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## British ambassador: "We keep the travel advice and quarantine restrictions under close review..."

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**T**HE British ambassador to Spain Hugh Elliott told the *Bulletin* yesterday: "We have considered the overall situation for British nationals travelling to and from the Balearic and Canary Islands, including the impact of the requirement to self-isolate on return to the UK, and concluded that we should advise British na-

tionals against all non-essential travel to the whole of Spain.

"We have received the Spanish request to exempt the Canaries and Balearics from the quarantine list, and will consider carefully the points they raise. We keep the travel advice and quarantine restrictions under close review, and will lift the measures as soon as it is safe to do so."



# Spain slams Britain, Germany for advising tourists to stay away

**S**pain reacted angrily yesterday to recommendations from Britain and Germany that their citizens avoid its islands and beaches because of an increase in coronavirus cases during what should be the height of the tourism season.

With advisories piling up on top of a quarantine order from Britain for returning travellers, Spain, which depends on summer visits by sun-seeking northern Europeans, is facing a major blow to any hopes of reviving its economy.

Tourism accounts for just over 12% of Spain's GDP and nearly 13% of jobs. The country lost one million jobs between April and June, its biggest ever quarterly decline, and fears steeper losses as the summer season crashes.

"It's very unfair because it's not based on any sanitary criteria," Francina Armengol, the head of the key tourist Balearic region, told Cadena Ser radio of the travel advisories.

Britain's decision had no logical explanation, Armengol said, adding that the archipelago's contagion rate was lower than that of the United Kingdom. The northern Spanish Aragon region said the no-travel advisories were "discriminatory".

Their comments chimed with those of Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, who on Monday said it was a mistake for Britain to have considered Spain's overall coronavirus rate rather than having a granular, regional approach.

On the streets of Madrid, the reaction

was one of outrage. "It annoys me because it's not as though they were especially better off than us," said Madrid resident Isabel Garcia, who works in marketing. "Everyone is in a bad way, and the fact that they pick on Spain... It seems wrong."

But Britain stood firm, saying it would stick to the sudden quarantine announced on Saturday and its late Monday move to extend a travel advisory against travel in mainland Spain to the Canary and Balearic islands.

### 'OUR JOB TO ACT SWIFTLY'

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said yesterday Britain would take action to impose quarantines on other countries should COVID-19 infections rise.

"I'm afraid if we do see signs of a second wave in other countries, it is really our job, our duty, to act swiftly and decisively to stop travellers coming back from those places seeding the disease here in the UK," he told reporters.

The only glimmer of hope for Spain came from Britain's junior transport minister Charlotte Vere, who said that while London would continue to make decisions on a country-wide basis, it was looking at setting quarantine rules for different regions "in the future". She gave no timeframe.

Spanish Foreign Minister Arancha Gonzalez Laya said Madrid was working on convincing London to soften its stance.

"We are still talking to British authorities, explaining that the outbreaks in Spain are under control ..."



Spanish tourist industry hit hard by restrictions.