



Singapore, 17.03.2020

## Update on the COVID-19 situation

Dear compatriots,

COVID-19 continues to spread around the world. This has led the World Health Organization to declare the current COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic on 11 March 2020.

This past Sunday on 15 March 2020, the Singapore Government announced [additional precautionary measures](#) to contain the spread of the virus. These measures aim at curbing the importation of cases, which in the last few days have contributed significantly to the rising number of confirmed cases in Singapore. The additional measures affect travel from the ASEAN region, Japan and the United Kingdom, and also Switzerland. According to the Ministry of Health, *“From 16 March 2020, 2359 hours, all travellers (including Singapore Residents, Long Term Pass holders, and short-term visitors) entering Singapore with recent travel history to ASEAN countries, Japan, Switzerland, or the United Kingdom within the last 14 days will be issued with a 14-day Stay-Home Notice (SHN). In addition, they will have to provide proof of the place where they will serve the 14-day SHN, for example a hotel booking covering the entire period, or a place of residence they or their family members own. They may also be swabbed for testing for COVID-19, even if asymptomatic. This is because of the risk of community transmission in these countries and evidence of cases that have been imported from these countries into Singapore.”*

On [Friday 13 March](#) and on [Monday 16 March](#) 2020, the Swiss Federal Council has decided to introduce further measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 and to categorise the situation as “extraordinary”. With immediate effect, public and private events are prohibited. All shops, restaurants, bars, entertainment and leisure facilities will be closed until 19 April. Exceptions are, among other things, hospital, clinics, medical practices and pharmacies, as well as food stores and food delivery services. Courses and activities onsite in schools and universities are prohibited until 4 April. The Swiss population is asked to avoid all unnecessary contact and maintain social distancing. The Federal Council has authorised the deployment of up to 8000 military personnel to support the cantons in hospitals, logistics, and security. The Federal Council also announced an emergency aid package of 10 billion Swiss Francs to help Swiss companies cope with the economic impact of the pandemic. Further, it has decided to introduce checks at the borders with Germany, Austria and France as of Sunday 15 March midnight, and impose entry bans, albeit with exceptions. On Friday, it had already imposed Schengen border controls on persons entering from Italy. Entry to Switzerland from its four large neighbors is now only possible for Swiss citizens, persons holding a residence permit for Switzerland and persons who have to enter Switzerland for work-related reasons. Transit and goods traffic will continue to be allowed as well. These measures are intended to protect the Swiss population while at the same time safeguarding the capacity of the Swiss health system to run properly.

In connection with the spread of COVID-19, many airlines have now ceased flight operations on certain routes. At this stage, it is not possible to estimate how long these interruptions will last. In any event, it bears emphasizing that both Switzerland and Singapore have taken the further step of advising their citizens to defer all non-essential travel abroad. This is to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 while abroad.

As in our past letter to you, we would like to draw your attention to some relevant sources of information. Please check them for the latest measures as the global and local situation is continuously evolving:

- [Ministry of Health, Singapore](#)  
[Official push notifications via WhatsApp](#)  
MoH general enquiry hotline: +65 6325 9220
- [Immigration & Checkpoints Authority, Singapore](#)
- [Federal Office of Public Health, Switzerland](#)
- [World Health Organization, WHO](#)
- [International Air Transport Association, IATA](#)

The Embassy of Switzerland continues to monitor the situation closely and remains in contact with all relevant authorities, both in Singapore and Switzerland, and stands ready to assist you where possible and needed.

We wish you and your family good health.

With my very best regards,



Fabrice Filliez  
Ambassador