



Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany
Bangkok

Germany and the European Union Join Hands to Help Stranded Europeans in Thailand Return Home

3 April 2020, Bangkok – The German Embassy in Bangkok, the Delegation of the European Union to Thailand and diplomatic missions of other EU Member States are working together to bring EU citizens stranded in Thailand back home.

Thailand is a very popular destination for European tourists, but due to the COVID-19 outbreak many of them have seen their return flights cancelled, leaving them with limited options. Thanks to a joint European endeavour, however, EU citizens stranded in Thailand have begun their journey home through repatriation flights leaving from Bangkok and Phuket.

In an act of European solidarity, Germany has taken the lead so far in organising most of these flights from Thailand, which are supported by the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), an EU instrument aimed at protecting the lives of EU citizens and other nationals in times of crisis. The first two flights under this collaboration, from Phuket on 2 April and Bangkok on 3 April, brought home more than 500 EU citizens from 11 Member States. Further flights are planned over the coming week. Other European states have already organized flights on their own and accommodated citizens from neighbouring countries.

On Friday 3 April, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany H.E. Georg Schmidt and the EU Ambassador to Thailand H.E. Pirkka Tapiola were present at Suvarnabhumi Airport to send their fellow Europeans safely home. On this occasion, Ambassador Schmidt said: “Germany is committed to bringing home its nationals stranded abroad in the wake of this health crisis as well as to helping other Europeans return to their homes whenever possible. I am delighted that the first repatriation flight from Bangkok can leave for Germany today. More flights will follow. This is only possible by support from Condor Airlines, our Head Office in Berlin and the Embassy Team. My gratitude goes also to the Thai authorities for their support.”

Ambassador Tapiola added: “The European Union was founded on the idea of solidarity. Never is this solidarity more important than in times of great need. Helping our citizens in countries outside the EU return home is therefore our absolute priority right now. I am grateful to Germany for opening their flights to fellow Europeans and glad that, together with my colleagues from other EU Member States, we can be at the service of our citizens and contribute to their safe return.”

Since the COVID-19 outbreak has turned into a global pandemic, many Europeans find themselves stranded abroad as flights are suspended and borders closed. In response, the UCPM has facilitated the repatriation of more than 10,000 EU citizens so far.

In addition to the flights organised by the German Embassy in Bangkok, the UCPM also supported repatriation flights from Thailand organised by the Czech Republic and Lithuania, with dozens of EU citizens from 10 Member States on board. Flights to the Czech Republic included more than 160 citizens of Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Italy, France, Germany and Switzerland. At present, the European Union is assisting its Member States to coordinate assistance and consular repatriation operations of EU citizens from across the globe, wherever they may be. On 27 March, the European Commission proposed to make an additional €45 million available from the EU budget to help Member States repatriate EU citizens.

For more information on Germany's efforts to repatriate its citizens, please click <https://bangkok.diplo.de/>

For more information on the European Union's response to the COVID-19 outbreak, visit https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response_en and <https://europa.eu/!HB33Fw>

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