

Government Council- New measures taken in response to the Coronavirus

Press release 15.03.2020

Taking into account the evolution of the coronavirus COVID-19 in our neighbouring countries and on the national territory, it is necessary to take additional measures to limit the spread of the virus in the population and to protect those at risk.

The proposed measures take into account the pathogenic and contagious nature of the COVID-19 virus. In this context, the respect of appropriate distance rules in interpersonal relations is one of the most effective measures to limit the spread of the virus.

The Government Council has therefore taken the following decisions, until further notice and in addition to the measures decided at its extraordinary meeting of 12 March 2020. These measures enter into force at midnight - on 16 March 2020.

1. People aged over 65 and vulnerable people.

It is strongly recommended to stay at home and only go out when strictly necessary.

2. General public: travel restrictions.

- Traffic on public roads is restricted to the following activities:
- purchase of food, pharmaceuticals and basic necessities,
- visit of health services,
- travel to the place of work for the exercise of the professional or commercial activity,
- assistance and care for the elderly, minors, dependent people, disabled people or particularly vulnerable people,
- travel to financial and insurance institutions in the event of an emergency,
- due to a case of force majeure or a situation of necessity,
- leisure activities (walking, jogging, playgrounds, ...), provided that an interpersonal distance of 2 metres is respected.

3. Measures regarding the hospital sector.

Hospitals will deploy their staff and services mainly to urgent, non-deprogrammable and acute activities. Patients infected with COVID-19 who do not present serious complications (mild symptoms) are hospitalised at home.

4. Maintenance of essential activities.

Activities that are essential to maintain the vital interests of the population and the country must be maintained. These include the following sectors and activities:

- production and distribution of energy and petroleum products;

- the health sector with hospital activities and medical analysis laboratories;
- the food sector;
- water distribution;
- the collection and treatment of waste water;
- waste removal and management;
- public transport;
- administrative services involved in the exercise of public authority;
- systems for the exchange, payment and settlement of financial instruments;
- the elderly sector, institutional and home help and care, the disability sector.

5. Recommendations to companies

It is recommended that companies should make maximum use of home office as far as possible and reduce their activities to those tasks which are essential for the functioning of the company.

6. Restriction of professional activities.

All commercial and artisanal activities which include direct contact to costumers remain closed.

This measure does not apply to commercial premises selling mainly food products, or to:

- pharmacies,
- opticians,
- stores selling mainly pet food,
- telecommunication shops,
- stores selling mainly hygiene and washing products and sanitary equipment,
- sale of fuel and petrol stations,
- distributors and specialized trade in medical-sanitary equipment,
- medical pedicure
- kiosks,
- dry-cleaning and laundry services,
- financial and insurance institutions,
- funeral services,
- the sale of non-food products in drive-ins,
- the sale of non-food products between professionals.

This shutdown also applies to shops in supermarket shopping arcades, with the exception of the activities referred to above.

The aforementioned exceptions are justified by public health imperatives and particularly by the guarantee of a separation between the client and the professional service provider.

7. Cancellation of all non-essential activities.

Activities of a cultural, social, festive, sporting and recreational nature are suspended.

Establishments in the cultural, recreational, sports and HORECA sectors remain closed (museums, bars, restaurants, cinemas, cafés, discotheques, libraries, swimming pools, sports halls, etc. ...).

The ban does not apply to take out, drive in and home delivery services.

Hotels remain open. Hotel restaurants and bars, with the exception of room service, remain closed.

8. Measures for administrations and public establishments.

The Government will reduce the activities of public administrations and establishments to those tasks that are essential for its proper functioning and for crisis management.

The reception and teller counters of public administrations and establishments will operate at reduced service.

If necessary, the staff thus released will perform other functions considered essential for crisis management.

Press release by the Ministry of State