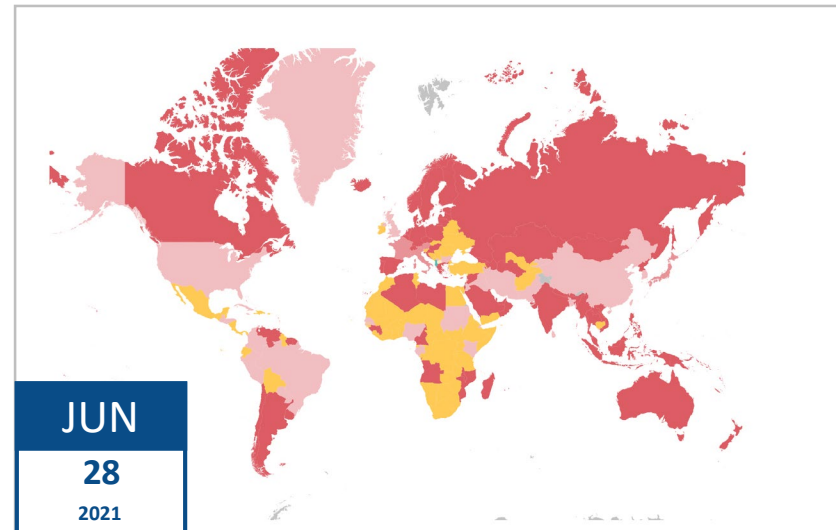
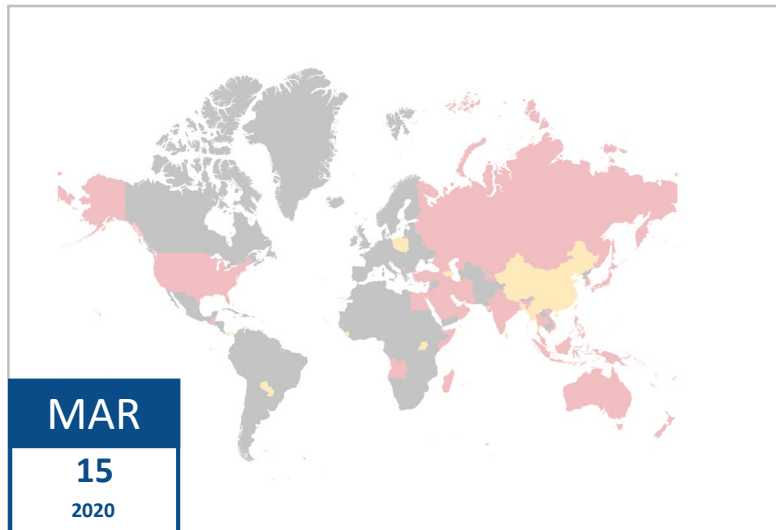
## Monitoring Restrictions on International Air Travel from March 2020 to January 2023

COVID-19 Mobility Impacts: January 2023  
<https://migration.iom.int> • [dtmccovid19@iom.int](mailto:dtmccovid19@iom.int)

### COUNTRY STATUS

These maps show the number of countries, territories or areas (C/T/As) subject to a given restriction or condition imposed by the highlighted country. The darker the shade on the map, the more C/T/As are affected by policies imposed by the highlighted country.

From RESTRICTIONS to CONDITIONS



### LEGEND

#### Entry restrictions (1\*)

- 1 to 99 C/T/As
- 100 to 200 C/T/As
- > 200 C/T/As

#### Conditions for authorized entry (2\*)

- 1 to 99 C/T/As
- 100 to 200 C/T/As
- > 200 C/T/As

- Fully Open
- No official data available

(1\*) Restricted entry on passengers coming from other countries, territories and areas (C/T/A).

(2\*) C/T/As imposing medical measures, changes in Visa or ID or other measures on arrival.

Note: IOM expresses no opinion concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

**DISCLAIMER:** C/T/As that have issued **both** entry restrictions and conditions for authorized entry are mapped in **red** as C/T/As issuing entry restrictions.

## Executive Summary

The DTM *Global Mobility Restrictions Overview* began documenting how international air travel restrictions and conditions for authorized entry evolved as of March 2020 when COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic. Using IATA Timatic Coronavirus Outbreak Updates, DTM has documented how each **country, territory or area (C/T/A)** changed its entry restrictions in line with public health-related immigration and border management measures. Data was collected from **229 C/T/As (Arrival C/T/A)** showing the different types of travel measures and accompanying exceptions placed on a total of **247 C/T/As (Restricted CTAs)**. As the situation evolved, DTM data collection showed emerging trends in the post COVID-19 mobility restrictions and conditions for entry. The Global Mobility Restrictions Overview has provided information intended to support IOM missions and partners in targeted response planning and advocacy for vulnerable populations who may have been affected by changes in global mobility.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, **C/T/As** responded to rising infection rates with a series of measures restricting global mobility. These ranged from **entry restrictions** (passenger bans on travellers arriving from specific C/T/As and flight suspensions) to a series of **conditions for authorized entry** which individual passengers had to meet in order to enter a C/T/A by air travel. These conditions included medical measures (COVID-19 test and/or vaccination certificates, quarantine and other health-related requirements) as well as changes to visa/other documentation requirements and passenger registration and tracking tools monitoring arrivals after entry. Data was also collected on the accompanying exceptions that made certain **groups of individuals exempt from travel measures** (for example, nationals and residents or children under 18 years old). Most recently, since April 2022, entry restrictions and conditions for authorized entry have gradually been lifted and **air travel has become less restricted**.

Throughout the development of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments have had varying responses to the virus spread either through trying to contain it, delay its arrival or minimize the number of infections overall (MPI, 2022). As restrictive travel measures due to COVID-19 have progressively declined globally, **DTM is ending its data collection** on COVID-19 mobility impacts. This final report details the most significant events and the regional and global trends on the issuing of entry restrictions, conditions for authorized entry and the respective exception groups that shaped COVID-19's impact on global mobility.

**Note:** This analysis does not aim to provide exact information on travel requirements which can be accessed via consular authorities of the destination country.

## Key Definitions

**Entry Restrictions:** passenger bans and flight suspensions issued by C/T/As.

**Conditions for Authorized Entry:** medical measures (COVID-19 tests, vaccination or COVID-19 recovery certificates, visa or other documentation requirements, passenger registration and tracking systems).

**Exceptions:** refers to specific categories of groups (i.e. children, diplomatic passport holders, nationals, residents, persons that travelled from or transited through a specific country) and/or individuals to whom the specific COVID-19 related travel restriction issued by a CTA are not applicable to.

**No Measures:** Refers to the removal of COVID-19 related international air travel restrictions issued after 10th March 2020.

## Methodology

229 Arrival C/T/As tracked

2 Categories of Entry Restrictions Tracked (Passenger Bans and Flight Suspensions)

4 Categories of Conditions for Authorized Entry Tracked

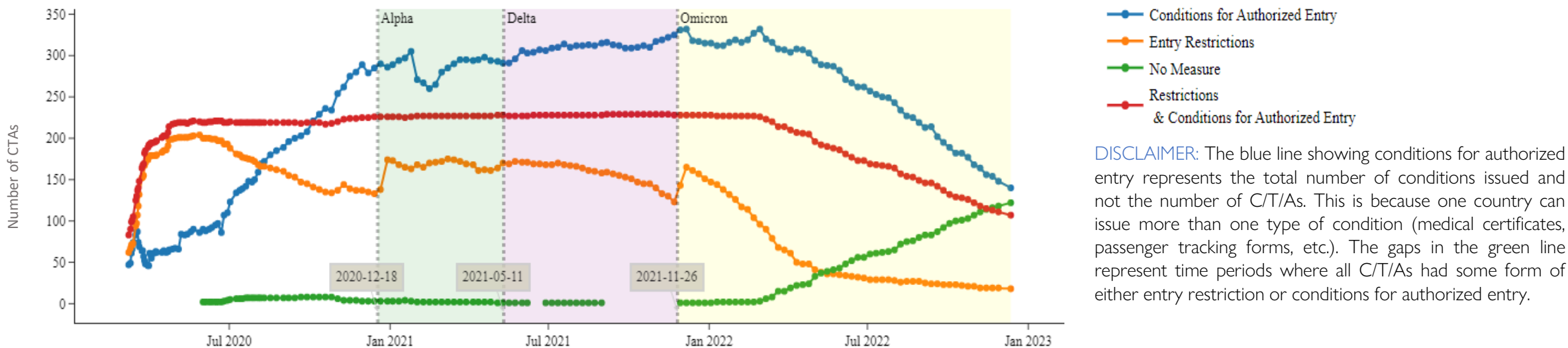
9 Categories of Exception Groups Tracked (Children, Passengers with Diplomatic/UN passports, COVID-health document, Work-related Travel, Emergency Assistance, Nationals and Residents of another C/T/A, Students, Transit, Others)

Data Collection Period: 10 March 2020 – 12 December 2022

**NOTE:** Over time the data collection methodology and categories of information collected changed. For the full methodology and limitations explanation of each phase of data collection see [here](#).

Overview: Number of C/T/As Issuing Entry Restrictions and/or Conditions for Authorized Entry (March 2020 – December 2022)

Number of C/T/As issuing Entry Restrictions and/or Conditions for Authorized Entry (March 2020 – December 2022)



**DISCLAIMER:** The blue line showing conditions for authorized entry represents the total number of conditions issued and not the number of C/T/As. This is because one country can issue more than one type of condition (medical certificates, passenger tracking forms, etc.). The gaps in the green line represent time periods where all C/T/As had some form of either entry restriction or conditions for authorized entry.

The graph above shows the total number of C/T/As issuing **entry restrictions and conditions for authorized entry** since the beginning of data collection.

**Entry Restrictions:** In March 2020, entry restrictions were imposed rapidly as C/T/As aimed to contain the spread of the virus. As of July 2020, the rate at which C/T/As imposed new entry restrictions followed a downward trend, with the exception of some jumps following the designation of the Alpha variant (December 2020) and the Omicron variant (November 2021).

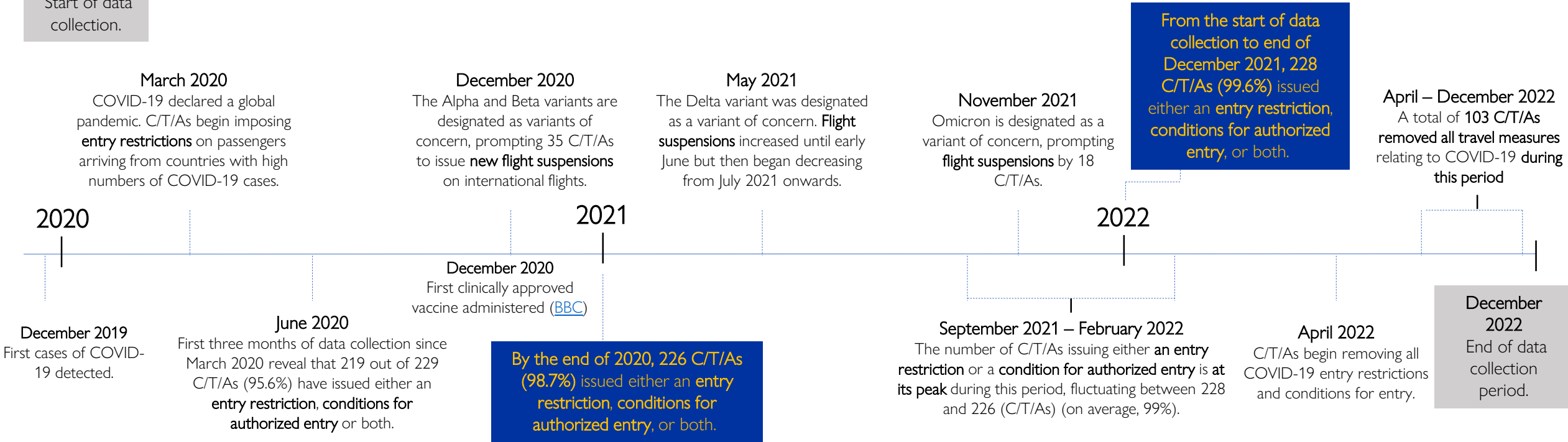
**Conditions for Authorized Entry:** As C/T/As tried to address the spread of the virus, most switched to issuing conditions for authorized entry. It is notable that the declining number of entry restrictions with the exception of occasional spikes was accompanied by a growing number of conditions for authorized entry as countries became less restrictive while at the same time

exercising control over entries by requiring international travellers to meet conditions for entry.

**No Measures:** Beginning in April 2022, C/T/As began lifting all entry restrictions and conditions at a quicker rate, i.e. No Measures. This is a mutually exclusive occurrence, meaning that the gaps in the green line reflect time periods where all C/T/As had some form of either entry restriction and/or conditions for authorized entry. As of 12 December 2022, the final date of data collection, the number of C/T/As that had no measures was 122 out of 229 (53.2%). Due to the overall declining prevalence of entry restrictions and conditions for authorized entry, data collection on global mobility restrictions related to COVID-19 ended in mid December 2022.

## TIMELINE OF COVID-19 KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND MOBILITY IMPACTS

**March 2022**  
Start of data collection.

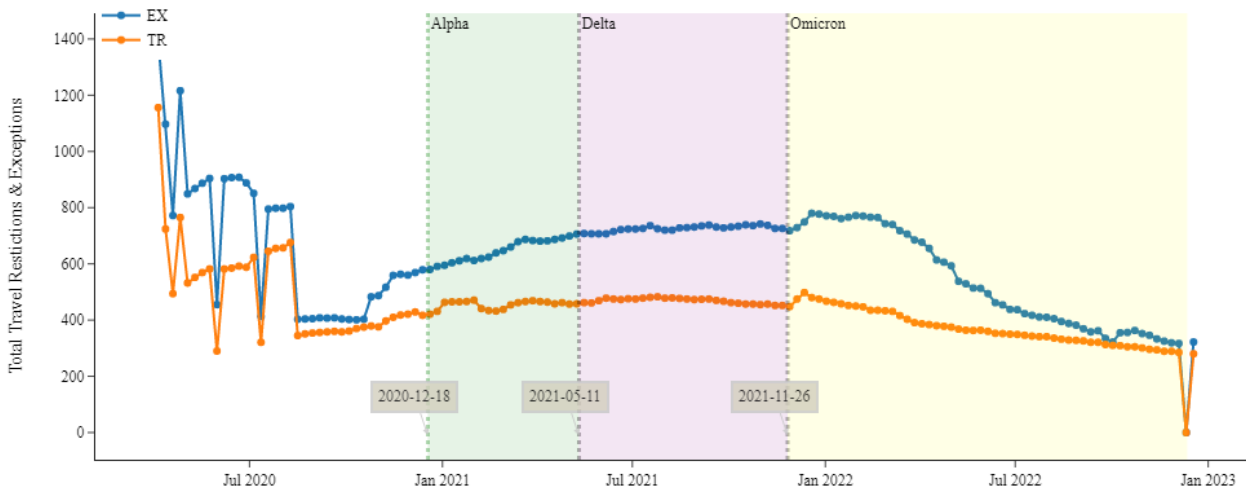


**NOTE:** As of 1 January 2023, it is estimated that more than 5.51 billion people or 71.8% of the world population has received one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. ([New York Times](#))

### Number of Cumulative Travel Measures and Exceptions Imposed Over Time

This graph shows the total number of **travel restrictions (TR)** (including entry restrictions and conditions for authorized entry) imposed by 229 C/T/As since the beginning of data collection. It also shows the total number of **exceptions (EX)** that were issued by each C/T/A alongside each travel measure at any given point. The number of exceptions is higher because C/T/As could issue multiple exceptions for any type of travel restriction.

Number of Cumulative Travel Measures and Exceptions Imposed Over Time



**NOTE:** There was no data collection on 28 November 2022 which is the reason for the dip in TR and EX seen above.

### Trends

**Start of Data Collection:** Due to challenges in obtaining frequent data at the beginning of data collection, as well as the fluctuation exhibited by C/T/As in the periodic removal and re-issuing of restrictions and exceptions this period shows both peaks and drops in the number of TR and accompanying EX issued by each C/T/A. The most common restrictions in the early stages (March 2020) of the pandemic were Medical Restrictions (e.g., health screening upon arrival, quarantine upon arrival, etc.) and passenger bans on nationals arriving from or having been to a specific C/T/A. In March 2020, nationals or passengers arriving from People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Italy and Islamic Republic of Iran were most affected.

**Variants Designation and Vaccine Rollout:** Following the designation of the Alpha variant in December 2020 there was a steady rise in both travel restrictions and exceptions being issued by C/T/As. The rise in exceptions in this period can also be attributed to the beginning of global vaccination at this time which exempted travellers from quarantine and other types of travel restrictions. Following the designation of the Delta variant in May 2021, the number of travel restrictions remained relatively consistent. During this period, international air travel experienced high volumes of passengers who were vaccinated and thus were no longer subject to harsher medical travel restrictions such as enforced 10-day quarantines. For example, in the week of 13 December 2021, 22 CTAs including Islamic Republic of Iran, Morocco, Fiji, and United States of America introduced the COVID-19 full vaccination certificate. By the end of March 2022 a total of 67 C/T/As had COVID-19 vaccination certificates as the main condition for authorized entry.

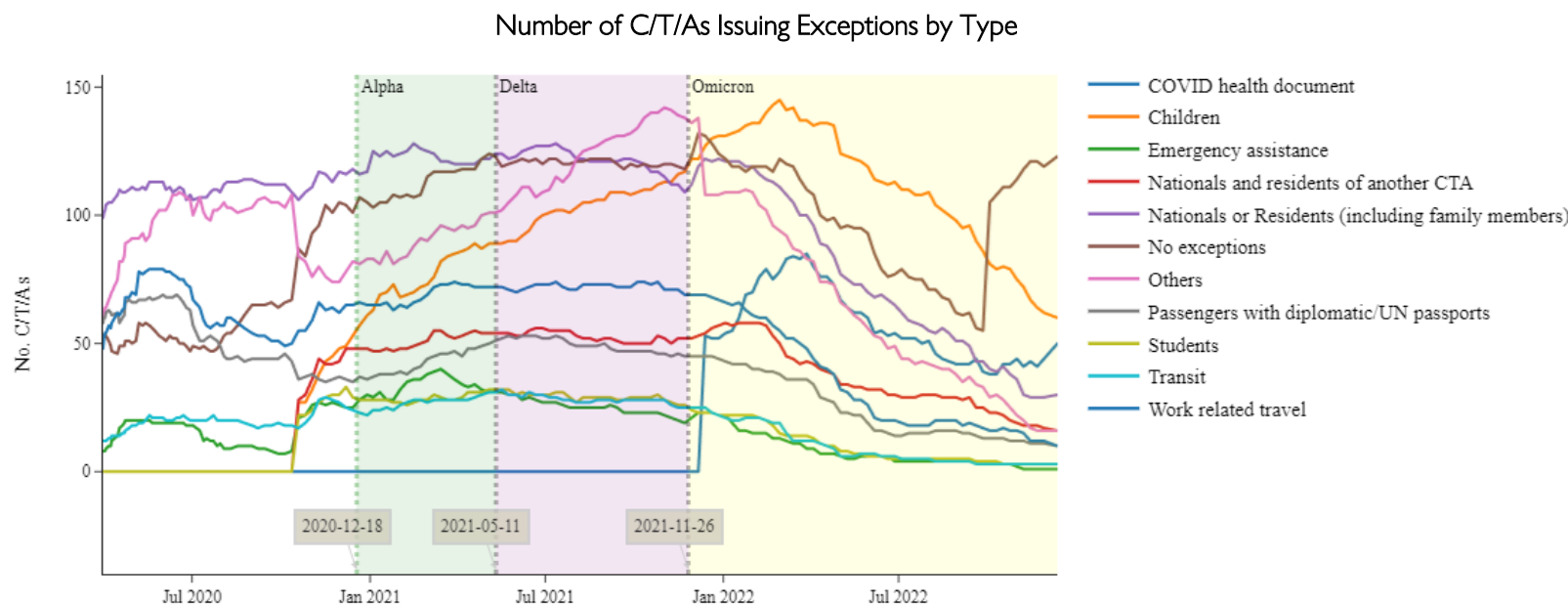
**Phasing out of Restrictions and Exceptions:** The Omicron variant triggered an increase in travel restrictions and accompanying exceptions, however its effects were short term compared to previous variant designations. As of January 2022, the data reflected C/T/As' decisions to phase out travel restrictions in favour of a conditions-for-authorized-entry-based system that became less harsh and as a result also had fewer exceptions causing the two to converge. For example, many C/T/As required all passengers (no exceptions) to fill out health declaration or tracking forms, which can be attributed to the drop in conditions with exceptions.



### Number of C/T/As Issuing Exceptions by Type

This graph shows the total number of C/T/As that issued exceptions by type over time. Throughout the period of data collection, the most predominant exception type was **Nationals or Residents (including family members)**. Whereas this exception was made at first for entry restrictions (passenger bans or flight suspensions), later on, it was frequently included as an exception for conditions for authorized entry (particularly medical restrictions).

**No exceptions** indicates that C/T/As had travel measures in place from which no passengers were exempt. This could range from no exceptions from more restrictive entry restrictions (i.e. passenger bans) which explains the initial prevalence of “No Exceptions”. Later on, “No Exceptions” was still used, but more for conditions for authorized entry (i.e. health declaration forms) from which no passengers were exempt. It should be noted that when C/T/As removed all travel measures (No measures), all assigned exceptions were removed (No exceptions). For this reason, toward the end of the data collection period in late 2022 there is a steep upward trend, as this period had the most C/T/As that removed all restrictions and exceptions.



### Highlights

**Children:** Exceptions for children was the fastest and most consistently growing exception group; they were also issued the most times out of all the exception types. This correlates with the increase in testing and vaccination requirements that accompanied the easing of entry restrictions, as well as the transition towards a conditions-based global mobility system. As children were more likely to be unvaccinated and testing was mostly enforced for adults, C/T/As often exempted children from medical restrictions.

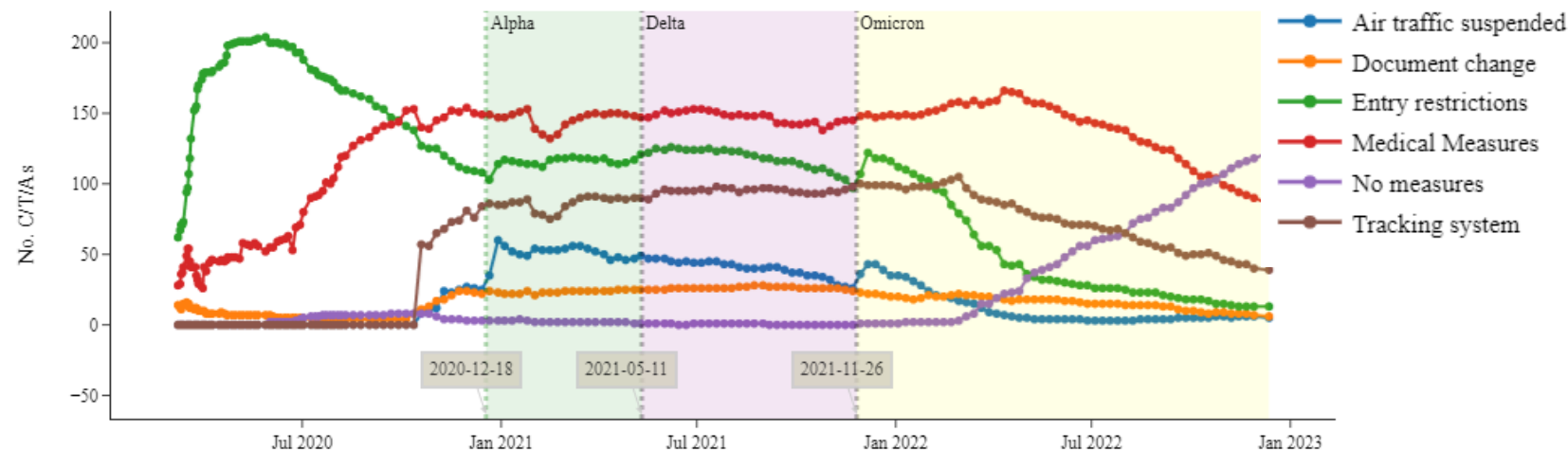
**Others:** This category of exceptions was most often issued for entry restrictions and frequently included exceptions for nationals or passengers arriving from certain C/T/As at the early stages of data collection in 2020. From 2021 onwards, exceptions for others mostly entailed exceptions for passengers with full COVID-19 vaccination certificates. As a result, exceptions for passengers with COVID-19 health documents were collected and tracked separately as of November 2021.

**COVID-19 health document:** This exception is for passengers who have either a COVID-19 negative test, vaccination or recovery certificate (or otherwise medically exempt) and was introduced in Phase 4 (November 2021 – March 2022) of data collection. Since then, it grew to become a relatively common exception especially for harsher entry restrictions such as passenger bans or mandatory quarantine.

### Number of C/T/As Issuing Entry Restrictions and Conditions for Authorized Entry by Type

This graph shows the total number of C/T/As that issued either **entry restrictions** or different types of **conditions for authorized entry** over time. Entry restrictions were initially the fastest growing type of travel measure imposed by C/T/As to curb the spread of the virus. The other lines represent the different types of conditions for authorized entry that C/T/As imposed to regulate international arrivals.

Number of C/T/As Issuing Entry Restrictions and Conditions for Authorized Entry by Type



### Highlights

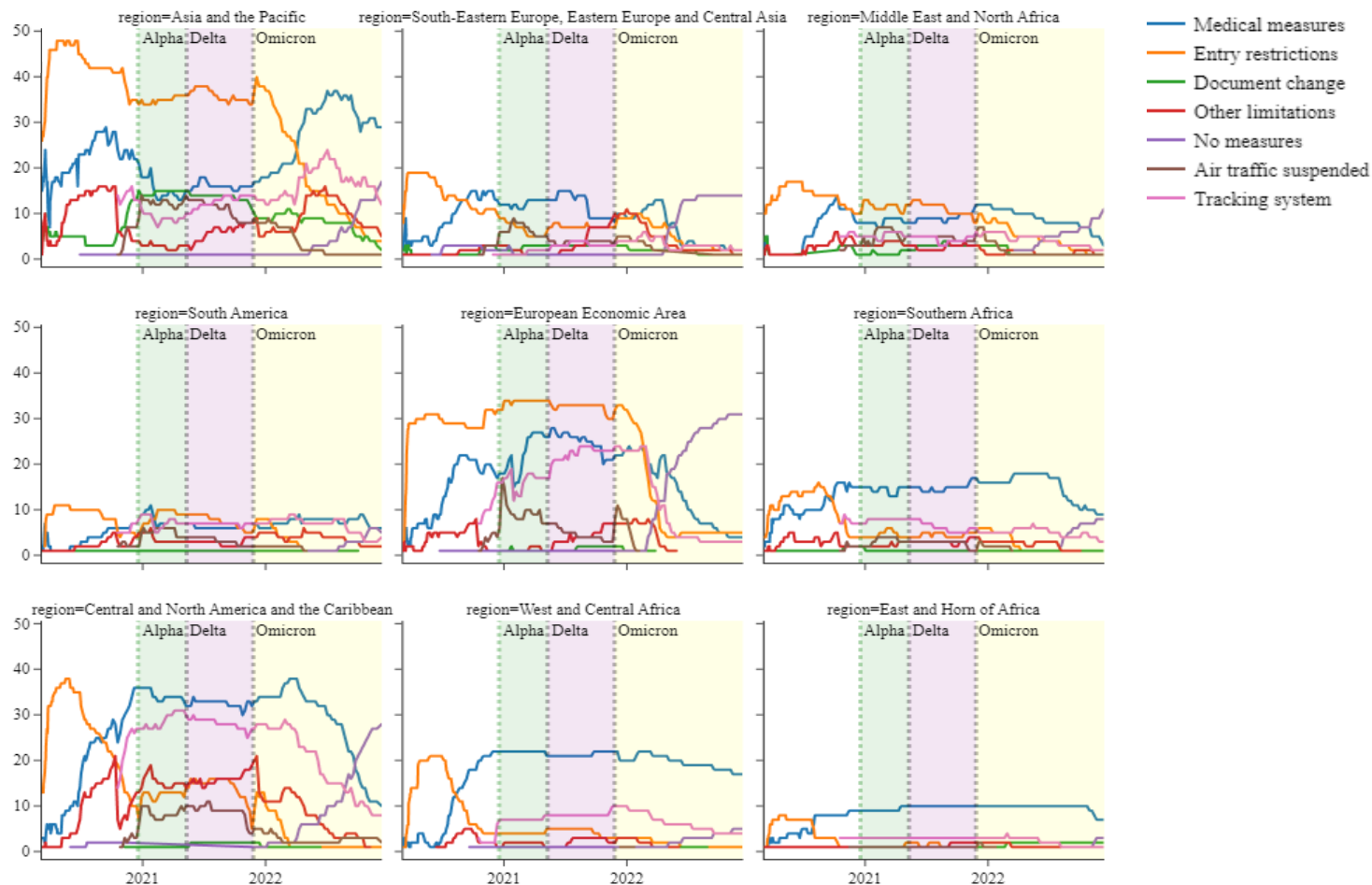
**Medical Measures:** As one of the types of conditions for authorized entry, medical measures rose at the beginning due to the implementation of mandatory quarantines. As tests became more ubiquitous and available for the general public toward mid to end of 2020, most C/T/As shifted more towards medical measures requiring passengers to show negative COVID-19 tests (PCR or lateral flow) prior to departure and after arrival. Following the global rollout of vaccines, there was a further shift to showing either full vaccination certificates or negative COVID-19 tests and/or recovery certificates.

**Tracking System:** This category refers to health declaration/travel history forms, health surveillance forms or passenger locator forms for all passengers entering a C/T/A. As of data collection Phase 4 (November 2021 – March 2022) data was collected on how many C/T/As require passengers to register health declarations or locations following arrival. The rise in tracking systems correlates with the decline in entry restrictions as C/T/As shifted more toward health and location surveillance (instead of banning) of arrivals with the aim of containing the spread of the virus. Tracking systems were first recorded as conditions for entry in October 2020 in four C/T/As (Curaçao, Ireland, Syrian Arab Republic, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and by the end of December 2020, 85 C/T/As had issued a form of tracking system.

**No Measures:** No measures refers to the number of C/T/As that did not have any measures restricting international air travel in place. June 2020 marked the first time a C/T/A that had issued travel restrictions removed all measures. Serbia and United States Virgin Islands were the first to remove restrictions in June 2020. The removal of all measures stayed dormant until April 2022 onwards. From April to December 2022 a total of 103 additional C/T/As removed all travel restrictions and conditions for entry.

### Regional Trends in Issuing Entry Restrictions and Conditions for Authorized Entry

Regional Trends in Issuing Entry Restrictions and Conditions for Authorized Entry



### Trends

These regional differences over time reflect the dissimilar evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic in different geographical areas. There are important differences in terms of timing and severity of measures. For instance, **West and Central Africa** and **East and Horn of Africa** saw the sharpest shift from restrictions (passenger bans, suspended air traffic) to conditions (medical measures, passenger tracking systems). On the other hand, **Asia and the Pacific** kept an overall more consistent presence of entry restrictions on international air flights, as well as steady levels of C/T/As issuing entry conditions such as medical measures, passenger tracking systems and document changes relating to visa requirements.

Throughout the middle of the data collection period it is notable that **Central and North America and the Caribbean** had a consistently high number of C/T/As that instituted a tracking system as part of the conditions for entry. This can be attributed to the fact that many island states adopted health registration forms and passenger location tracking as the main condition for authorized entry.

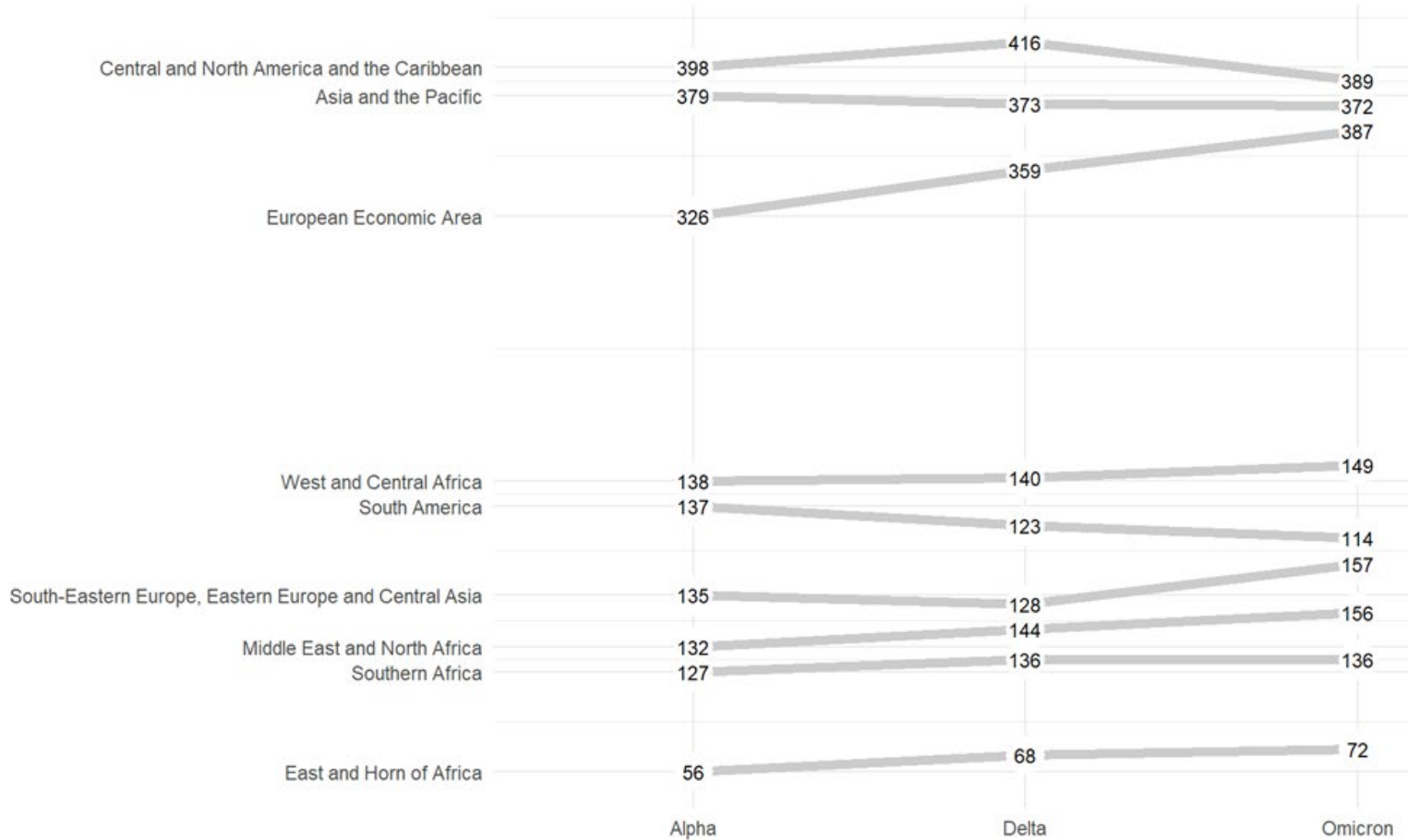
Since the onset of the Omicron variant, the **European Economic Area** has been the region where the most entry restrictions and conditions have been removed. Currently, it is the region that has the highest number of C/T/As that have removed all COVID-19 related travel measures (31 C/T/As) followed by **Central and North America and the Caribbean** (25 C/T/As) and **Asia and the Pacific** (17 C/T/As).

**NOTE:** For the purposes of this analysis the regions above have been defined based on IOM regional office coverage, for more details on this see <https://www.iom.int/regional-offices>



Response Evolution by Region by COVID-19 Variant Designation

Response Evolution by Region by COVID-19 Variant Designation



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Trends

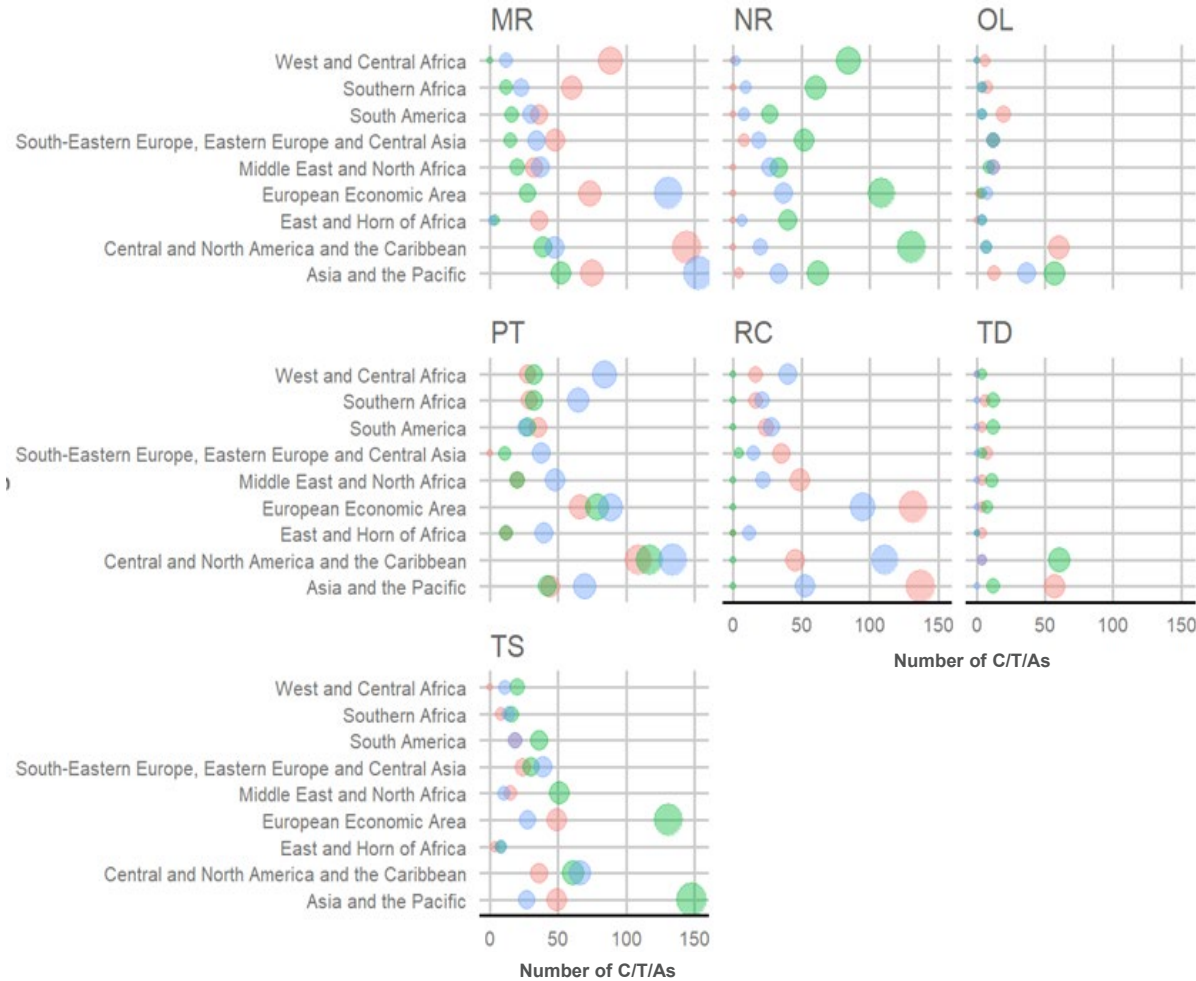
Rate of Change of Travel Measures following Variant Designation:

This visualization explores travel restriction responses by region coinciding with the designation of the three COVID-19 variants: **Alpha** (18 December 2020), **Delta** (11 May 2021) and **Omicron** (26 November 2022). The calculations take into account the sum of travel restrictions (TR) imposed by regions across a 30-day period from the first recorded case of each variant.

The onset of the Delta variant caused a +7.8% increase in the number of travel restrictions issued in the **European Economic Area** compared to the period after the Alpha variant. However, following the designation of the Omicron variant a +18.7% increase was observed in the number of travel restrictions issued in the **European Economic Area** compared to the travel restrictions imposed following the Alpha variant. This is the region with the largest changes in travel restrictions imposed across the variant timeline. **Central and North America and the Caribbean** saw a -6.5% decline in travel restrictions imposed when Omicron was designated as a variant compared to Delta, indicating that the designation of new variants did not always indicate a blanket increase in the total number of mobility restrictions on a global level.

Generally, **West and Central Africa**, **Southern Africa** and the **East and Horn of Africa** saw little change in travel restrictions imposed across the variant timeline although the sum of total restrictions increased with every new variant designation.

Evolution by Type of Response per Region by COVID-19 Variant Designation



**NOTE:** For the purposes of this analysis the regions above have been defined based on IOM regional office coverage, for more details on this see <https://www.iom.int/regional-offices>

Trends

Type of Travel Measures imposed following Variant Designation:

MR	Medical Restrictions
NR	No Restrictions
OL	Other Limitation
PT	Passenger Tracking
RC	Restricted Country
TD	Document Change
TS	Travel Suspension

This visualization displays an evolutionary breakdown of the types of travel restrictions imposed by each region when the three COVID-19 variants were designated. As in the previous page, the calculations are based on the sum of travel restrictions type counts across a 30-day period from when the variant was officially designated.

Each type of restriction (RC and TS) as well as each type of condition for authorized entry (MR, OL, PT, TD) show the changes in the magnitude of travel restrictions imposed following the discovery of each variant. No restrictions (NR) was at its highest following the Delta variant designation however after Omicron this number reduced significantly.

For instance, passenger tracking tools (PT) were continuously implemented in the Central and North America and the Caribbean across all variants. In contrast, West and Central Africa saw a surge in the use of passenger tracking tools (PT) for authorized entry only when it coincided with the onset of Omicron. In the European Economic Area, medical restrictions (MR) became the main TR type coinciding with the discovery of Omicron. Despite the fact that this is related to the rollout of vaccinations and booster shots at the time, this was still a significant increase in the uptake of MR in the region compared to the previous variant designations.

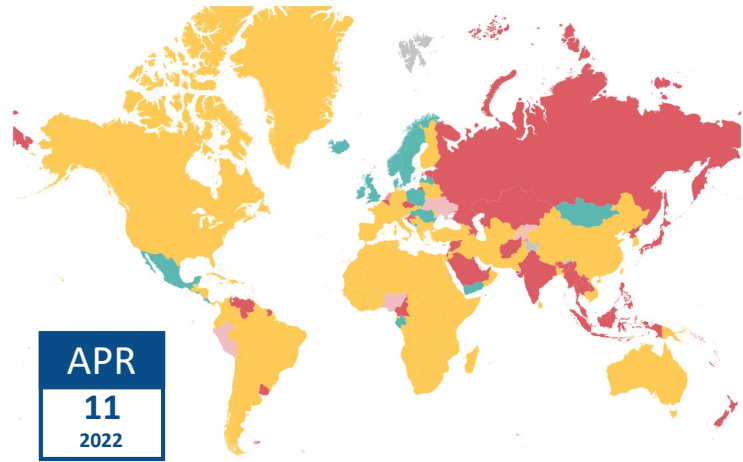
Travel Restriction Total Count

- 0
- 50
- 100
- 150

COVID-19 Variant

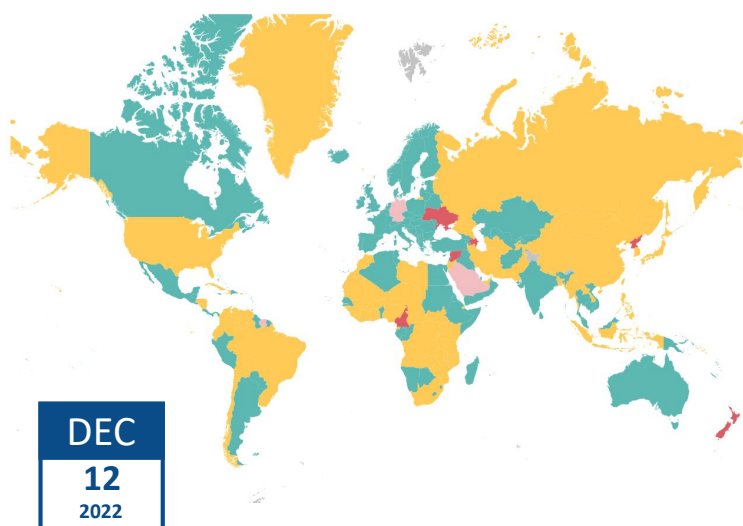
- Alpha
- Delta
- Omicron

Gradual Removal of Entry Restrictions (April - December 2022)



APR  
11  
2022

61 C/T/As issuing entry restrictions  
149 C/T/As issuing conditions for authorized entry  
22 C/T/As without COVID-19 measures



DEC  
12  
2022

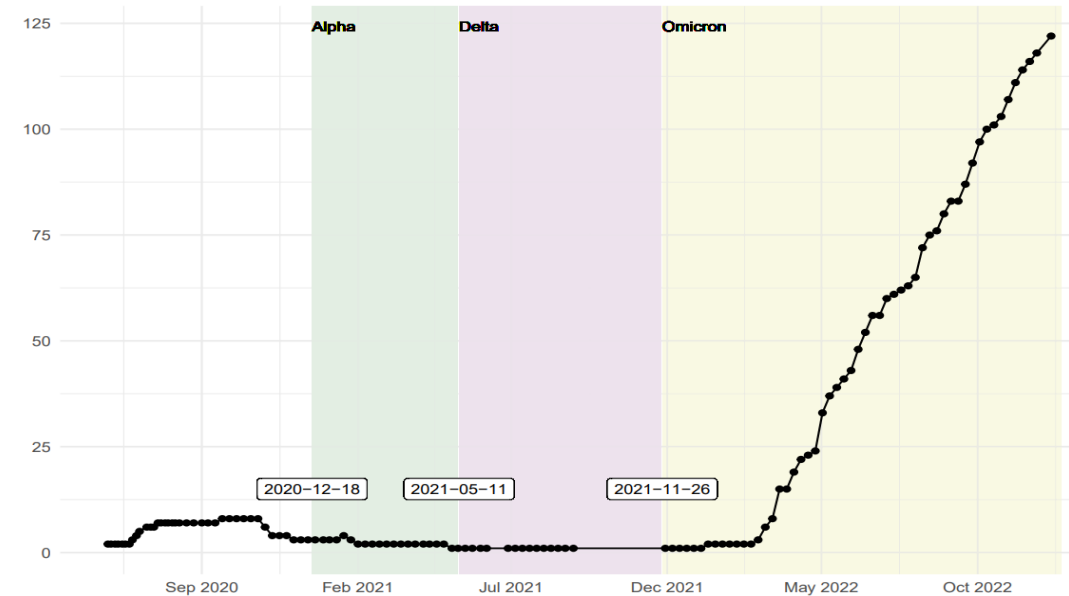
18 C/T/As issuing entry restrictions  
99 C/T/As issuing conditions for authorized entry  
122 C/T/As without COVID-19 measures

Highlights

Removal of Restrictions and Conditions for Authorized Entry

The period in which most C/T/As removed all entry restrictions and conditions for authorized entry was from April – December 2022. During this time, a total of 100 C/T/As removed all travel measures, leading to a total of 122 out of 229 (53%) of tracked C/T/As.

Number of C/T/As issuing “No Measures”



## OVERVIEW OF OTHER RESOURCES

- [COVID-19 Mobility Impacts](#) – Overview of all IOM outputs relating to COVID-19 Mobility Impacts (2020-2022).
- [Global Mobility Restrictions Overviews](#) – All weekly update reports using IATA Timatic Updates on international air travel restrictions.
- [Impact of COVID-19 on International Flights - Omicron Variant](#) – Special snapshot report on the effects of the Omicron variant on flight suspensions.
- [Point of Entry Monitoring Interactive Map](#)
- [Point of Entry Monitoring Reports](#) - IOM COVID-19 Impact on Points of Entry Biweekly and Monthly reports analysing the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Points of Entry.
- [COVID-19 and the State of Global Mobility in 2021](#) - collaboration between IOM and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) to analyse the implications of these data and, in particular, to track on an annual basis the impact of COVID-19 on cross-border mobility.

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