



Coronavirus: Commission proposes more clarity and predictability of any measures restricting free movement in the European Union

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The Commission has today adopted [a proposal for a Council Recommendation](#) to ensure that any measures taken by Member States that restrict free movement due to the coronavirus pandemic are coordinated and clearly communicated at the EU level.

The Commission's proposal sets out four key areas where Member States should work closer together:

1. **Common criteria and thresholds** for Member States when deciding whether to introduce travel restrictions;
2. Mapping of common criteria using **an agreed colour code**;
3. **A common framework for measures applied to travellers from high-risk areas**;
4. **Clear and timely information to the public about any restrictions**

Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella **Kyriakides**, said: *"Today we propose to our Member States a well-coordinated, predictable and transparent approach to travel restrictions where these are needed, always placing the protection of public health first. We must avoid further disruption of already fragile economies and additional uncertainty for citizens who have made huge sacrifices. They expect this from us after so many months living with COVID-19."*

Commissioner for Justice, Didier **Reynders**, said: *"Our right to move freely in the EU has been heavily impacted by the pandemic. For the many citizens who rely on frictionless travel every day, the cacophony of national rules in the EU is overwhelming. We want to simplify things. We are proposing straightforward criteria, applicable without discrimination, which are easy to follow by Member States and allow to inform Europeans properly."*

Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva **Johansson**, said: *"Since March, the Commission has developed and delivered a solid foundation of internal and external border control recommendations for Member States to follow. Today's measures builds on this track record so that we can fully benefit from our Schengen area. That is why we want a clear 'green, orange, red' system and not a kaleidoscope of individual measures"*.

Common criteria

There is currently a wide discrepancy between national criteria for introducing measures that restrict free movement in the European Union. The Commission is proposing that each Member State takes into account the following criteria when putting in place any restrictive measures:

- The total number of newly notified COVID-19 cases per 100 000 people in a given area in a 14-day period;
- The percentage of positive tests from all COVID-19 tests carried out in given area during a seven-day period;
- The number of COVID-19 tests carried out per 100 000 people in a given area during a seven-day period.

Member States should provide this data on a weekly basis to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Member States should also provide this data at the regional level to ensure that any measures can be targeted to those regions where they are strictly necessary.

On the basis that the Member State of departure has a weekly testing rate of more than 250 per 100 000 people, the Commission is proposing that Member States should not restrict free movement of people travelling from another Member State where:

- The total number of newly notified COVID-19 cases in a given area is equal to less than 50 per 100 000 people during a 14-day period, **OR**,
- The percentage of positive tests from all COVID-19 tests in a given area is less than 3%.

A common colour code

Based on the data provided by Member States, the Commission proposes that the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control publishes a map of EU and EEA countries, updated weekly, with a common colour code to support Member States and travellers. The Commission proposes the following:

- **Green** for an area where the total number of newly notified COVID-19 cases is less than 25 during a 14-day period **AND** the percentage of positive tests from all COVID-19 tests is less than 3%;
- **Orange** for an area where the total number of newly notified COVID-19 cases is less than 50 during a 14-day period **BUT** the percentage of positive tests from all COVID-19 tests is 3% or more **OR** the total number of newly notified COVID-19 cases is between 25 and 150 **BUT** the percentage of positive tests from all COVID-19 tests is less than 3%;
- **Red** for an area where the total number of newly notified COVID-19 cases is more than 50 during a 14-day period **AND** the percentage of positive tests from all COVID-19 tests is 3% or more **OR** the total number of newly notified COVID-19 cases is more than 150 per 100 000 people during a 14-day period;
- **Grey** if there is insufficient information available to assess the criteria proposed by the Commission **OR** the number of COVID-19 tests carried out per 100 000 people is less than 250.

A common approach for travellers from high-risk areas

The Commission proposes a common approach amongst Member States when dealing with travellers coming from 'high-risk' zones. Member States should not refuse the entry of persons travelling from other Member States. Member States that introduce restrictions to free movement based on their own decision-making processes, could require:

- persons travelling from an area classified as 'red' or 'grey' to either undergo quarantine **OR** undergo a COVID-19 test after arrival – COVID-19 testing being the preferred option;*

Where justified, Member States could consider recommending that persons travelling from an area classified as 'orange' undergo at least a COVID-19 test prior to departure or upon arrival. Member States could require persons arriving from an area classified as 'red', 'orange' or 'grey' to submit passenger locator forms, notably those arriving by airplane, in accordance with data protection requirements. Travellers with an essential function or need – such as workers exercising critical occupations, frontier and posted workers, students or journalists performing their duties - should not be required to undergo quarantine.

Clear and timely information to the public

The Commission proposes that Member States provide details of upcoming restrictions to free movement or the lifting of travel restrictions to Member States and the Commission on a weekly basis. Changes should be notified a week before entering into force.

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

Citizens and businesses need predictability. Member States must make all efforts to minimise the social and economic impact of travel restrictions. This should include the provision of information to the public in a clear, comprehensive and timely manner.

Background

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. Any restrictions to the fundamental right of free movement within the EU should only be put in place where strictly necessary and be coordinated, proportionate and non-discriminatory to address public health risks. To limit the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak, Member States have adopted various measures, some of which have had an impact on free movement. 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 frictionless cross-border travel every day, and crucial for our efforts to start safely re-building the economy.

Next steps

The Commission's proposal for a Recommendation will be discussed by the Council with the aim of an adoption in the coming weeks.

More information

[Proposal for a Council Recommendation](#) on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

[Re-open EU](#)

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Press contacts:

[Christian WIGAND](#) (+32 2 296 22 53)

[Alice HOBBS](#) (+32 2 298 08 29)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)

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