

Statement by the Minister of Health, Mr Constantinos Ioannou, during the announcement of the emergency measures to combat the pandemic

The Government finds itself again in the difficult position of announcing today new emergency measures in an effort to curb the spread of the pandemic and bring the epidemiological picture back to an acceptable state, particularly in places where the contagion of the virus tends to get out of control.

I wish to make clear that apart from the epidemiological data, the decisions we take are based primarily on the evaluation of the social and psychological impact the measures will have on the members of the public.

At the same time, the final decisions have been made in conjunction with the recommendations of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). Both myself and the Epidemiological Monitoring Unit are in constant touch with ECDC, so that any decisions are made in line with the updated instructions issued for all European States. Indeed, in a telephone communication I had with an executive member of the ECDC on Sunday, and in accordance with the epidemiological data of Cyprus, he suggested that any contingency measures that would be decided should be concentrated on the local level, where a deterioration of the epidemiological load takes place, and also on limiting contacts between people.

Moreover, the guidelines issued by the World Health Organization and the ECDC concerning high risk places and sectors in spreading the virus have been considered and brought into play.

Taking into consideration all of the above factors, the following sets of emergency measures have been decided:

Set A – Emergency measures valid island-wide:

The following measures announced on 4 November 2020 **continue to be in force until the 30th of November 2020**:

1. Gatherings of persons in houses and public spaces are allowed, with the exception of catering areas, **with a maximum number of 10 persons attending per house/group**, including underage children.
2. **Catering establishments are allowed to operate until 10:30 at night.** By catering establishments it is meant the restaurants, catering areas within hotels and other tourist accommodation, catering areas in shopping centres, supermarkets and malls, taverns, cafeterias, pizzerias, pubs, snack-bars, bars, coffee shops and catering areas in canteens or/and sports clubs, cultural circles, associations, societies etc. It is clarified that the above premises may provide home delivery services after 10:30 p.m. Catering spaces in the Airports of Larnaka and Pafos are exempt from the prohibition.
3. The maximum number of persons allowed to be served in catering establishments **is set at 75 in indoor areas and 150 in outdoor areas.**
4. The maximum number of persons per reservation/table/group in catering areas **may not exceed six (6).**

5. **The movement of persons is prohibited from 11 at night until 5 in the morning of the following day**, excluding movement for emergency medical reasons (to/from a pharmacy or hospital) or for work purposes by presenting the relevant certificate or documentary evidence.
6. Church services and other forms of religious worship in churches, mosques and other religious sites, as well as religious ceremonies shall be performed **with a maximum number of 75 persons**, by observing the protocols in force for places of religious worship.
7. Matches held in sports installations in the context of sports championships are allowed **without spectators being present**, provided the relevant protocols are observed.
8. **The use of changing rooms inside gyms is not allowed.**

In addition to the above, the following come into effect **on an island-wide basis** for the period from 12 November until 30 November 2020:

1. **The operation of children's playgrounds, thematic parks and amusement parks is suspended.**
2. **The holding of conferences, trade and visual exhibitions, assemblies and events is not allowed.**
3. **Visits are banned** to old people homes, care units for the elderly, chronic patients' units, homes and hostels for the hospitality of vulnerable groups, transitional hospitality hostels for the homeless, day centres, child protection units, with the exception of persons with disabilities whereby each tenant may receive two visits per week, with the possibility of considering more visits on exceptionally necessary occasions.
4. **The functioning of camping areas is suspended.**
5. **The entry and/or exit of any person into and from the centres for the reception, hospitality and detention of asylum seekers is prohibited, save the entry of newly-arriving asylum seekers.** Provided that the entry into and/or exit from the said centres for workers shall be permitted as well as the exceptional entry and exit for humanitarian reasons following a permit by the Minister of the Interior.
6. Retail trade drink and food businesses (supermarkets, mini-markets, butcher's shops etc) and pharmacies **from their opening hour until 10 a.m. shall serve only persons above 65 years of age or with disabilities.**

In addition to the above measures across the whole of Cyprus and having evaluated the epidemiological data as they have developed during the period from 25 October until and including 7 November in the Districts of Lemesos and Pafos, the implementation of additional local measures has been decided. Before presenting these measures, I would like to point out that in both Lemesos and Pafos, the epidemiological load has been particularly increased for some weeks now, despite the measures previously taken. Indicatively I would like to state that since the beginning of the pandemic, 28% of the cases occurred in Lemesos and Pafos, while in

October until to date 70% of the cases occurred in Lemesos and Pafos. More characteristic still is the fact that from 28 October until today, out of 2,644 COVID-19 cases recorded, 1,788 come from Lemesos and Pafos, while in only five days from 7 until 11 November, 605 cases out of 904 were from these two Districts. Also, 49 out of 68 patients receiving treatment in hospitals come from these two Districts. Cause for even more concern is the fact that from 31/10 until today we had 8 fatalities, of which 7 were permanent residents in Lemesos and Pafos.

On the basis of the above data, the set of measures concerning the two Districts is shaped as follows:

Set B – Emergency measures in force in the Districts of Lemesos and Pafos for the period from 12 November until 30 November 2020

1. **The movement of persons is prohibited from 8 at night until 5 in the morning on the next day**, with the exception of movement for medical reasons (to/from pharmacy, hospital) or for work reasons, by presenting the relevant certificate or documentary evidence.
2. **The movement of persons from and to the Districts of Lemesos and Pafos, and also between the two Districts, is prohibited**, except for the movement of those working in essential services, movement for a medical incident (by presenting a medical certificate), movement for the transportation of persons to and from the Airports of Larnaka and Pafos, as well as the Limassol Port.
3. **Gatherings are prohibited in public places** (parks, squares, water reservoirs, picnic areas, beaches, pavements and marinas etc.) except for exercise purposes, provided that their number shall not exceed two persons, excepting underage children of the parents exercising.
4. Home gatherings are allowed **with a maximum number of 10 persons per house**, including underage children.
5. Church services and other forms of religious worship in religious places **take place without a congregation present**.
6. **Religious ceremonies are allowed** (weddings, christenings, funerals) **with a maximum of 10 persons attending**.
7. **The holding of lunch/dinner and any event for weddings and christenings is prohibited**, other than a home event with a maximum number of 10 persons including minors.
8. **The functioning of public and private Lyceums and Higher and University Educational Institutions shall be carried out remotely as of 16 November 2020**. Preschools, Primary Schools and Secondary Schools (Gymnasiums) carry on their normal operation.
9. **Public services** (public sector, wider public sector and Local Government Authorities) **will be functioning with the minimum personnel necessary for emergency issues and for the emergency needs of the public**. Provided that exempted are those working in essential services, which shall carry on with their operation without interruption by observing the relevant protocols. **Workers not employed in essential services shall work remotely by rotation**.

10. **Visits are prohibited to public and private hospitals, clinics, medical and diagnostic centres.**
11. **The functioning of catering establishments is suspended** (restaurants, taverns, cafeterias, pizzerias, pubs, snack-bars, bars, coffee shops and catering areas in canteens or/and sports clubs, cultural circles, associations, societies etc) with the exception of services concerned with home delivery and take - away. Provided that only home delivery service is allowed after the lockdown hour. Catering areas inside hotels and tourist accommodation may function until 10:30 p.m. serving only the guests staying in their premises. The catering areas within Pafos Airport are exempt from the lockdown.
12. **The functioning of archaeological sites, museums and historical sites is suspended.**
13. **The functioning of open-air and indoor theatres, amphitheatres, cinemas and performance halls is suspended.**
14. Popular markets shall function **at 50% capacity** on the basis of the relevant protocol.
15. Public transport shall function **at 50% passenger capacity.**
16. **The functioning of covered shopping centres, malls and large stores with an area over 500 sq.m. is suspended.** It is provided that retail trade enterprises are exempt from the above arrangement.
17. **The functioning of beauty centres and tattoo parlors is suspended.**
18. **The functioning of hairdressing saloons and barber shops is suspended.**
19. **The functioning of gyms is suspended.**
20. **The functioning of Driving Schools is suspended.**
21. **The functioning of betting shops is suspended.**
22. **The functioning of casinos is suspended.**
23. **The functioning of swimming pools is suspended,** with the exception of their use by persons with disabilities for reasons of therapeutic exercise or for training of up to four persons including the coach.
24. **The functioning of gyms, swimming pools and spas inside hotels and tourist accommodation, serving only the guests staying in such premises is allowed.**
25. **Limassol Port shall function only for commercial transactions and activities.** The boarding of cruise ships by passengers is prohibited.
26. **The training and athletic events for persons under 18 is suspended.**
27. **The training and athletic events are suspended,** with the exception of Premier League Championships and National Teams matches.
28. **The functioning and use of organized sports installations is prohibited,** with the exceptions which will be set out in a relevant Decree.

29. Group sports and social activities for children under 18 years of age are prohibited, as defined in the relevant instructions that have been issued by the Ministry of Health.

Friends,

The period of more than 8 months that we have been living with the effects of the pandemic has caused fatigue, mainly a psychological one. The fact that we do not have a clear picture yet as to when an effective vaccine or treatment will be available to us, brings with it great uncertainty and uncomfortable impatience to all of us.

The biggest and most important problem that we are called upon to handle is that of the large number of contacts that every positive case has. The work of the tracking team is encumbered every day by the very large number of contacts stated by every case. The main objective of the measures announced is precisely the limitation of the contacts and the minimization of the possibility of passing on the virus to other persons in one's professional or and social environment.

The sanitary measures taken are not pleasant to anyone of us. It is, however, our only weapon right now, so as to prevent the deterioration of our epidemiological data and safeguard Public Health. The constant awareness of all of us and the observance of protocols is the only protection we have for the safeguard of the vulnerable groups and our elderly people, who run a more serious risk for serious illness.

I am certain that each one of us recognizes the need to behave responsibly once again for ourselves and for the common good. I have no doubt that again we shall rise to the challenge and succeed in curbing the spread of the virus, allowing us to return gradually to more normal conditions.