

Statement by the Minister of Health, Mr Michalis Hadjipantelas, on the decisions of the Council of Ministers

During today's meeting of the Council of Ministers, I informed the President of the Republic and my fellow Ministers on the epidemiological data of the last days. In particular, the analysis of the evidence of traces of positive cases reveals influxes of cases arising from places of increased assemblage and social events. Large chains of positive cases within mainly young people with intense social activity are being observed.

At the same time, it has been found that more than 90 % of COVID cases have either not completed their vaccination scheme or have no history of vaccination, intensifying concerns about virus mutations and the dispersion of the virus in the community. Equally worrying is the fact that the majority of hospitalized patients are individuals who have not been vaccinated, and as a result when they become ill, they develop severe symptoms and require inpatient care.

In accordance with the above, and with the aim of minimizing the possibility of transmission of the virus in the areas of increased assemblage and social events, as well as suppressing the diaspora, the Council of Ministers decided today the following:

1. From 9 to 31 July, the maximum number of individuals in indoor spaces shall be set at 250 individuals with necessary SafePass presentation or 350 individuals provided that all individuals are vaccinated at least with the first dose and a period of three weeks has elapsed, or have been infected with COVID-19 during the last six months. It is understood that in each case the health protocol applies to each establishment/sector.
2. From 9 to 31 July, the maximum number of individuals in outdoor spaces shall be set at 350 individuals with necessary SafePass presentation or 500 individuals provided that all individuals are vaccinated at least with the first dose and a period of three weeks has elapsed, or have been infected with COVID-19 during the last six months. It is understood that in each case the health protocol applies to each establishment/sector.
3. Individuals aged 12-15 years, who cannot be vaccinated at this stage, and individuals 16 years and over who cannot be vaccinated due to a serious medical problem, upon presentation of the necessary medical certificate can be exempted and may present a certificate of negative result from a PCR test or a rapid antigen testing valid for 72 hours.
4. The places in which the above will apply are the dining establishment, events or reception venues, nightclubs, entertainment venues, music and dance venues,

bars, discos, theatres, amphitheatres, theaters, cinemas, religious places and stadiums, excluding football stadiums.

5. Businesses/establishments that will choose to accommodate only citizens who have been vaccinated or who have been ill during the last six months, should ensure that this is noted in a prominent area of the business/establishment, as well as inform citizens of their decision.

6. The owner or the manager of the business or the establishment is responsible for the implementation of the SafePass and other health measures. It is stressed that the Police and the authorized officers of the Services/Departments will continue to be responsible for the control and supervision of the measures.

In addition, it is recalled that, according to the decisions of the 2nd July, the following are in force:

- **Vacation allowance to those vaccinated** from July 15 to August 31. The details of the vacation allowance plan have already been announced by the Deputy Ministry of Tourism.
- **A five-day honorary leave to soldiers who have been vaccinated or will be vaccinated until August 31st 2021.** The honorary leave will be granted both to the soldiers of the 2020 ESSO, as well as to the conscripts of the 2021 ESSO. More details will be announced today by the Ministry of Defence.
- Employees of the public, wider public and private sector are granted a special leave of absence on the whole day of their vaccination which will not be deducted from the employee's annual leave of absence. If their vaccination concerns a two-dose vaccine, this measure applies for both days of vaccination. The same applies in the case of **working parents/legal guardians of minors** who will accompany their minor(s) for vaccination, provided that the parent/legal guardian presents a copy of the child's Vaccination Card for confirmation.
- From July 9th until July 20th, entrance to football games, at 50% of stadium capacity, will only be allowed for individuals who have completed their vaccination scheme or have been vaccinated with the 1st dose of the vaccine and three weeks have elapsed, or for individuals holding a negative PCR test result valid for 72 hours, or for individuals who have been infected with COVID-19 during the last six months. Minors aged 12-15 who cannot be vaccinated at the present stage are exempted from this decision, and may present a negative rapid test result valid for 72 hours. In addition, exempted from this decision are also individuals aged 16 and over who cannot be vaccinated because of serious health problems, by presenting a medical certificate verifying the reason they cannot get vaccinated. These individuals may present a negative rapid test result valid for 72 hours.
- As of July 21st, entrance to football games, **at 75% of stadium capacity**, will be allowed only for individuals who have completed their vaccination

scheme and for individuals who have contracted COVID-19 in the last six months. Minors aged 12-15 and individuals aged 16 and over who cannot be vaccinated because of serious health problems, are exempted from the decision and may present a negative rapid test result, as described above.

- **Abolishment of the provision of free rapid antigen testing as of August 1st.** Minors aged 12-15 and individuals aged 16 and over who are not allowed to get vaccinated because of serious health problems, are exempted from the decision.
- As of August 1st 2021, passengers who are Cypriot citizens and permanent residents of the Republic of Cyprus must follow the protocols that apply for all passengers, unless they have been vaccinated with the 1st dose of the vaccine. Specifically, only individuals vaccinated with the 1st dose of the vaccine will be allowed to undergo a molecular test at the airports of the Republic upon arrival in Cyprus. This means that, if they are not vaccinated with at least the 1st dose of the vaccine or have no certificate of recovery and will travel from countries of the Orange and Red Category, must present a valid for 72 hours negative PCR test result from their country of origin. Minors aged 12-15 and individuals aged 16 and over who are not allowed to get vaccinated because of serious health problems, are exempted from the decision.

In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to the private companies and public law organisations who, as part of their corporate social responsibility, will provide incentives for young people to promote vaccination. More information will be announced by the Commissioner for Citizen in the coming days.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The burden on epidemiological indicators requires careful application of personal protection measures and health protocols. We need to remember in any case that the virus is still among us and only with responsibility and discipline will we prevent its spread, for the benefit of the whole society.

On this occasion, I would like to call on our fellow citizens who have not yet proceeded with their vaccination, to do so as soon as possible, in order to protect themselves and contribute in this way to the building of immunity in the community that will allow everyone to return to functional normality safely.

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