



Questions & Answers on the coordination of measures restricting free movement in the European Union related to the coronavirus pandemic

Brussels, 13 October 2020

1. Why was this Recommendation adopted?

To limit the spread of the coronavirus outbreak, the EU's 27 Member States have adopted various measures, some of which have had an impact on citizens' right to move freely across the European Union, such as requirements to undergo quarantine or coronavirus test.

While the measures are intended to safeguard the health and wellbeing of citizens, they have serious consequences for the economy and citizens' rights. The right of European citizens to move and reside freely within the European Union is one of the most cherished achievements of the European Union, as well as an important driver of our economy.

A well-coordinated, predictable and transparent approach to the adoption of restrictions on freedom of movement is necessary to prevent the spread of the virus, safeguard the health of citizens as well as maintain free movement within the Union, under safe conditions. This is important for the millions of citizens who rely on cross-border travel every day, and crucial for our efforts to start safely rebuilding the economy.

2. What does today's Council Recommendation change for me as a citizen?

Today, the Member States agreed on a coordinated approach to travel restrictions linked to the coronavirus pandemic. This includes a **single map**, published every week by the [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#), which will show the risk levels across the regions in Europe using a traffic light system. Regions will be indicated in the colours '**green**', '**orange**', '**red**' and '**grey**' (if not enough information is available).

On the basis of this map, Member States will then decide whether they introduce certain restrictions, such as quarantine or tests, on travellers coming from other areas. **Member States have agreed that there will be no restrictions, such as quarantine or testing, on travellers coming from 'green' regions.** When travelling from 'orange' or 'red' regions, travellers can expect restrictive measures to be imposed. As per the Recommendation, Member States should distinguish between 'orange' and 'red' zones.

The map will also provide travellers with general information as to the risk level at their destination. Together with the information made available on the '[Re-open EU](#)' web platform, **travellers should be able to tell whether they can expect to be subject to certain measures if they travel to another region in the EU.**

The Member States will provide citizens with information on any restrictions to free movement, any accompanying requirements (for example, the possibility to enter with a negative test or the obligation to fill in a passenger locator form) as well as the measures applied to travellers travelling from risk areas. **As a general rule, information on new measures will be published 24 hours before they come into effect.**

3. Which countries does it apply to?

The Recommendation applies to all EU countries, as well as the UK during the transition period. The map will also include Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

4. Will the colours be by region or country?

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control will publish a map of EU Member States broken down by regions. This is because there can be big variations between the regions of a Member State. Due to their size, some Member States will be shown as a single region. The map will also include Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway^[1].

5. What are the factors Member States will use to decide if regions are red, orange, or green?

- the '**14-day cumulative coronavirus case notification rate**', which is the total number of newly notified coronavirus cases per 100 000 people in the last 14 days;
- the '**test positivity rate**', which is the percentage of positive tests for coronavirus infection during the last week;
- the '**testing rate**', which is the number of tests for coronavirus infection per 100000 people during the last week.

6. What determines whether a 'red' zone is red etc.

In the map, an area should be marked in the following colours:

- **green**, if the 14-day cumulative coronavirus case notification rate is less than 25 per 100,000 people and the test positivity rate of tests for coronavirus infection is less than 4%;
- **orange**, if the 14-day cumulative coronavirus case notification rate is less than 50 per 100,000 people but the test positivity rate of tests for coronavirus infection is 4% or more, or, if the 14-day cumulative coronavirus case notification rate ranges from 25 to 150 but the test positivity rate of tests for coronavirus infection is less than 4%;
- **red**, if the 14-day cumulative coronavirus case notification rate is 50 or more per 100,000 people and the test positivity rate of tests for coronavirus infection is 4% or more, or if the 14-day cumulative coronavirus case notification rate is more than 150;
- **grey**, if not sufficient information is available to assess the criteria in the points above or if the testing rate is 300 or less.

7. I am a lorry driver/nurse/student/diplomat/journalist – do I have to undergo quarantine if I cross a border? I need to go home because my mother is unwell, do I need to quarantine?

If you have an essential reason to travel, you will not be required to undergo quarantine. This is because the EU recognises that while we must protect ourselves from the spread of the virus, there are important reasons for which EU citizens need to use their right to free movement in an unrestricted way.

The Member States have agreed that **the following categories of travellers will be exempt from the requirement to undergo quarantine measures** when fulfilling their essential function or need:

- workers or self-employed people exercising critical occupations including health care workers, frontier and posted workers as well as seasonal workers as referred to in the [Commission Guidelines](#);
- transport workers or transport service providers, including drivers of freight vehicles carrying goods for use in the territory as well as those merely transiting;
- patients travelling for imperative medical reasons;
- pupils, students and trainees who travel abroad on a daily basis;
- people travelling for imperative family or business reasons;
- diplomats, staff of international organisations and people invited by international organisations whose physical presence is required for the well-functioning of these organisations, military personnel and police officers, and humanitarian aid workers and civil protection personnel in the exercise of their functions;
- passengers in transit;
- seafarers;
- journalists, when performing their duties.

8. What I'm travelling from, say Germany to the Netherlands via Belgium. What would I have to do then? If quarantine measures are in place, would I have to do this twice?

If you are transiting Belgium then no, you should not have to quarantine here, even if the country is imposing restrictions on travellers coming from Germany. However, if you are staying in Belgium before travelling to the Netherlands, **you should look at the measures applied the Member State as indicated on the 'Re-open EU' web platform on travellers coming from your region of departure in Germany**. By looking at the map published by the [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#), you can see whether your region of departure is mapped as 'green', 'orange', 'red' or 'grey'. **If your region is mapped as 'green', you will know that you will not be subject to any measures such as quarantine or testing.**

9. Do restrictive measures apply if I just drive through a country? Or stop at a petrol station? Or change trains?

Travellers in transit should not be subject to restrictive measures such as testing or quarantine.

10. Where can I find information about travel restrictions?

Information will be available on the '[Re-open EU](#)' web platform, with a link to the weekly-updated map by the [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#).

Member States will provide details of upcoming restrictions to free movement or the lifting of travel restrictions to Member States and the Commission. These changes will also be published on Re-open EU. **As a general rule, information on new measures will be published 24 hours before they come into effect.**

11. What if I am on my way home or to another EU Member State and new measures are announced?

The common map published by the [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#) will be updated once a week. This will provide citizens with regular information on risk levels across the EU.

Member States will provide details of upcoming restrictions to free movement or the lifting of travel restrictions to Member States and the Commission. These changes will also be published on Re-open EU. **As a general rule, information on new measures will be published 24 hours before they come into effect.**

12. What about contact tracing applications – where can I find information on the national schemes if I'm travelling?

All information about contact tracing apps will be available via the '[Re-open EU](#)' web platform. You can also find useful information on your national Coronavirus travel advice pages, which normally link to other Member States' travel advice pages.

13. If I need to get tested 'on arrival' where can I find information on how to do this?

If you need to get tested on 'arrival', this information will be given on the '[Re-open EU](#)' web platform.

14. Will any other factors be taken into account such as hospitalisation rates?

When considering whether to apply certain travel restrictions, Member States may, apart from the common map, also take into account additional criteria and trends, for example looking at the population size, the hospitalisation rate, the rate of ICU admission and the mortality rate, of the different countries.

15. What type of measures can EU Member States apply to travellers coming from risk areas?

For travellers coming from 'orange', 'red' or 'grey' areas, Member States will decide whether to apply certain measures, such as quarantine or testing. **Information on which which measures are applied by Member States will be available on the '[Re-open EU](#)' web platform.**

Measures must not be discriminatory, meaning that they will also apply to returning nationals of the Member State concerned.

Member States can also require people entering their territory to submit **passenger locator forms**, in accordance with data protection requirements. For this purpose, a common European Passenger Locator Form will be developed. **Wherever possible, a digital option should be used in order to simplify processing**, while ensuring equal access to all citizens.

16. Can EU Member States ban citizens from travelling within the EU?

Member States should in principle not ban the entry of people travelling from other Member States. Instead, they could apply measures such as quarantine or testing if they consider them necessary. **Entry bans must be limited to absolutely exceptional situations, such a general lockdown across the country.**

17. Can I travel to the EU from a non-EU country?

The recommendation adopted today concerns travel within the EU. As regards travel from outside the EU, a temporary restriction on non-essential travel from outside the EU remains in place for many non-EU countries.

It is however not an outright travel ban: if you are an EU citizen or long-term resident, you and your

family members should be allowed to travel to Europe. The same applies if you have an essential reason to come to Europe.

The Commission has called on Member States and will continue to call on Member States to allow the entry of people in duly attested unmarried relationships with European citizens and residents without delay. Around half of the Member States have already moved in that direction, and the Commission expects further progress.

In addition, the Council is keeping the current restrictions under review, and updates the list of countries from where travel is possible regularly, based on the evaluation of the health situation.

[\[1\]](#) Switzerland will be included if an when an agreement on public health is concluded with the EU.

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