

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

COVID-19 crisis creates fresh demand for second passports

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Post-pandemic demand for second passports for countries in the European Union, with their visa-free access to many markets, has grown among the affluent set

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Lockdowns around the world, the closure of borders and restrictions on travel have led to a spike in inquiries among affluents for second passports and alternative citizenships and residencies, according to the financial advisory firm deVere Group.

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There has been a 50 percent year-on-year jump in demand for such services, per deVere Group. Most of the interest is coming from affluents from the United States, India, South Africa, Russia, the Middle East and East Asia who are hunting for alternative options that would allow them to live in Europe and the Commonwealth.

"Now, second citizenship or overseas residency are increasingly becoming not just a nice to have accessory' but a must have," said Nigel Green, founder/CEO of deVere Group, in a statement. "Previously, a second passport, citizenship or residency were regarded by many as the ultimate luxury item; a status symbol like yachts, supercars and original artwork.

"They too value the many associated benefits including visa-free travel, world-class education, optimal healthcare, political and economic stability, reduced tax liabilities and wider business and career opportunities," he said.

Quest for adventure

COVID-19 has created a new demand for passports, as people seek access to healthcare, pandemic responses and potential safe havens to ensure they have a backup plan for the future.

However, the appeal is broader than the COVID-19 crisis as more and more people are now looking to be global citizens instead of just being tied to the country of their birth.

Each host country has different criteria for granting citizenship, including time spent in the country as well as being able to provide a source of funds and not having a criminal record.

Becoming a resident of Portugal, for instance, requires only two weeks every two years of residency to gain the benefits, which include the rights to live, work, study and open a business there. Once a resident, you can also travel

across Europe freely.



Portugal is a sought-after destination for affluents looking for an alternative residence in Europe. Image credit: Luxury Collection

One popular option is to buy one's way into a country. In such cases, applicants invest in a country's property market or another area of economic importance in exchange for permanent residency, citizenship or both.

The cost of these programs range from \$100,000 in Antigua, \$421,680 for Montenegro, \$1.3 million in Malta and \$3.6 million for Cyprus.

The investment migration practice residence and citizenship by investment industry is now a multibillion-dollar industry.

Ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNWI) and high-net-worth individuals (HNWI) have grown in numbers worldwide and are continuously purchasing additional passports as investment migration increases ([see story](#)).

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