



May 28, 2021

Joint Statement on Entry Restrictions in Japan

The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCI), the European Business Council (EBC), the Australian & New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ANZCCJ), and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) have appreciated the Government of Japan's efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Japan and to accelerate vaccination of the population, including all foreign residents.

We observe that vaccination programs in other countries are progressing rapidly and making possible substantial expansion of business and travel. Japan, however, has not been able to achieve comparable progress. We therefore urge the government to rapidly expand the vaccination program in Japan by mobilizing all of the country's considerable resources to ensure the vaccine is rapidly deployed and availability extended to a wider age group.

We recognize that the newest wave of infections and possible variants in South Asia pose real risks not only to those who live there, but also to the rest of the world. The recent decision to ban the entry into Japan of non-Japanese nationals traveling from certain South Asian countries was unfortunately not based on public health principles. This new rule applies only to non-Japanese nationals, including long-term residents of Japan. Barring entry of foreign residents of Japan without any scientific evidence that they pose more risk to public health than returning Japanese nationals is both discriminatory and ineffective public health policy.

To contain the risk of contagion from certain countries, effective quarantine measures need to apply equally to everyone, foreign and Japanese nationals alike, entering Japan from those countries. Japan should return to its previous approach, the approach of other G7 countries, that allows foreign nationals with established residency status and their immediate family members to depart and enter the country on the same basis as Japanese nationals. We ask that the government amend these rules immediately.

Given the current public health situation, our Chambers appreciate that some exceptions to the current ban on entry into Japan for foreign non-residents are being approved on a humanitarian basis. We also appreciate that the government has approved entry into Japan of a limited number of essential workers needed to maintain critical operations. In the interest of the impacted individuals and companies, and Japan's economic recovery, we urge that:

- (1) The government expand these programs, in line with the government's many initiatives to encourage foreign investment and promote economic growth and Japan as an Asian hub; and
- (2) The government consider further steps to make the current application and approval process more rules-based, transparent, and expeditious. We believe it is in the interest of companies in Japan, both Japanese and foreign, and the Japanese economy to permit intra-company transferees, such as management or engineers, to enter Japan more readily.

In the absence of needed transparency, companies will face difficulties planning for the future. This will continue to impede their ability to make much-needed investments in Japan and deal with

human resource issues, including hiring more Japanese workers. This is a problem that will only worsen with time, as the movement of global talent into Japan has come to a virtual halt. It is vital that the Government of Japan introduce a transparent regulatory framework that allows both Japanese and foreign-invested companies to bring essential personnel to Japan in a safe manner.

It is clear that vaccinations have a positive economic impact. It is also clear that there is a need for internationally recognized testing and vaccination documentation, such as vaccine certificates, to permit resumption of international travel that is vital to Japan's economy. In this connection we have several recommendations:

- (1) We appreciate the government's proposal to issue documentation of vaccination for the purpose of overseas travel of Japanese and foreign residents. We request that the government also accept credentials held by residents of Japan who have received the full course of a COVID-19 vaccination overseas.
- (2) In conformity with the government's digital initiatives, we also recommend that the specifications for vaccination and any other health-related documentation required of all visa applicants and travelers should be broadened to recognize digital signatures and digital documents wherever possible.
- (3) For the purpose of documenting PCR testing, vaccination, and other health-related data required of travelers, we recommend that the government also recognize the validity of the new health credential systems established by international organizations such as the International Air Transport Association and the Commons Project.
- (4) We urge the Government of Japan to ease restrictions on travel to Japan and quarantine by those who have received the full course of a WHO-accredited COVID-19 vaccination, have fully recovered from COVID-19 with an accompanied antigen test or have two consecutive negative PCR tests and hold such a credential.

The global business community in Japan recognizes that COVID-19 is placing an unprecedented burden on public resources, and we appreciate the efforts being made to ensure foreign residents have access to information and support. As the pandemic continues to challenge all aspects of Japanese society, the global business community is committed to ensuring a quick and sustainable recovery from the pandemic in Japan, and we believe the recommendations listed above are key to such a recovery.

We look forward to having the opportunity to discuss these recommendations, and to continuing to support Japan's economic recovery and growth.

The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) www.acej.or.jp

European Business Council in Japan (EBC) www.ebc-jp.com

The Australian and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ANZCCJ) <https://www.anzccj.jp/>

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) <https://www.cccj.or.jp>