



29th April 2021

Mr Stephen Donnelly TD
Minister for Health
Department of Health
Block 1, Miesian Plaza
50-58 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2

Dear Minister

I refer to previous letters to you in my capacity as Chief Medical Officer providing advice, as referred to in Section 38E of the Health Act 1947, in relation to the designation of states for the purpose of mandatory quarantine and the revocation of such designations; including letters setting out the approach and criteria advised by the Expert Advisory Group on Travel (EAGT) which provides analysis, data and recommendations to me, to assist me in consideration of the issues involved and provision of advice as foreseen under section 38E of the Act.

As you will recall, the most recent recommendations of the EAGT and my advice in relation to same were set out in a letter to you dated 23rd April 2021. I note that, following consideration of this advice as required under the Act, you now intend to designate certain of the states recommended by the EAGT and by me, namely: **Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, Georgia, Iran, India, Mongolia.**

I am writing to you now in the context of your regular review of the situation in states designated under Section 38E and in order to continue to ensure that you have access to the most up-to-date data and analysis prior to designation of these additional states.

In line with the EAGT agreed process, which considers ECDC, WHO, and European Commission guidance, variant of concern (VOC) data is reviewed on a fortnightly basis, with this interval regarded appropriate from an epidemiological/public health perspective, reflecting the more sustained nature of VOC threat and slower pace of change of VOC data as compared to incidence data. For that reason, this letter solely considers a review of states which are intended to be designated on the basis of incidence, while noting that the position of countries designated based on VOC is being kept under review.

Variants of concern

The country of **India** which you announced you intend to designate was recommended for designation in my letter of 23rd April on the basis of variant of concern.

Very high incidence and high incidence

The additional states which it is understood you now intend to designate – Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, Georgia, Iran, India, Mongolia – were among the states recommended for designation in my letter of 23rd April on the basis of very high incidence (defined as a 14-day incidence greater than 500 per 100,000) or high incidence (defined as a 14-day incidence less than 500 per 100,000 and greater than 2.5 times Ireland's 14-day incidence) of COVID-19.

The recommendations based on 14-day incidence contained in 23rd April letter reflect ECDC incidence data from 22nd April 2021, which is updated weekly. Bearing this in mind and in advance of your designation, I have reviewed the most recent available data, reflecting ECDC 14-day incidence data from 29th April 2021, with individualised assessment in relation to all other states which are currently designated, following earlier recommendations to do so on the basis of very high incidence or high incidence.

Following individualised consideration of that most recent available data and as set out in more detail in the annex, I am confirming that the states concerned – Andorra, Armenia, Aruba, Bahrain, Bermuda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, **Costa Rica**, Curaçao, **Georgia**, **Iran**, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Maldives, **Mongolia**, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Palestine, Puerto Rico, Serbia, and Ukraine continue to meet the 14-day incidence threshold of either very high or high risk of transmission (as defined above). For this reason, having considered the most recent available data, I remain of the view that there is known to be sustained human transmission of COVID-19 in these states; or a high risk of importation of infection or contamination with COVID-19 by travel from that state, within the meaning of Section 38E of the Health Act 1947.

Designation

In accordance with the recommendations above, I can confirm that my advice is to proceed with designation of **Costa Rica, Georgia, Iran, India, and Mongolia**.

Revocation

The assessment of states based on 14-day incidence as contained in the EAGT letter dated 23rd April advised the revocation of the designations of **Moldova, Monaco and Wallis and Futuna**. I can confirm that it remains my advice that these designations may be revoked.

Having reviewed the most recent data and based on 14-day incidence data correct as of 29th April 2021, I am additionally advising revocation of the designations of **Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba and San Marino**, and I am no longer recommending the designation of **Azerbaijan**.

This information and advice (additional to the data, information and recommendations provided to you in my previous letters) is provided to you in keeping with the requirements of the Health Act 1947, to inform your ongoing review of the situation in states designated under Section 38E of the Health Act 1947; and to ensure that your decision to designate additional states under that section continues to be informed by the best available and most recent data and analysis.

Yours sincerely



Dr Tony Holohan
Chief Medical Officer

Annex: 14-day incidence for week 16 based on ECDC data on 29th April 2021

1. For Designation or Continued Designation

14day Incidence ≥ 500 non-EU/EEA (10)		14day Incidence ≥ 2.5 non-EU/EEA* (12)	
Andorra	659.0	Armenia	342.3
Bahrain	876.1	Aruba	473.0
Bermuda	714.6	Bosnia and Herzegovina	343.6
Puerto Rico	900.0	Costa Rica	367.0
Serbia	540.8	Curaçao	471.7
		Georgia	398.0
		Iran	413.3
		Jordan	380.3
		Kosovo	336.7
		Kuwait	464.9
		Lebanon	353.0
		Maldives	417.5
		Mongolia	476.5
		Montenegro	360.4
		North Macedonia	421.1
		Palestine	470.8
		Ukraine	387.0

Based on Ireland's 14-day incidence of 114.6 ($2.5 \times = 286.4$) as per the ECDC data for week 16 extracted on 29th April 2021

2. For revocation

As previously advised on 23rd April

Moldova	196.4
Monaco	193.4
Wallis and Futuna	44.5

As advised 29th April

San Marino	269.9
Bonaire, Saint Eustatius and Saba	225.0

3. No longer for designation

Azerbaijan	251.7
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