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Government updates policies on border issues, remote working and recommendations for persons over 70 years of age

Government Communications Department

🕒 23.6.2020 17.52

PRESS RELEASE 445/2020

In its meeting on Tuesday 23 June, the Government also received a report on the measures to be taken based on the assessment of the crisis follow-up group headed by Permanent Secretary Martti Hetemäki. In addition, the Government received a briefing on the current epidemiological situation.

Restrictions on travel and tourism to be further lifted

In its meeting, the Government agreed that as of 13 July, it would lift the internal border control and restrictions on traffic between Finland and countries where the incidence of COVID-19 is similar to that in countries where internal border control has already been lifted. These countries are Norway, Denmark, Iceland and the Baltic countries. At present, the limit value is a maximum of eight new cases of the disease per 100,000 persons in the previous 14 days.

Based on the current development of the epidemic, internal border control could therefore be lifted for the following Schengen countries: Germany, Italy, Austria, Greece, Switzerland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and Liechtenstein. In addition, travel to Finland from Croatia, Cyprus and Ireland, which are EU Member States but not part of the Schengen area, would be allowed. However, the Government will continue to assess the overall situation in the Schengen area and the EU Member States until 10 July and will update the list of countries based on the development of the epidemic at that time.

The Government will decide on the matter in its plenary session on 10 July 2020.

Based on the current epidemiological assessment, internal border control and travel restrictions would continue between Finland and the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Poland, France, Sweden and the Czech Republic, with the exception of leisure boating.

However, anyone travelling from Finland to these countries must remember to check the restrictions on entry into the country of destination. These countries may have their own restrictions in force for travellers.

Government recommendation on extensive remote work to end on 1 August

In its meeting, the Government stated that the recommendation on extensive remote work would end on 1 August due to the improved epidemiological situation. The summer holiday season in July will allow for a flexible, step-by-step transition towards normal working conditions.

The Government will review the matter if the development of the epidemic so requires. In order to prevent a second wave of the epidemic, it is necessary to monitor the effects of lifting the restrictions very closely.

Recommendation for persons over 70 to avoid physical contacts to be lifted

The Government will no longer issue an age-based recommendation to avoid physical contact. However, in close contacts, it is advisable to take a cautious approach using individual discretion and taking the overall situation and the individual risk factors into account.

Avoiding close contacts has been effective in protecting older people from coronavirus infections. Nevertheless, despite its benefits, the practical implementation of the recommendation has also had also negative impacts on the physical, psychological and social wellbeing and functional capacity of people over 70 years of age.

If necessary, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare will issue hygiene and other guidelines, within the scope of their competence, that may help reduce the risk of infection among older people.

Measures to be taken based on Permanent Secretary Martti Hetemäki's reconstruction report

The Government has agreed that the implementation of the post-crisis management and reconstruction strategy will continue based on the memorandum presented on 23 June 2020 (see appendix).

The measures in the report are categorised under the maintenance stage and the post-crisis management and reconstruction stages.

The aim of the post-crisis management stage is to support the safe recovery of society after the acute phase of the crisis. Post-crisis management measures will also prevent the emergence of long-term adverse effects of the crisis.

In the reconstruction stage, we will examine long-term measures for society that will enable us to achieve carbon neutrality, sustainability in public finances and wellbeing of the population after the acute phase of the crisis.

In line with the proposal by the crisis follow-up group, the Prime Minister's Office will appoint intersectoral working groups to prepare proposals on post-crisis and reconstruction measures under the following themes:

- Public-sector productivity
- International economy, competitiveness and green growth
- Competence, innovation and digitalisation
- Resilience, wellbeing and preparedness for crises

The term of the working groups will continue until 15 September 2020. The working groups will report their proposals to the Government by 22 August 2020. The term of the crisis follow-up group, which consists of the Ministries' Permanent Secretaries, will be extended until 15 September 2020.

Inquiries

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