

# COVID-19: Council adopts a recommendation to coordinate measures affecting free movement



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Today the Council adopted a recommendation on a coordinated approach to the restrictions of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This recommendation aims to avoid fragmentation and disruption, and to increase transparency and predictability for citizens and businesses.

Any measures restricting free movement to protect public health must be proportionate and non-discriminatory, and must be lifted as soon as the epidemiological situation allows.

Every week, member states should provide the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) with the data available on the following criteria:

Based on this data, the ECDC should publish a weekly map of EU member states, broken down by regions, to support member states in their decision-making. Areas should be marked in the following colours:

Member states should not restrict the free movement of persons travelling to or from green areas.

If considering whether to apply restrictions, they should respect the differences in the epidemiological situation between orange and red areas and act in a proportionate manner. They should also take into account the epidemiological situation in their own territory.

Member states should in principle not refuse entry to persons travelling from other member states. Those member states that consider it necessary to introduce restrictions could

require persons travelling from non-green areas to:

Member states may offer the option of replacing this test with a test carried out before arrival.

Member states could also require persons entering their territory to submit passenger locator forms. A common European passenger locator form should be developed for possible common use.

Member states intending to apply restrictions should inform the affected member state first, prior to entry into force, as well as other member states and the Commission. If possible the information should be given 48 hours in advance.

Member states should also provide the public with clear, comprehensive and timely information on any restrictions and requirements. As a general rule, this information should be published 24 hours before the measures come into effect.

The decision on whether to introduce restrictions to free movement to protect public health remains the responsibility of member states; however, coordination on this topic is essential. Since March 2020 the Commission has adopted a number of guidelines and communications with the aim of supporting member states' coordination efforts and safeguarding free movement within the EU. Discussions on this topic have also taken place within the Council.

On 4 September, the Commission presented a draft Council recommendation on a coordinated approach to restrictions to freedom of movement.

The Council recommendation is not a legally binding instrument. The authorities of the member states remain responsible for implementing the content of the recommendation.

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