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Spain to further ease restrictions, won't rush on border opening

Spain will further ease a coronavirus lockdown in its two biggest cities from Monday, but will not start opening its borders to foreign tourists before July 1, the government said yesterday. Health Minister Salvador Illa said some restrictions would be lifted in Madrid and Barcelona, which have so far lagged behind the rest of the country's easing programme. From Monday, bar and restaurant patrons will be allowed to sit inside rather than exclusively on outdoor terraces, while children will be able to play outside at any time of day.

On Thursday, Tourism Minister Reyes Ma-

roto said land borders would reopen from June 22, though her ministry later walked back on the statement, causing some confusion, as well as criticism in neighbouring Portugal.

"There has been no change in the government's position since day one," government spokeswoman Maria Jesus Montero told a news briefing, referring to the previously announced July 1 date.

Despite relying heavily on tourism, which generates some 12% of GDP, hard-hit Spain has been reluctant to open its borders without a European Union-wide agreement on defining safe travel.

Britain and Spain working closely so that British tourists can holiday safely in the Balearics, says ambassador Hugh Elliott



The British ambassador to Spain, Hugh Elliott, paid a "virtual visit" to the Balearics yesterday giving an interview to *Bulletin* editor Jason Moore, talking with members of the British community across the islands and even enjoying a typical Balearic breakfast and lunch.

● The British ambassador to Spain, Hugh Elliott, told the *Bulletin* yesterday that both the British and Spanish governments were working so that British tourists **could visit and holiday in the Balearics safely this summer**. He said that he understood the concerns of the local business community but said that safety was of upmost importance and it was a "step

by step process." The ambassador said that he sincerely hoped that British tourists would be able to enjoy the Balearics later this summer as he paid a "virtual" visit to the islands holding talks with the local authorities and leading members of the British community via video conference. Hugh Elliott **thanked British residents for their efforts during the lockdown**

process and praised the local English-speaking associations for their hard work and dedication during these difficult times. As regards Brexit he said that British residents would soon have a **new residence document** and that further details would be announced by the Spanish authorities in the coming months. *Full interview in Sunday's newspaper.*