



## **European Commission Statement on the coordination of measures restricting free movement in the European Union related to the coronavirus pandemic**

Brussels, 13 October 2020

Following the proposal of the Commission on 4 September 2020, today EU ministers have reached an agreement that will provide more clarity and predictability on measures that restrict free movement due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Commission welcomes the adoption by the Council and issued the following statement:

*"Our right to move freely across the EU has been severely impacted by the pandemic. On top of this, citizens have been faced with so many different rules and procedures, unclear information about areas of high and low risk, and a lack of clarity about what to do when travelling. A month ago, the Commission put forward a proposal on how to address these challenges and support the millions of EU citizens who travel in the EU every day. Today, Member States have reached an agreement on how to put this into practice.*

*We welcome this agreement to bring more order to a currently confusing situation. The coming together of Member States sends a strong signal to citizens and is a clear example of the EU acting where it absolutely should. We have learned our lessons: we will not surmount the crisis by unilaterally closing borders, but by working together.*

*A common map with common colour codes based on common criteria, produced by the European Centre for Disease Control, is the first important outcome. We now call on Member States to ensure that the necessary data is provided so that the map can be updated on a weekly basis with accurate information on the epidemiological situation in the EU and its regions.*

*Secondly, while Member States can still decide what restrictive measures they apply such as quarantine or tests, we call on Member States to ensure that citizens are given clear and timely information about what they must do, and which restrictions are in force, as per the agreement today. Member States also agreed on the mutual recognition of tests, and we will continue to work with them on better coordination of testing and quarantine requirements.*

*For the millions of citizens with an essential reason to travel, be it for important family reasons, for their livelihoods, or to ensure that we receive the goods we need, today's agreement will also be a welcome improvement to a currently precarious situation. No quarantine measures should be applied in these cases.*

*Our strength as a Union is when we act as one, to protect our common rights and freedoms and the health of our citizens. Today's agreement is a good example of this."*

All information about travelling in the EU will be available on the 'Re-open EU' platform, where the common map published regularly by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control will also be cross-referenced.

With regard to any restrictions to free movement, Member States should provide clear, comprehensive and timely information, including about any accompanying requirements (for example negative tests for COVID-19 infection or passenger locator forms), as well as the measures applied to travellers travelling from higher risk areas) as early as possible before new measures come into effect. As a general rule, this information should be published 24 hours before the measures come into effect, taking into account that some flexibility is required for epidemiological emergencies. This information will also be made available on the 'Re-open EU' web platform.

- [Re-open EU](#)
- [European Centre for Disease Control](#)

#### **For more information**

- [Q&A](#)
- [Factsheet - A coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Council Recommendation on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

#### **Background**

The right of European citizens to move and reside freely within the European Union and the lack of border checks at internal borders are among 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 used where strictly necessary and be coordinated, proportionate and non-discriminatory to address public health risks. To limit the spread of the coronavirus 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 economic recovery efforts.

STATEMENT/20/1871

Press contacts:

[Christian WIGAND](#) (+32 2 296 22 53)  
[Stefan DE KEERSMAECKER](#) (+32 2 298 46 80)  
[Adalbert JAHNZ](#) (+ 32 2 295 31 56)

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