



## Coding decisions made by and about EU+ countries: a Manual

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Throughout the 2020-21 coronavirus pandemic, European countries stemmed border traffic following the policies of a large variety of national-level and cross-national governing bodies. Similarly, countries around the world introduced policies which either targeted European countries or, made special exceptions to their border closures for European countries. To code systematically the policy decisions relevant to the EU context for the COVID Border Accountability Project (COBAP), research assistants (RAs) first learned the basic definitions of the groups of countries which were referred to regularly in country-level policy texts across the globe. This document (1) details these definitions, (2) explains the coding issues faced regarding policies introduced *by* and *about* European countries, (3) expounds the solutions to these problems posed by the COBAP project and (4) lists in the appendix the country names per cross-national governing body related to the European context. Both RAs and researchers using the COBAP dataset will find this document essential – paired with our [data descriptor](#) in *Scientific Data* under the Nature Portfolio. Moreover, this document serves as a useful baseline for other data and policy projects which interact with the EU context.

### Terms

First, the **European Union (EU)** currently includes 27 member-states following the exit of the United Kingdom. The territory which makes up the EU is mostly found in continental Europe but also encompasses regions outside of “mainland” Europe, as well as other territories related to EU countries. For instance, island territories that are part of the EU include the Åland Islands, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Réunion, Mayotte, and Saint-Martin. Thus, unless explicitly exempt from a particular policy, these countries should be considered part of the EU. Similarly, citizens of Monaco, San-Marino, Andorra, and the Holy See are considered EU residents, according to EU Commission recommendations. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, these states should be coded as if they were part of the EU.



On October 2020, the EU laid out a non-binding traffic light systems to regulate non-essential travel of EU member states to all EU+ countries. Each EU+ state's region is ranked according to the number of COVID cases per 100,000 people in the last 14-days. Initial categories included green, orange, red, and grey; since February 2021, dark red has been added. Although the traffic light system does not specify restrictions, it recommends mandatory testing or quarantine for orange and (dark) red regions. In general, entry should not be denied to any member state's citizen. Furthermore, all rules applying to other member states' citizens must also apply to returning citizens, because EU law prohibits discrimination of other member states' citizens.

Second, the **Schengen Area** comprises 26 countries, many of which are also part of the EU. Notably, Ireland, Romania, Croatia, Cyprus, and Bulgaria are EU member-states but not part of the Schengen Area. This means that border checks are in place but normally, EU citizens can enter the country freely. Countries not part of the EU but included in the Schengen Area are bound by the Schengen Code to follow EU immigration policies. Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Iceland are part of the EFTA and Schengen. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, it should be assumed that travel is possible between these countries, and what this means for the coding process is that careful distinctions between closures and additional checks and screenings at borders should be made. The COBAP dataset only records actual closures, defined as restrictions on entry across international borders.

Collectively, all Schengen and EU countries are sometimes referred to as **EU+ countries** (see list below).

Third, there are specific border agreements within Europe that should be considered when coding national-level policies, as such. For instance, Liechtenstein's border policies follow Switzerland's migration policy, because the countries have open borders with each other. Similarly, Ireland and the United Kingdom share a de facto open border in Northern Ireland. Moreover, in almost all cases in which (semi-)autonomous territories are attached to a larger governing region, the two territories share reciprocally unrestricted border traffic. This includes, inter alia, the Åland Islands with Finland, Greenland, Faroe Islands with Denmark, EU passport holders from Caribbean parts of the Netherlands.



For coding countries related to cases like these, RAs should assume travel is permitted between the entities unless explicitly prohibited. For an example of how this might be applied while coding, if Denmark were to prohibit all travel from outside the EU, the RA should exclude Greenland and the Faroe Islands from the list of banned countries--although they are not part of the EU. As part of (the Kingdom of) Denmark, citizens of Greenland and the Faroe Islands are allowed to enter Denmark unless explicitly prohibited.

### **Policies made by EU+ countries: Common Coding Issues and Solutions**

A large variety of border controls and screening were introduced during the coronavirus pandemic. At first glance, it was easy to read the introduction of border checks as border closures, whereas the COBAP dataset records enforced border closures.

Solution → RAs double-checked that the border policy text explicitly prohibits travel, as an actual restriction on entry.

Moreover, a policy text might refer to a border closure at a set of specific locations, which most often we record as a “partial closure” instead of a “complete closure.” However, if all points of entry were listed as closed, the COBAP database should reflect a complete closure.

Solution → review all points of entry (land, air and sea) into the country you’re coding before recording new policies. The third source in the list provides further information on air, sea, and land border regulations per EU+ country.

### **Policies made about EU+ countries: Common Coding Issues and Solutions**

Because the COBAP database works with country names, separated by commas, RAs explicitly listed the countries in the relevant sections of the Qualtrics survey, avoiding abbreviations (i.e., “Schengen,” or “EU+”) even if listed as such in the policy text. The purpose of this is to allow for country-level network analysis on the data. In practice, however, this coding process allows for errors.



Solution → double-check what region the policy is directed at and list all member countries. Unless the policy explicitly excludes certain countries, the lists provided below can be used to replace the abbreviation. If you feel a caveat is needed when you make the change from a sweeping term to a list of countries, please add this to the “notes” section of the survey.

Relatedly, a policy is only coded as a complete closure if the number of states exempt from closures is below 11. This number was arbitrarily chosen as a cut-off.

Solution → Please count individual states and collectives (i.e., all (27) member states instead of the EU as single exception).

## Sources

Restrictions on travel from third countries to the EU: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/travel-during-coronavirus-pandemic\\_en#restrictions-on-travel-from-third-countries-to-the-eu](https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/travel-during-coronavirus-pandemic_en#restrictions-on-travel-from-third-countries-to-the-eu)

EU notifications of temporary reintroduction of border control: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/reintroduction-border-control\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/reintroduction-border-control_en)

Travel regulations in EU+ countries: <https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/travel-and-covid/>

EU traffic light system: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19/situation-updates/weekly-maps-coordinated-restriction-free-movement>

EU Report on effects of COVID-19 induced border closures on cross-border regions: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/46250564-669a-11eb-aeb5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> (see report’s footnotes)

EU study on Schengen Internal Border Controls and Travel Restrictions in the EU



[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/659506/IPOL\\_STU\(2020\)659506\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/659506/IPOL_STU(2020)659506_EN.pdf) (see report's footnotes)

European flight data: <https://www.public.nm.eurocontrol.int/PUBPORTAL/gateway/spec/>

## **Appendix: Country Lists per Cross-National Governing Body**

### **The EU includes:**

Åland Islands, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, French Guiana, Germany, Greece, Guadeloupe, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Martinique, Mayotte, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Réunion, Romania, Saint Martin (French part), Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden

### **The Schengen Area includes:**

Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland

### **EU+ countries, as per the EU Commission's COVID travel recommendation, include:**

Andorra, Åland Islands, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, French Guiana, Germany, Greece, Guadeloupe, Holy See (Vatican City State), Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Martinique, Mayotte, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Réunion, Romania, San Marino, Saint Martin (French part), Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland

### **All other countries, i.e., non-EU+ countries, as per the EU Commission's COVID travel recommendation, include\*:**

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, American Samoa, Angola, Anguilla, Antarctica, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Aruba, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bermuda,



Bhutan, Bolivia, Bonaire Sint Eustatius and Saba, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bouvet Island, Brazil, British Indian Ocean Territory, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cayman Islands, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Curaçao, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), Faroe Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Georgia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greenland, Grenada, Guam, Guatemala, Guernsey, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Isle of Man, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Jersey, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, North Korea, South Korea, Kuwait, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Macao, North Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia Federated States of, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Montserrat, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Niue, Norfolk Island, Northern Mariana Islands, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine State of, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Pitcairn, Puerto Rico, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Barthélemy, Saint Helena Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Pierre and Miquelon, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sint Maarten (Dutch part), Solomon Islands, Somalia, Somaliland, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Svalbard and Jan Mayen, Syrian Arab Republic, Taiwan, Tajikistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste (East Timor), Togo, Tokelau, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Turks and Caicos Islands, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, Virgin Islands British, Virgin Islands U.S., Wallis and Futuna, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara), Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

\*These lists of country names were imported into the COBAP dataset according to the policy text, with each policy row demarcating which countries were targeted by a partial closure or excepted by a complete closure (up to 10).

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