

Guidelines for the controlled dismantling of restrictions and recommendations put in place due to the COVID-19 epidemic

Government memorandum 20 April 2021

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Government memorandum
20 April 2021

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Guidelines for the controlled dismantling of restrictions and recommendations put in place due to the COVID-19 epidemic Government memorandum 20 April 2021

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Abstract The plan opens the Government's goal state in terms of dismantling restrictions and recommendations related to the COVID-19 epidemic. The guidelines are based on research data, modelling, forecasts and monitoring. Mitigation and dismantling will become possible once the epidemic situation is stable, the vaccination progresses and the epidemic declines with seasonal fluctuations.

The plan describes the principles and guidelines for gradually mitigating and dismantling restrictions and recommendations. In addition, the prerequisites for dismantling are described from an epidemiological point of view, and an indicative timetable is set for the dismantling of restrictions. The plan does not deal with after-treatment and reconstruction following the acute stage of the crisis; instead, these questions will be addressed separately later.

With the controlled dismantling of the restrictions, the Government aims to build a bridge to a time when a large proportion of the adult population has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. The dismantling will begin with those groups that have experienced particular strain as a result of the restrictions. The first priority will be to lift the restrictions on activities for children and young people, to resume outdoor group hobbies and, where possible, to reopen libraries and museums with health security arrangements in place. The Government considers it important that competent authorities in the regions draw up their own more detailed regional dismantling plans.

Due to virus variants, health-safe procedures on the borders will carry a special meaning for a long time. An electronic coronavirus certificate, which contains vaccine, test and recovery certificates, is being prepared for the My Kanta service. National access to an EU-compatible system will be examined. No decisions have currently been made on the national purpose of vaccination certificates or other similar certificates.

In communication, it is important to provide citizens, businesses and society with a view of how society will gradually open up. The situation requires everyone to act responsibly and to follow the existing restrictions and recommendations. It is the responsibility of regional and local authorities to monitor the situation and make appropriate decisions in a proactive and sufficiently extensive manner.

Keywords coronaviruses, pandemics, recommendations, restrictions

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Suuntaviivat covid-19-epidemiaan liittyvien rajoitustoimien ja -suositusten hallitulle purkamiselle

Hallituksen muistio 20.4.2021

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Kieli englanti **Sivumäärä** 54

Tiivistelmä

Suunnitelma avaa hallituksen tavoitetilan covid-19-epidemiaan liittyvien rajoitusten ja suositusten purkamisessa. Suuntaviivat pohjautuvat tutkimustietoon, mallinnuksiin, ennusteisiin ja seurantaan. Lieventäminen ja purkaminen tulevat mahdollisiksi, kun epidemiatilanne on vakaa, rokotukset edistyvät ja epidemia taantuu kausivaihtelun myötä.

Suunnitelmassa kuvataan periaatteet ja suuntaviivat sille, miten rajoitustoimia ja suosituksia lievennetään ja puretaan asteittain. Lisäksi kuvataan purun edellytyksiä epidemiologisesta näkökulmasta ja asetetaan suuntaa antavaa aikataulua rajoitusten purun vaiheille. Suunnitelmassa ei käsitellä kriisin akuutin vaiheen jälkeistä jälkihoitoa ja jälleenrakennusta, vaan näihin kysymyksiin palataan myöhemmin erikseen.

Hallituksen tavoitteena on hallitun rajoitustoimenpiteiden purun kautta rakentaa siltaa aikaan, jolloin suuri osa aikuisväestöstä on saanut vähintään yhden rokotteen. Purkutoimet aloitetaan ryhmistä, joihin rajoitustoimenpiteet ovat aiheuttaneet aivan erityistä rasitetta. Ensimmäisenä on tarkoituksena purkaa lasten ja nuorten toiminnan rajoituksia, vapauttaa ulkona tapahtuvaa ryhmäharrastustoimintaa ja mahdollisuuksien mukaan avata myös kirjastot ja museot terveysturvallisiin järjestelyin. Hallitus pitää tärkeänä, että toimivaltaiset viranomaiset alueilla laatisivat omat tarkemmat alueelliset purkamissuunnitelmat .

Virusmuunnoksista johtuen rajojen terveysturvallisilla menettelyillä on erityinen merkitys vielä pitkään. Valmistelussa Omakanta-palveluun toteutettava sähköinen koronatodistus, joka sisältää rokote-, testi- ja sairastetun taudin todistukset. EU-yhteensopivan järjestelmän kansallisia käyttömahdollisuuksia selvitetään. Tässä vaiheessa ei ole tehty päätöksiä rokotus- tai vastaavien todistusten kansallisesta käytötarkoituksesta

Viestinnässä on tärkeää luoda kansalaisille, yrityksille ja yhteiskunnalle näkymä siihen, kuinka yhteiskunta asteittain avautuu. Tilanne edellyttää kaikilta vastuunkantoa voimassaolevin rajoitusten ja erityisesti suositusten noudattamisesta. Alueellisten ja paikallisten viranomaisten vastuulla on seurata tilannetta ja tehdä sen mukaiset päätökset ennakoivasti ja riittävän laaja-alaisina.

Asiasanat koronavirukset, pandemiat, suositukset, rajoitukset

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Riktlinjer för en kontrollerad avveckling av de restriktioner och rekommendationer som införts till följd av covid-19-epidemin

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Referat I denna plan redogörs för regeringens målbild när det gäller att avveckla restriktionerna och rekommendationerna som införts till följd av covid-19-epidemin. Riktlinjerna anpassas utifrån tillgänglig forskningsdata, modelleringar, prognoser och uppföljning. Åtgärder blir aktuella i takt med att epidemiläget stabiliseras, vaccineringen framskrider och epidemin avtar till följd av säsongsvariationen.

I planen beskrivs principerna och riktlinjerna för hur de restriktioner och rekommendationer som införts lindras och avvecklas gradvis. Dessutom beskrivs förutsättningarna för avveckling av restriktionerna ur en epidemiologisk synvinkel samt fastställs en riktgivande tidsplan för i vilka faser restriktionerna kan lindras. I planen behandlas inte eftervård och återuppbyggnad efter krisens akuta fas, utan dessa frågor kommer att behandlas separat senare.

Regeringen har som mål att genom en kontrollerad avveckling av restriktionerna åstadkomma en smidig övergång till ett läge där en stor del av den vuxna befolkningen har fått minst en vaccindos. Det är viktigt att avvecklingsåtgärderna inleds i fråga om de grupper som belastats särskilt mycket av restriktionerna. Avsikten är att först avveckla de restriktioner som gäller verksamhet för barn och unga, tillåta grupphobbyverksamhet utomhus och i den mån det är möjligt öppna också bibliotek och museer med hjälp av arrangemang som tryggar hälsosäkerheten. Regeringen anser det vara viktigt att de behöriga myndigheterna i regionerna utarbetar egna mer detaljerade regionala avvecklingsplaner.

På grund av spridningen av virusvarianter kommer förfaranden som tryggar hälsosäkerheten vid gränserna fortsättningsvis att vara en särskilt viktig åtgärd. Ett elektroniskt coronaintyg breddas för webbtjänsten Mina Kanta. Intyget avses innehålla uppgifter om vacciner, test och genomgången sjukdom. Möjligheterna att tillämpa ett EU-kompatibelt nationellt system utreds och utvärderas. I detta skede har inga beslut fattats om det nationella användningsområdet för vaccinationsintyg eller motsvarande intyg.

I kommunikationen är det viktigt att ge allmänheten, företagen och olika gemenskaper en utsikt till hur samhället gradvis öppnas. Situationen förutsätter att alla tar ansvar för att iakttä de gällande restriktionerna och rekommendationerna. De regionala och lokala myndigheterna ska följa läget och fatta sina beslut på ett föregripande och tillräckligt omfattande sätt enligt det aktuella läget.

Nyckelord coronavirus, pandemier, rekommendationer, begränsningar

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1 Introduction

This plan describes the principles and guidelines for the progressive mitigation and dismantling of restrictions and recommendations to control the coronavirus epidemic. In addition, it details the conditions for the controlled dismantling of restrictions from an epidemiological point of view and sets an indicative timetable for the stages through which the restrictions can be lifted. Guidelines for dismantling the restrictions have been established on a monthly basis; detailed dates are not included in the plan. This is justified because the course of the epidemic is difficult to predict and the epidemic situation in the various regions of the country is very different. It is essential that the development of the epidemic and the impacts of changes in restrictions are monitored and assessed at all times so that the next steps towards opening up society can be taken in a controlled and timely manner. The purpose of the plan is to create an outlook and predictability for citizens, businesses and communities. The aim is also to create trust and hope that a return to the basic level of the epidemic and encounters with other people is a possibility in all regions during the summer.

The guidelines for the dismantling process will evolve along with the epidemic, based on the available research data, modelling, forecasts and monitoring. The plan contains uncertainties, and is not binding on the preparation and decision-making of the government or competent authorities. The plan will open up a common intent jointly agreed by the Government for dismantling restrictions and recommendations, so that society, business life and citizens can anticipate, make initial plans, and prepare, on the one hand, for good developments, and on the other, also for careful progress in dismantling restrictions and the possibility of taking steps back.

The aim of the hybrid strategy has been to control the epidemic in Finland until vaccination significantly reduces the effects of the coronavirus epidemic. According to the strategy, the measures taken by the Government aim to prevent the spread of the virus in Finland, to safeguard the capacity of the healthcare system and to shield and protect people, especially those who are most at risk. The principle of testing, tracing, isolating and treating, timely and proportionate restrictions and recommendations, and

compliance with them, as well as the progressive vaccine strategy, have been key tools for managing the epidemic.

The restrictions and recommendations in force put a strain on society in multiple ways. In order to reduce the adverse effects of the epidemic and the restrictions, a decision has already been made on a number of support measures in order to help people, communities and businesses in the midst of the corona crisis and, where necessary, beyond. The costs associated with remedying the economic and social impacts of the crisis are partly discussed in the spending limits discussion, and later in the preparation of the budget for 2022 and in Finland's Sustainable Growth Programme. This plan does not take a position on them. Prolonged restrictions may undermine the wider development prospects and production capacity in some sectors. In addition, this plan does not address after-care or reconstruction once the acute stage of the crisis is over. Instead, these questions will be separately addressed later.

Several temporary legislative amendments are in force to control the epidemic and to reduce its adverse effects (see Appendix 1, paragraph 2). The whole will be examined and further needs will be assessed in April. It will be proposed that provisions whose validity is deemed necessary remain in force. The Government's proposals will be submitted to Parliament as soon as possible.

With the controlled dismantling of the restrictions, the Government aims to build a bridge to a time when a large proportion of the adult population has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. In the Government's view, it is important for the dismantling to begin with those groups that have experienced particular strain as a result of the restrictions. The first priority will be to lift the restrictions on activities for children and young people, to resume outdoor group hobbies and, where possible, to reopen libraries and museums with health security arrangements in place. Due to virus variants, health-safe procedures on the borders will carry a special meaning in Finland's measures for a long time.

An electronic coronavirus certificate, which contains vaccine, test and recovery certificates, is currently being prepared for the My Kanta service. The possibilities of using an EU-compatible system at a national level are being examined and assessed in relation to both the pace of vaccination and its legal aspects.

The controlled dismantling of restrictions means phasing, regular monitoring of the development of the situation and, where necessary, withdrawal from the dismantling plans as the epidemic situation changes. The dismantling of restrictive measures requires everyone to act responsibly and continue to follow the existing restrictions and recommendations. It is the responsibility of the regional and local authorities to monitor the situation and, within the framework of their competence, to make decisions in

accordance with the epidemic situation in a proactive and sufficiently comprehensive manner, as well as to dismantle the restrictions in accordance with their powers and applicable legislation when the criteria for their application are no longer met. The Government considers it important that the competent regional authorities draw up their own more detailed regional plans for the dismantling of restrictions in order to improve regional predictability and support the operating conditions of business life.

In communication on the dismantling of restrictions, it is important to provide citizens, businesses and communities with an outlook on how society will gradually open up. For this reason, the plan was submitted for an open consultation round and has been clarified by means of the feedback given. In the Otakantaa.fi service, a total of 2,141 respondents gave feedback on the draft memorandum ([Publications of the Finnish Government 2021:16](#)). Finns' views on the dismantling of coronavirus restrictions were also examined simultaneously by means of a separate survey carried out on 14 and 15 April 2021, which received 1,249 responses. During the consultation round, Prime Minister Sanna Marin also organised separate discussion events for representatives of labour market organisations and the municipal sector. In addition, 28 opinions on the guidelines document were submitted to the Government by various parties.

An indicative timetable is provided for the examination of dismantling the restrictions, which is possible as the epidemic situation and the national vaccine coverage develop favourably. It is important that everyone acts in a responsible and health-safe manner and that all existing restrictions and recommendations are complied with. The communications describe the risks associated with dismantling restrictions and their possible impacts on schedules. It is also reminded that the dismantling of restrictions is planned in an uncertain situation. It is possible that the restrictions will need to be reinstated or tightened again in certain regions if the development of the epidemic so requires. As the situation is challenging for people's coping and expectations, the information must always be clear and transparent. It must be ensured that communications are nationwide but regionally comprehensive and correctly targeted. Communications between regional and local authorities must also be clear and open, taking the protection of privacy into account.

This plan provides the basis for mitigating and dismantling the restrictions and recommendations made by the Government in response to the COVID-19 epidemic. Mitigation and dismantling will become possible once the epidemic situation is stable, the vaccination progresses and the epidemic declines with seasonal fluctuations. This plan is a Government memorandum which will be updated as the epidemic situation progresses, especially with regard to Figure 1 and Appendix 1 of the memorandum. The concrete implementation of the plan is carried out through the Government's policies, Government decisions, steering by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and

decisions made by competent authorities on grounds of continuous monitoring and overall evaluation. The ministries will draw up more detailed implementation plans for measures in different sectors. Planning also prepares for the possibility that the epidemic may accelerate again after the summer season.

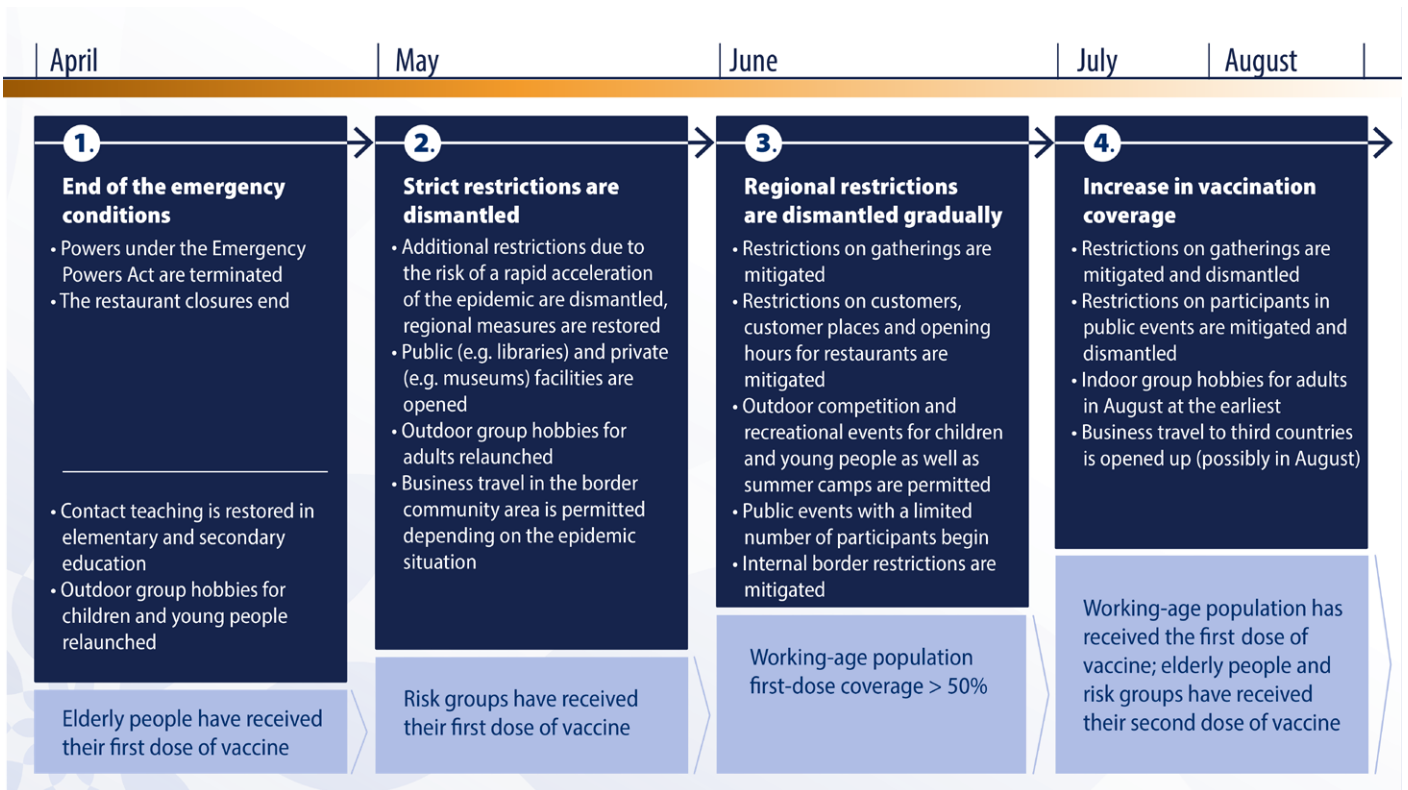
2 General conditions and principles for dismantling restrictions

2.1 Target timetable for dismantling

The dismantling of restrictions and recommendations is based on effective and comprehensive monitoring of the epidemic situation and overall consideration, taking into account economic, social and societal impacts. It involves significant uncertainties and risks. Monitoring the epidemic situation and assessing the impacts of the measures taken are continuous activities. Based on the monitoring and overall assessment, restrictions may be dismantled, maintained or restored. The measures have been set up as logical, larger sets of measures, in which case it has been possible to assess and monitor the direction and magnitude of the impacts. A similar procedure also applies in a situation where restrictions and recommendations can be mitigated or dismantled.

The Government sets a target timetable for the controlled dismantling of restrictions, which is entirely dependent on the development of the epidemic situation and the vaccine coverage. It is anticipated that the first conditions for dismantling restrictions are created in a stable epidemic situation and as the national vaccine coverage improves. Every two weeks, the Government assesses the prerequisites for dismantling restrictions and updates its situation assessment with regard to the target timetable (Figure 1 below) and the information specifying it (Appendix 1).

Figure 1. Target timetable for controlled dismantling of restrictions and recommendations in key terms*



*The figure only applies to areas in which the restrictions required by the epidemic have been in force.

In addition to the epidemic situation and vaccine coverage, a common EU policy on travel from third countries also has an effect on following the target timetable for travel restrictions.

2.2 Decision-making and monitoring in dismantling

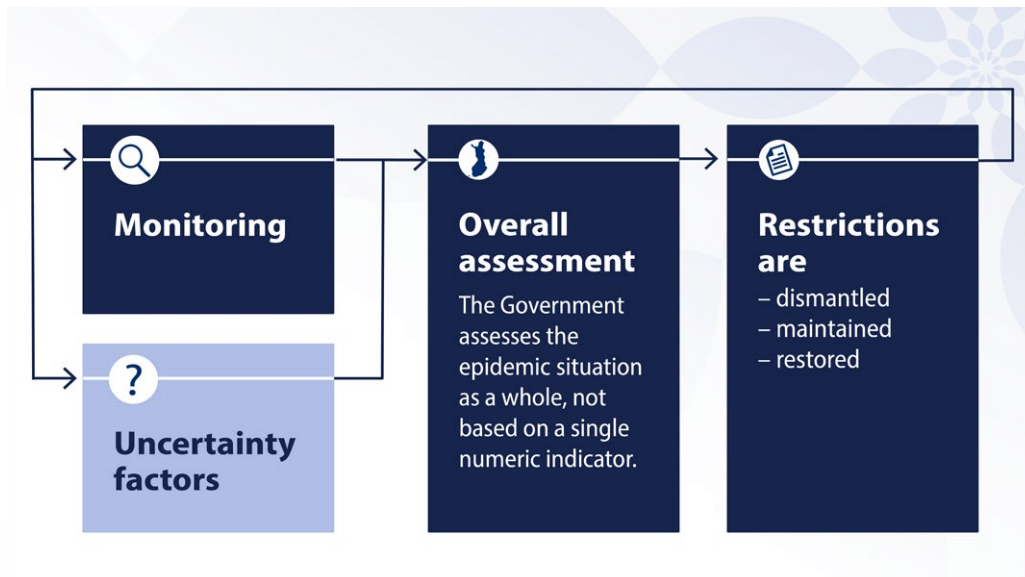
Decision-making when dismantling restrictions and recommendations is gradual and based on the epidemiological situation and overall assessment. The overall assessment of measures takes into account their acceptability among the population and the adverse effects of prolonged restrictions on people's well-being, the economy and society as a whole. The Government decides on the end of the emergency conditions,

and in accordance with Section 11 of the Emergency Powers Act, any existing implementation statutes, their extension statutes and application statutes must be repealed at the latest in this connection.

The Emergency Powers Act on closing restaurants and other food and beverage service businesses was in force until 18 April 2021. After the emergency conditions laid down in the Emergency Powers Act have ended, the next step in dismantling the restrictions will be the Government's support for abandoning the national classification of measures in accordance with the Hybrid strategy action plan supplement (26 January 2021) (action levels 1–3). After this, regional decision-making will take over in accordance with the hybrid strategy, and the evaluation and monitoring of the epidemic situation will continue. The assessment and preparation of border decisions are also closely linked to the whole.

The dismantling of restrictions is based on an overall assessment by the Government on the possibilities to dismantle restrictions or the need to maintain or re-establish them. As part of the overall assessment, the identified risks affecting the development of the epidemiological situation are examined. The effects on the epidemiological situation of each occasion when restrictions are dismantled will be monitored for two weeks, after which the potential for subsequent dismantling measures will be assessed. In this way, information on the epidemiological impacts of mitigating restrictions can be used in decision-making, thus reducing the risks associated with excessively rapid and extensive dismantling.

Figure 2. Decision-making and monitoring when dismantling restrictions



The monitoring tasks of the regional and central administration, particularly monitoring at the national level in normal conditions, are described in more detail in the update of the action plan for the hybrid strategy ([Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2021:11](#)). At the Government level, the overall assessment examines in particular the functionality and effectiveness of the hybrid strategy as a whole and the existence of the framework and prerequisites for regional action.

2.3 Principles of dismantling decisions

The controlled dismantling of restrictions requires a stable epidemic situation and a favourable development direction throughout the country. The Government assesses the national epidemic situation as a whole, not based on a single numerical indicator. The following indicative criteria may be used:

1. The epidemic has clearly decreased nationally for three weeks
2. Vaccination coverage for risk groups and people over 70 years of age is considered sufficiently extensive.
3. There is no indication that a virus variant with unknown characteristics or which significantly undermines the protection provided by vaccines would hamper the overall assessment of the epidemic situation.

In accordance with the criteria of the hybrid strategy, a stable regional epidemic refers to a situation in which the incidence of infections in the region has fallen steadily (for at least two weeks) below 50/100,000 people (or less than 25/100,000 people), and

the transmission chains are well controlled. In addition, comprehensive testing and a reduction in the proportion of positive samples to 1.5% or less is required. The starting point for the dismantling is that those restrictions which remain in force are adhered to when certain restrictions are abandoned and that health-safe practices are implemented responsibly.

The basic precondition for the gradual opening up of society during spring 2021 is that by means of restrictions, the total number of infections can be reversed into clear and long-term decline in comparison to mid-March 2021. This means that the effective R-number is very close to or below 1, which means that with seasonal variation and vaccinations, the decline of the epidemic may continue, and preconditions may be created for a gradual opening up of society towards the summer. Similarly, the uncertainty factors of the controlled dismantling of restrictions are linked to the initial high level of infection which would further postpone the creation of conditions required for dismantling, a slower progression of the vaccination programme than planned and the potential effects of the virus variants which may accelerate the epidemic and impair the efficacy of the vaccines.

Up-to-date national guidelines on safe operating practices and, in transitioning to a region-specific assessment, a regionally appropriate and feasible package of dismantling measures are prerequisites for dismantling. In addition, it is important to ensure smooth testing and tracing and to monitor the epidemiological situation closely, including readiness for rapid reassessments of the situation.

The Government considers it important that the aim of the controlled dismantling of restrictions is initially to mitigate and dismantle restrictions related to the lives and everyday life of children and adolescents. It is also important that the information available on vaccine protection is used to update restrictions and recommendations concerning elderly people. Attention should also be paid to the situation of groups that are expected to have suffered the most from the restrictions.

The dismantling of both nationally guided restrictions and controlled restrictions in the regions includes a step-by-step progression, in which the possibilities of entering the next stage of dismantling are assessed two weeks after the end of the previous stage in order to keep the epidemic situation under control. It is also important to ensure the health safety of the borders.

International coordination, in particular with regard to restrictions with direct or indirect effects on other countries, shall be ensured when the restrictions are dismantled. According to the joint European Union roadmap, measures to restrict traffic on the external borders may be dismantled in cooperation with neighbouring countries once the

disease situation of the neighbouring countries is consistent. The dismantling of border traffic restrictions would take place in stages and in a controlled manner from the current restrictions to the normal state. In addition to public health considerations, the dismantling takes into account EU legislation and recommendations, the free movement in the Schengen area, the operating conditions for foreign trade, the security of supply, economic and other social policy dimensions in order to minimise negative economic and social impacts.

The EU's digital green certificate will play a role in opening up travel. At this stage, no specific national purpose is planned for vaccination certificates or other similar certificates. An electronic coronavirus certificate (coronavirus vaccination, negative test result or recovery from the disease) for the My Kanta service is being prepared. No decisions have currently been made on the national purpose of vaccination certificates or other similar certificates. For details see section 5.2 below.

2.4 Overall assessment of factors affecting the schedule for the dismantling of restrictions

According to a conservative assessment by the health authorities and taking into consideration the assumptions on the progress of vaccination and the effect of seasonal variation, a more permanent improvement in the epidemiological situation may be expected at the turn of April and May 2021. In this case, people aged 70 and older would have been vaccinated at least once, some twice. A large proportion of those at risk of serious disease have also received their first dose of vaccine. In addition, high infection rates which, in the cold season, are typical of Finland as a northern country, could turn to a natural decline.

At the beginning of June, medical risk groups have also been offered the opportunity to receive their first dose of vaccine. Vaccinations for elderly people mainly continue with the second doses. Vaccinations for working-age people will mainly begin during May and proceed quickly in June. The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare has proposed that vaccinations for working-age people should begin with the oldest age groups, between the ages of 60 and 70, and gradually progress towards the youngest groups, i.e. those aged 16 or over. In July, a significant proportion of working-age people would already have good vaccination protection, but the administration of the second doses of the vaccination series providing long-term protection will continue from August to October. The assessment includes uncertainties regarding the delivery schedule of vaccines, age group specific restrictions for vaccines and positive attitudes towards vaccination. Any changes in vaccination deliveries or vaccination may affect the schedule for achieving vaccination coverage. The increase of virus variants

may also weaken the vaccination protection of the population and in the future, it may require booster doses with COVID-19 vaccines tailored against virus variants.

In a large part of the country, the epidemiological situation could correspond to the basic level, but the epidemic would decline more slowly, and local infection clusters would occur particularly in larger population centres and holiday resorts. However, as there would still be large unvaccinated groups in the population and since a more infectious virus variant is likely to be the mainstream variant throughout the country by the summer, it would not be possible to abandon all precautions in the summer.

At the end of August, the number of infections would gradually begin to rise as contacts increase, especially in educational institutions and workplaces. However, exponential acceleration, as in autumn 2020, would be unlikely if the vaccination coverage of the entire adult population and especially young adults were sufficient and if general hygiene practices and guidelines were adhered to. For information on the epidemic situation, see the [Situation update on coronavirus](#) on the website of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare.

Preparing for the epidemic situation of the autumn and the plans concerning it will be examined by the Government in early August.

3 End of emergency conditions and abandonment of action levels

In late 2020 and early 2021, the epidemic has been at an accelerating stage in Finland. It can be estimated that from December 2020 onwards, more contagious virus variants also had an accelerating effect on the epidemic and impaired the effectiveness of restrictions in Finland. For this reason, at the turn of February and March 2021, stricter restrictions were enforced: the restrictions were taken to action level 2 of the Hybrid strategy action plan supplement (1/2021), and a lockdown was imposed with the closure of restaurants and other food and beverage service businesses for three weeks, and emergency conditions were declared.

Table 1 shows the stricter restrictions introduced at the turn of February and March 2021.

Table 1. Enforcement of stricter restrictions in March 2021

Time	Restriction levels
March Action level two	Transition to epidemic measure level 2* (Government resolution 25 February 2021, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health circular 1 March 2021) Lockdown 8–28 March 2021, especially in areas in the spreading stage**
March Emergency conditions	Emergency conditions from 1 March 2021 onwards (Government Decrees 186/2021, 193/2021, 187/2021, 194/2021, 217/2021 and 226/2021) In emergency conditions, the closure of restaurants and other food and beverage service businesses between 9 March and 18 April 2021 (Act 185/2021 and Government Decree 186/2021, Act 257/2021 and Government Decree 258/2021)

*Action levels to prevent rapid acceleration and a spreading stage threatening the entire country in different situations: 1. maintaining the current restriction level and implementing all spreading stage measures in the areas in a spreading stage, 2. steering the fixed-term and large-scale implementation of the spreading stage measures, 3. implementing emergency conditions.

**In areas in the spreading and acceleration stages, the upper comprehensive school classes were instructed to temporarily switch to distance teaching. Group hobbies for young people over 12 years of age may be suspended.

Table 2 shows the main steps for dismantling the restrictions described above between April and June. In practice, every two weeks the Government assesses the prerequisites for dismantling, maintaining or restoring restrictions and updates its assessments of the situation.

Table 2. Steps for dismantling the stricter March restrictions

Time	Dismantling of restrictions
April Emergency conditions	Assessment of the necessity to close restaurants and other food and beverage service businesses, the Emergency Powers Act expired on 18 April 2021) Assessment of the need for the use of existing powers granted under the Emergency Powers Act and the validity of emergency conditions
May Action level two	At the turn of April and May, two reviews of action level two and an assessment of a return to the gradual examination of regions* (baseline, acceleration and spreading stage)
June Regional levels	Assessment of the dismantling of restrictions in regions according to the stage of the epidemic

* Regional restrictions have been based on the epidemic stages (baseline, acceleration and spreading stages) under the action plan on the implementation of the hybrid strategy and the recommendations and restrictions set in accordance with these stages. See Appendix 1, paragraph 3.

3.1 Termination of emergency conditions and the Emergency Powers Act

When there is no longer an absolute need to continue to enforce the emergency conditions, termination of the emergency conditions will be declared. The termination of the emergency conditions will be submitted to the Government plenary session for decision. The Prime Minister's Office is in charge of preparing and presenting the decision of the Government plenary session on declaring and terminating the emergency conditions. In order to terminate the emergency conditions, the Government shall consider, based on the situational picture formed, that the epidemic can be managed with the statutory powers of the authorities. In accordance with Section 11 of the Emergency Powers Act, any existing implementation statutes, their extension statutes and application statutes must be repealed at the latest in this connection. The Government will issue any revocation statutes concerning the termination of the powers under the Emergency Powers Act.

The decision that the emergency conditions referred to in Section 3 of the Emergency Powers Act no longer prevail in the country does not mean that the situation and the risk of the epidemic accelerating again are over. The significance of the decision is that the powers under the Emergency Powers Act will no longer be used. In line with the Government's hybrid strategy, other legislative powers will continue to be applied, in particular those laid down in the Communicable Diseases Act, but also the Border Guard Act and other legislation under normal conditions. The situation is also managed by orders, instructions and recommendations issued by the authorities. However, the level of measure two under the Hybrid Strategy is still valid.

The Government monitors the development of the epidemic situation based on information issued by health authorities. The validity of the restrictions requires a necessity for them. In the Emergency Powers Act (257/2021) on the closure of restaurants and other food and beverage service businesses in accordance with Section 23 of the Constitution, the Government had been obliged to closely monitor the development of the epidemic and to take immediate action where necessary. If the necessity requirement is no longer met as the disease situation eases in a given area, the Government shall take immediate measures to dismantle the restrictions. The regional necessity for the closure of restaurants and other food and beverage service businesses was monitored on a weekly basis and the regulation on the application of the restriction by region was amended twice. The Emergency Powers Act was in force until 18 April 2021. Under the new temporary amendments to sections of the Communicable Diseases Act, more stringent restrictions on the opening hours, serving times of on-licensed premises and the number of customer places in restaurants and other food and beverage service businesses may be provided for the regions in the future. Further provisions on the new restrictions will be laid down separately by government decree as the epidemiological situation requires. The amendments are valid from 19 April 2021 until 30 June 2021.

3.2 Abandonment of action levels

After the Emergency Powers Act on the closure of restaurants and other food and beverage service businesses and the emergency conditions have ended, the next step in dismantling the restrictions will be the Government's support for abandoning the national classification of measures in accordance with the Hybrid Strategy action plan supplement (26 January 2021) (action levels 1–3). The abandonment means that the action levels will no longer be applied at all; instead, an evaluation will be carried out in the future based on the epidemic stages in the regions (baseline, acceleration and spreading stage). Based on the epidemiological statement of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, support would be lent based on a Government decision on the proposal of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

According to current estimates, this support could be lent in May at the latest, provided that the epidemic situation is stable and is developing in a favourable direction as described in section 2.3.

Once the action levels have been abandoned, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health will guide the regions with its circulars. The Hybrid strategy action plan will also be updated.

4 Dismantling of regionally decided restrictions

4.1 General principles and conditions for dismantling regional restrictions

In the transition to a hybrid strategy situation where restrictions are imposed on regions on the basis of the stage of the epidemic (baseline, acceleration or spreading), the dismantling of the restrictions indicated in these principles will be assessed. The competent authorities of each region shall make decisions in accordance with the Communicable Diseases Act and other legislation.

With regard to the controlled dismantling of restrictive measures, it is important for the regional authorities to draw up their own specific plans. This would improve the predictability of actions in different regions in line with their characteristics. Regional plans also support timely and correctly targeted communications about the restrictions.

As a rule, regions can be guided to dismantle restrictions **mainly in reverse order** compared to the order in which they were imposed. However, the accumulated knowledge of the estimated effectiveness (information that will increase the risk of the epidemic accelerating the least is announced first) and the significance of the adverse effects of the restrictions will be taken into account. Assessment of the effects of the progress of vaccinations is part of the overall assessment.

The principle of **children and adolescents first** as well as the general principles and guidelines of the Hybrid strategy action plan are taken into account in the dismantling process. Attention should also be paid to the **situation of other groups that are expected to have suffered the most from the restrictions** (for example, elderly people and those covered by rehabilitative services). In addition, the aim is to move forward **faster in terms of outdoor facilities** and in facilities where events can be organised in a **health-safe** manner. In this case, an attempt will be made to allow, for example, public events **with a certain percentage of available seats or auditoria**, organised following safe procedures. When making decisions according to the epidemic stage, the recommendations already in force are based on the operator's freedom to decide how health safety should be organised (for instance by limiting customer places or operationally) in proportion to their own activities and in relation to the

maximum number of persons allowed on the premises (e.g. as per fire safety regulations).

Organising safe public events

In organising and participating in safe events, it is important that organisers and participants comply with the restrictions and recommendations given to implement safe events. Events and culture play an important role from the perspective of mental coping after long-term restrictions. The success of the organisation of events and gatherings is important from the perspective of the operating preconditions of both the event organisers and business life alike. While the emergency conditions are applicable, the organisation of gatherings and public events (with a maximum of 50 participants) is only possible in regions which are at the baseline when the competent authority decides to allow it in accordance with the precautionary principle. In terms of outdoor facilities with the possibility of separating auditorium and public facilities into clusters, the number of participants in one cluster is no more than 50.

When measures under the hybrid strategy are abandoned at a Government level, gatherings and public events can be organised in areas in baseline and acceleration stages in accordance with decisions made by competent local and regional authorities. The abandonment of measures will be examined at the turn of April and May, and the objective is to abandon them by May at the latest.

Once the action levels have been abandoned, the Regional State Administrative Agencies and municipalities will make decisions in accordance with the Communicable Diseases Act and other legislation in their regions. Section 58d of the Communicable Diseases Act must be taken into account in regional decision-making, according to which in areas that are at the acceleration and spreading stage, where the incidence of 14 days is 25 or more / 100,000 people, where there are unidentified disease clusters in the area and which, according to experts, pose a significant risk, the safety interval of two metres must be taken into account in indoor events.

A broad-based working group appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture has prepared a proposal that presents the stages for the gradual opening of public events as the disease situation improves. The Government considers the submitted proposal to be good and feasible after the action levels have been abandoned.

According to the proposal, the restrictions would be dismantled in three stages. At the first stage, the epidemic situation would have calmed down in several areas in the baseline or acceleration stage. In this case, the working group considers that the na-

tional incidence rate should be less than 75 cases per 100,000 inhabitants over a review period of 14 days, and that the regional epidemic situation would make it possible to organise events. In this case, public events could be organised when a pre-planned place is allocated to the public and it is genuinely possible for groups to avoid close contact with each other.

The second stage would require a decrease in the epidemic situation throughout the country for three weeks. In this case, the national incidence rate should be less than 50 cases per 100,000 inhabitants over a review period of 14 days, and that the regional epidemic situation would make it possible to organise events. In this case, it would also be possible to organise larger public events in accordance with the Communicable Diseases Act so that the maximum number of participants would be determined on grounds of the size and special characteristics of the facility reserved for the event.

At the third stage, the restrictions would be removed as new infections would no longer occasionally occur, and the Government policy on the level of adequate vaccine coverage has been reached. In all three stages, the organisers of the event would commit themselves to following the guidelines on preventing coronavirus infections prepared jointly by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. In addition, the principles for responsible events, which were completed in December 2020 by the Ministry of Education and Cultures working group on safe events, should be taken into account.

In conjunction with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, the Ministry of Education and Culture, will prepare more detailed instructions on dismantling restrictions at different stages.

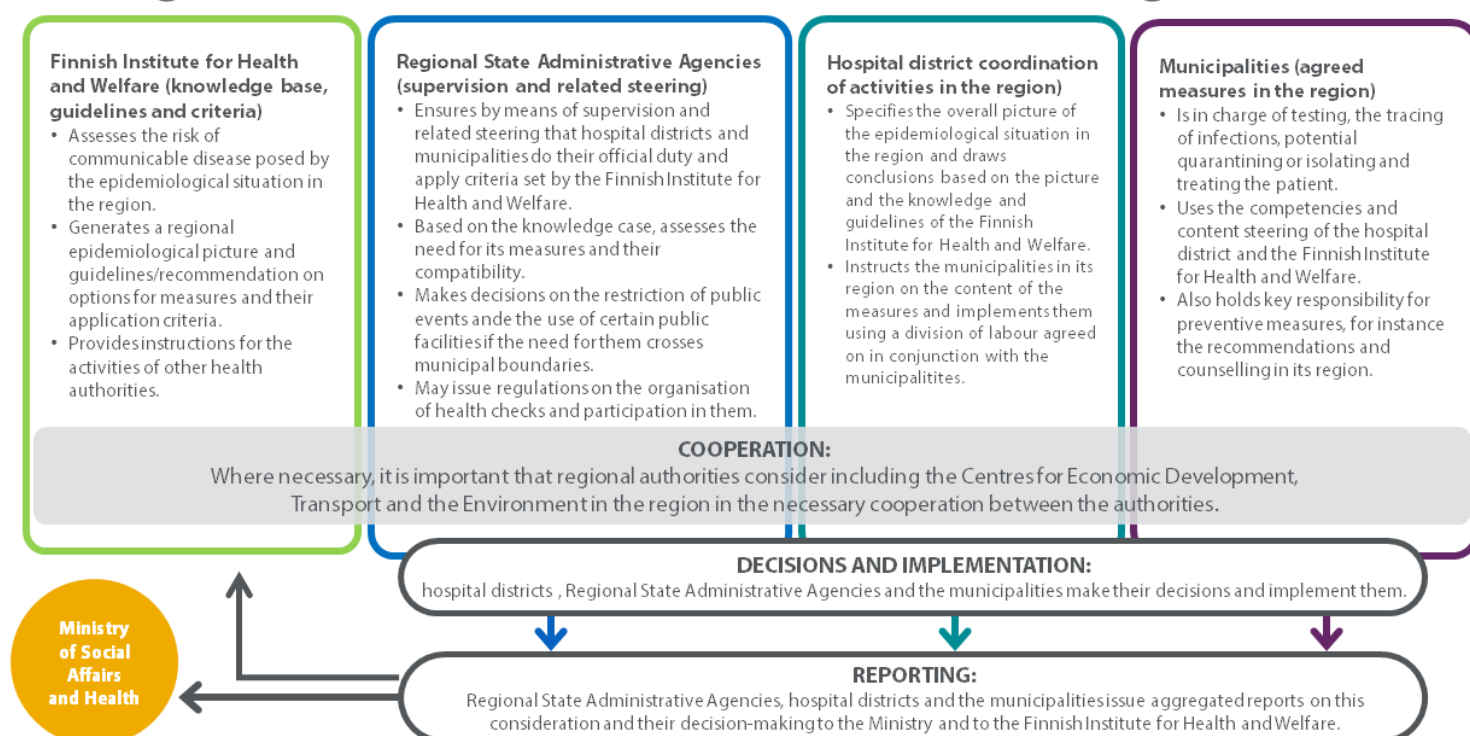
Joint dismantling regional restrictions

The starting point for easing and dismantling regional restrictions is the set of definitions and measures for the stages of the epidemic (baseline, acceleration and spreading stage) in accordance with the hybrid strategy. When assessing the situation in each region, it is also important to place importance on the infectious situation in the surrounding areas and on the national epidemic situation. Even after the restrictions have been eased or dismantled, it should be noted that Regional State Administrative Agencies, municipalities and other competent parties may impose regional and local restrictions when this is proactively necessary to prevent the spread of the epidemic.

The dismantling of regional restrictions is carried out in cooperation between different operators in accordance with the powers laid down in the Communicable Diseases Act (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Managing the coronavirus situation in the regions

Management of the coronavirus situation in the regions



4.2 Dismantling restrictions imposed under the Communicable Diseases Act

Several amendments have been made to the Communicable Diseases Act to prevent the spread of coronavirus infections and to control the epidemic (in detail for instance in HE 39/2021 vp). In addition to permanent changes, temporary provisions have been added to the Act due to the epidemic. The temporary provisions concern restrictions on the operation of restaurants and other food and beverage service businesses (Section 58 a-b), general hygiene obligations (Section 58 c-d), closure of business or other facilities intended for use by customers and participants (Section 58 g),

hygiene requirements for means of transport and limitation of passenger numbers (Section 58 e-f) and preparation of an action plan to prevent the spread of the epidemic (Section 58 h). General hygiene measures are obligatory in all customer and participant facilities and means of transport directly under this Act (Section 58 c, 58 e). In addition, amendments to Section 16 of the Communicable Diseases Act (compulsory medical examination), Section 22 (obligation of exposed and infected persons) and Section 89 (administrative assistance) entered into force on 29 March 2021. Under other provisions, restrictions are imposed for a fixed period by a decision made by the authorities.

The grounds for dismantling the regional restrictions under Sections 58 f and g of the Communicable Diseases Act are the application criteria laid down in the Act, which must be complied with when the provisions are in force. The incidence limits according to the provisions are as follows:

- limiting passenger numbers and the use of facilities:
incidence 25/100,000 people/14 days
- temporary closure of facilities:
incidence 50/100,000 people/14 days.

The temporary provisions of the Communicable Diseases Act are valid until 30 June 2021. As the epidemic continues, it is justified to prepare for the future introduction of the restrictions provided for in the Communicable Diseases Act described above. The Government proposal on extending the validity of temporary provisions is currently under preparation, and the aim is to submit it to Parliament as soon as possible.

With regard to the restriction on the operation of restaurants and other food and beverage service businesses, the Act requires the Government to closely monitor whether the preconditions for restrictions referred to in section 58 a are still apply. If they no longer apply, the Government must take immediate action to repeal section 58 a and the related provisions. If the restrictions laid down in Section 58 a are no longer necessary in certain areas or to the extent prescribed, the Government shall take immediate measures to amend the Government Decree. In Section 3 a of the Act on Accommodation and Food Service Activities, a similar monitoring and action obligation was laid down for the Government in terms of the fixed-term restaurant closure.

In practice, the above-mentioned restrictions must therefore be eased and dismantled in accordance with the epidemic situation due to an obligation laid down in the Act. As of 18 April 2021, the restaurant closure laid down under Section 23 of the Constitution came to an end. In the entire country, regional restrictions and restrictions based on types of restaurants laid down in the Communicable Diseases Act and the Decree is-

sued under it are applied. Act 304/2021 amending sections 58 a and b of the Communicable Diseases Act entered into force on 16 April 2021. Provisions on the content and regional scope of restrictions are laid down by Government decree.

5 Cross-border mobility and health security at borders

5.1 Valid decisions and objectives for dismantling

Promoting health safety in cross-border traffic has a key impact on preventing the spread of the epidemic and, in particular, the spread of virus variants. Border control was restored at internal borders from 17 March 2020 onwards, and similarly border crossing points have been closed and traffic at external borders has been restricted. Government decisions have been made for 30 days at a time. The most recent decisions will be valid until 30 April 2021. The continuation of internal border control has been justified by the incomplete health security measures and the preparation of compensatory measures. The Commission has reminded the Member States that all restrictive measures shall be non-discriminatory and in line with the principle of proportionality. Free movement within the EU territory should be preserved and categorical travel bans should be avoided. In particular, the Commission calls for the abolition of the ban on non-essential travel, to be replaced by more targeted measures, such as quarantine and testing, and the extension of exemptions for cross-border commuting. The Commission considers that less restrictive measures, such as quarantine and testing obligations, would be available in the case of Finland.

A Finnish citizen always has the right to leave the country and return to the country. Entry into Finland is restricted on grounds of the restrictions in force, so that entry into Finland at internal and external borders is mainly permitted based on the security of supply and other essential reasons. The countries subject to the restrictions and closed-border crossing points have been defined in the decisions on grounds of an expert assessment by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare on the COVID-19 communicable disease situation and its development in different countries at the time of each decision. Assessment is carried out weekly. At the borders, restrictions will be eased if the epidemic situation so permits, based on the expert assessment by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. As of the beginning of May, restrictions on entry at the internal borders will be gradually replaced by health security measures at the borders.

However, it is appropriate to continue to monitor internal borders for as long as it is necessary and proportionate to protect public health, but at the same time, the dis-

mantling of traffic restrictions will begin in reverse order. According to current estimates, the aim is to open up traffic between border communities at land borders between Finland and Sweden and between Finland and Norway by the end of May. The next to open up is business travel and the travel of families and relatives across the EU's internal border. The complete abandonment of internal border control would be possible when the adult population has adequate vaccine coverage and the epidemic situation is stable. Sufficient vaccine coverage will be achieved during the summer, depending on the number of vaccines available.

In foreign border traffic, traffic necessary for Finland's security of supply, foreign trade and the operating conditions for foreign connections and other necessary travel are permitted. According to current estimates, the aim is to open up work and travel for family reasons no later than early autumn, and after this, to create opportunities for other travel and tourism. The opening up of traffic from third countries will take into account the EU's recommendations and the common EU approach. Alongside this, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is also examining the possibilities of creating bilateral arrangements, particularly to enable business travel with countries with good vaccine coverage and disease situation. This solution enables traffic to and from these countries, if joint EU decisions do not find sufficiently efficient and fast solutions for opening up traffic.

However, the special conditions and statutory health security measures related to travel continue due to the global pandemic and can only be completely eliminated once the global pandemic has declined. Key solutions include a common European travel certificate and the resulting opportunities opening up travel as well an improvement in vaccination coverage both in Finland and other countries. The Government will also examine the situation in terms of Finland's security of supply and securing operating conditions for foreign trade, including international connections and logistics.

5.2 Health security at borders

Effective cross-border health security measures must be extended until cross-border infections do not threaten the control of the epidemic. Health security measures at the borders are central here. The prevention of COVID-19 infections that may spread with people arriving in Finland is essential to prevent the spread of the epidemic and virus variants. Effective, appropriate and proportionate prevention of infections in cross-border traffic is only possible through close cooperation between the authorities and other parties operating at border crossing points, which also takes local conditions into account. Health authorities are responsible for the required health security measures at the borders, and other authorities, such as the Finnish Border Guard, provide the necessary administrative assistance to carry out this task. These

measures will allow for the gradual dismantling of the necessary restrictions on internal and external border traffic which are currently in force. In addition to the health security measures in use, the Government will develop legislation (including the Communicable Diseases Act) so that entry into the territory can be opened up safely in situations where traffic volumes increase.

Amendments to Section 16 of the Communicable Diseases Act (compulsory medical examination), Section 22 (obligation of exposed and infected persons) and Section 89 (administrative assistance) entered into force on 29 March 2021. Section 16 of the Communicable Diseases Act has been specified in such a way that the possibility for the Regional State Administrative Agency to impose a medical examination is more clearly indicated. The decision may apply to several people or a single individual if it is necessary to prevent the spread of a generally hazardous communicable disease or a communicable disease which is suspected of being generally hazardous. A decision targeting several persons may be relevant, for example, in cross-border traffic. As a result of the amendments to the Communicable Diseases Act, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has prepared an operating model in which the Ministry indicates that, in the current epidemic situation, it is necessary that the Regional State Administrative Agencies make decisions concerning passengers arriving in Finland in accordance with Section 16 of the Communicable Diseases Act, taking into account the recommendations of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. This model is currently considered effective, but the Government is preparing for increasing traffic volumes by developing legislation.

Finland is preparing to introduce the EU Digital Green Certificate in accordance with the Commission's draft Regulation. The certificate is intended to indicate that the person has been vaccinated against COVID-19, has been tested negative or has recovered from COVID-19. The implementation of the My Kanta service enables Finnish certificates to interoperate with the EU Green Certificate. National preparation progresses gradually, so that in May 2021, coronavirus vaccination certificates will be made available to citizens through the My Kanta service. The Commission's proposal for a regulation proposes the introduction of a Green Certificate in June 2021, although some Member States have indicated that the schedule is too tight. It is currently estimated that the EU regulation will enter into force on 26 June 2021 and that it will be implemented within six weeks. In Finland, there is a real possibility of implementing all the data content of the certificate as required by the proposal for a regulation by the end of summer 2021. The situation in Finland and the possibilities for progress will be confirmed after the confirmation of the Commission regulation. The Government discussed the technical preparation of a vaccination certificate for the first time in February 2021, stating that it will not yet have a national purpose, but it is expected to be of use for travel. According to the EU Commission's proposal for a regulation, the purpose of the certificates is to promote the fundamental right of citizens of the Member States to free

movement during a pandemic. The introduction of the certificate still involves a number of practical questions, which should be resolved as soon as possible and as a matter of priority at the EU level.

The health security measures for travel and entry into the territory must be implemented in such a way that they correspond to changes in travel volumes through changes to the border decisions, and gradually when the restrictions on entry are dismantled. In addition to health security measures, such as medical examinations and potential quarantine decisions, which are enabled by the Communicable Diseases Act, the possibilities created by the EU's Digital Green Certificate shall be introduced for health measures at the border. For example, as an alternative to compulsory or voluntary medical examinations, the data contained in the EU Digital Green Certificate is taken into account.

6 Easing of recommendations

The national recommendations on remote work and the facial mask recommendation issued by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare are valid, and they will be examined in early June. At the moment, the authorities recommend working remotely as extensively as possible in both the public and private sectors. In addition, workplaces must promote arrangements to reduce close contact and other risk factors. The use of a facial mask is recommended for those aged 12 or over throughout the country. During the acceleration and spreading stages of the epidemic, the mask recommendation applies to comprehensive schools from the sixth grade onwards, upper secondary schools and higher education institutions as well as all indoor work communities and hobby and voluntary activities if more than one person operates and spends time in the same facility.

Recommendations on responsible behaviour when experiencing symptoms (testing and staying at home), keeping distances, good hand and coughing hygiene, using the Koronavilkku application and taking the vaccine are also valid (Figure 4). In terms of these recommendations, the mitigation criteria are only created in the event of a decline in the epidemic, and some of the hygiene guidelines may remain permanently in force.

Among national recommendations, the need for remote work and facial mask recommendations will be reviewed in August, because at the end of summer holidays there may be a risk that the infectious disease continues to spread within the unvaccinated population.

Figure 4. Responsible behaviour as a whole



Appendix 1: Dismantling of restrictions and recommendations and the provisional acts in force

1. Progressive dismantling of measures, restrictions and recommendations

The following tables provide estimates of the conditions for dismantling and easing the measures, restrictions and recommendations in force in April 2021. Schedule estimates are objectives, they may change and there are significant uncertainties related to their implementation. Easing the restrictions depends on the epidemic situation. It is possible that the restrictions will need to be reinstated or tightened again in certain regions if the development of the epidemic so requires.

The steps for dismantling restrictions are essentially as follows:

- 1. End of the emergency conditions: the Government decides on the end of emergency conditions (presentation by Prime Minister's Office)**

The Government's overall assessment of the possibility to manage the epidemic by means of the authorities' regular powers

The powers to exercise the powers laid down in the Emergency Powers Act are waived
(repealing implementation and application statutes)

- 2. The Government's support for abandoning the classification of measures based on the epidemiological statement of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (proposal made by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)**

The following indicative criteria may be used:

- a. The epidemic has clearly decreased nationally for three weeks
- b. Vaccination coverage for risk groups and people over 70 years of age is considered sufficiently extensive.

- c. There is no indication that a virus variant with unknown characteristics or which significantly undermines the protection provided by vaccines would hamper the overall assessment of the epidemic situation.

3. Return to regional decision-making based on the stage of the epidemic

National guidelines, regional assessment, a feasible set of dismantling measures, smooth testing, continuous monitoring of the epidemiological situation, monitoring every two weeks after dismantling measures

4. Regional restrictions will be gradually dismantled

The competent authorities of each region shall make decisions in accordance with the Communicable Diseases Act and other legislation.

The measures, recommendations and restrictions to be assessed are presented in three sections in the table below:

1. National measures and restrictions
2. Measures and restrictions to be decided on regionally
3. Recommendations and good practices

1.1 National restrictions and measures

Current status of restriction	Modification, easing or dismantling of a measure or restriction	Comments
1.1.1 Emergency conditions		
Closure of restaurant facilities and other food and beverage service businesses	Act 257/2021 in force on 18 April 2021, Government Decree (Regions) 258/2021 in force until 18 April 2021.	Emergency Powers Act under Section 23 of the Constitution
Steering mandate for a private or public social or health care unit	<p>According to Section 11(1) of the Emergency Powers Act, the current implementation or extension decree must be repealed at the end of the emergency conditions. According to Section 11(2) of the Act, if one of the preconditions for the provisions of Part II of the Emergency Powers Act ceases to apply, the implementation or extension decree shall be amended accordingly. The Government will closely monitor the compliance with the preconditions for implementing the Emergency Powers Act and the powers laid down in it and any problems that may be observed in its application.</p> <p>The Government Decree (187/2021) on the introduction of the powers laid down in Sections 86 and 88 of the Emergency Powers Act is valid between 11 March to 30 April 2021.</p>	Section 86 of the Emergency Powers Act (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Regional State Administrative Agencies (RSAA))
Municipalities may abandon compliance with the deadlines laid down in the Health Care Act (1326/2010) in the organisation of non-urgent care	<p>See above.</p> <p>The Government Decree (187/2021) on the introduction of the powers laid down in Sections 86 and 88 of the Emergency Powers Act is valid between 11 March and 30 April 2021.</p> <p>The application decree is valid between 18 March and 30 April 2021. It applies only in the Helsinki and Uusimaa Hospital District. The powers are limited to specialised medical care and specialised medical care provided in connection with primary health care.</p>	Section 88 of the Emergency Powers Act

Current status of restriction	Modification, easing or dismantling of a measure or restriction	Review/objective	Comments
1.1.2 Other restrictions			
Temporary limitation of the activities of restaurants and other food and beverage service businesses	The Act 165/2021 will be in force until 30 June 2021. Government Decree 166/2021 Valid between 1 March and 30 June 2021 (others: 195/2021, 305/2021)	Continuous review of the provisions of the Decree, assessment of the need to extend the Act in April Objective: In June, regulation corresponding to the summer 2020 situation	Communicable Diseases Act Section 58 a-b
Temporary reintroduction of border checks at internal borders and temporary closure of border crossing points and restriction of traffic at external borders	Weekly review based on expert information from the health authorities.	Continuous review of the epidemic situation in neighbouring countries and taking the global pandemic situation into account Objective: In May, commuting in the border community area will depend on the epidemic situation, in June, internal border restrictions will be mitigated, and in August, business travel to third countries will be opened up (possibly, in line with EU policies)	Government Decision Sections 15 and 16 of the Border Guard Act
Application of Section 16 of the Communicable Diseases Act at border crossing points in situations where a Regional State Administrative Agency has made a decision on a compulsory health check	Examination in accordance with the epidemic situation, taking EU regulation into account. In connection with the mitigation or complete dismantling of internal border controls, the adequacy of measures ensuring health safety and the need for changes will be reviewed. Coordination with the EU's Digital Green Certificate processes.	Continuous review Objective: The current operating model will be in place at least until September, after which the increase in passenger traffic will still require adequate health security measures at the borders	Operating model for applying Section 16 of the Communicable Diseases Act at a border crossing point

1.2 Regional measures and restrictions

Current status of a measure or restriction	Modification, easing or dismantling of a measure or restriction	Review/objective	Comments
1.2.1 Facilities, gatherings, events and meetings			
Temporary closure of facilities or restriction of their use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Temporary closure of facilities with a high risk of infection to customers and participants – Restriction of the use of public spaces – Restriction of the use of private spaces – Recommendations for restricting the use of facilities and their closure <p>Operating situation: baseline, acceleration and spreading stages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Gradual dismantling <p>Amendment 147/2021 to the Communicable Diseases Act, effective 30 June 2021</p>	<p>Continuous review, assessment of the need for extending the validity of the provisions at the turn of April and May and overall assessment at the beginning of June</p> <p>Objective:</p> <p>In May, the abandonment of action levels and the opening up of public and private facilities in baseline and acceleration stage regions, in accordance with the recommendations of the Hybrid strategy action plan, taking safety distances into account. In the spreading stage regions, the high-infection-risk facilities are still closed under decisions or recommendations. The facilities used by children, young people and special groups are prioritised</p> <p>In June, the majority of the regions will be at the baseline or the acceleration stage, which means that their restrictions are limited to a safety distance obligation that is adapted to their own activities</p> <p>In July, all regions will be at the baseline or the acceleration stage, and the measures will be based on hygiene obligations</p>	<p>Communicable Diseases Act Sections 6, 9, 58 c, 58 d and 58 g (RSAA, municipality)</p>

Current status of a measure or restriction	Modification, easing or dismantling of a measure or restriction	Review/objective	Comments
Restrictions and recommendations on gatherings	Operating situation: baseline, acceleration and spreading stages. – gradual dismantling	Continuous review, overall review at the turn of April and May and in early June Objective: In June, 10 people also in regions at the spreading stage, outdoor gatherings in July without restrictions on the number of people, meeting indoors with restrictions on the number of people, removal of indoor restrictions in August at the earliest	Section 58 of the Communicable Diseases Act (RSAA, municipality) The public events referred to in the section on the organisation of safe public events are covered by the following section of the table.
Restrictions and recommendations on the organisation of public events (gatherings included)	Operating situation: baseline, acceleration and spreading stages. – gradual dismantling	Continuous review, overall review at the turn of April and May and in early June Objective: Once the action levels have been abandoned, based on the decisions made by the regional authority, step 1 of the working group for the Ministry of Education and Culture will be taken in May at the earliest. Step 2 of the working group for the Ministry of Education and Culture in May or June at the earliest Complete dismantling of public restrictions according to the epidemic situation in July at the earliest	Communicable Diseases Act Section 6, 9, 58 and 58 c (hygiene, distances) (RSAA, municipality, event organiser)

Current status of a measure or restriction	Modification, easing or dismantling of a measure or restriction	Review/objective	Comments
Closure of libraries and museums	Opening up of libraries and museums. Operating situation: baseline, acceleration and spreading stages	Review at the turn of April and May and in early June Objective: Opening up facilities with user restrictions in May	
1.2.2 Passenger traffic, means of transport			
Passenger traffic measures Temporary restriction of the passenger numbers in means of transport Restrictions and recommendations of the transport operators	Operating situation: baseline, acceleration and spreading stages. – gradual dismantling Amendment 147/2021 to the Communicable Diseases Act, valid 30 June 2021.	Continuous review, overall review at the turn of April and May and in early June Objective: During May, at least the restrictions on the number of passengers will be dismantled	Section 58 e of the Communicable Diseases Act (hygiene, distances) Section 58 f of the Communicable Diseases Act (Traficom) Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare guidelines/ recommendation

Current status of a measure or restriction	Modification, easing or dismantling of a measure or restriction	Review/objective	Comments
1.2.3 Group hobbies			
Suspension or restriction of group hobbies for young people (born between 2002 and 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enabling outdoor group hobbies for children and young people – Enabling indoor hobbies for children and young people <p>Operating situation: baseline, acceleration and spreading stages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – gradual dismantling <p>Regional State Administrative Agencies and municipalities may impose regional and local restrictions and recommendations on group hobbies when this is necessary to prevent the spread of the epidemic.</p>	<p>Objective:</p> <p>Outdoor group hobbies will open up in April and May, outdoor competitions and recreational events and summer camp activities for young people may take place at the beginning of June</p> <p>Indoor recreational activities that do not involve close contact during June</p> <p>Indoor competitions and events as well as hobby activities involving contacts in early July</p>	Regulation of recreational activities takes place through the management of facilities (municipalities) and the recommendations of the Communicable Diseases Act as well as decisions on the facilities (RSAA, municipalities)
Suspension or restriction of adult group hobbies (including basic art teaching)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enabling adult group hobbies with restrictions (high-risk indoor hobbies) when the area returns from the spreading stage to the acceleration stage – Group hobbies for adults, avoiding close contacts when the region returns to baseline <p>Operating situation: baseline, acceleration stage and spreading stage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – gradual dismantling <p>Regional State Administrative Agencies and municipalities may impose regional and local restrictions and recommendations on group hobbies when this is necessary to prevent the spread of the epidemic.</p>	<p>Overall assessment at the turn of April and May and in early June</p> <p>Objective: Outdoor group hobbies taking place at the end of May or in June, outdoor competitions and recreational activities taking place in June and July, indoor group hobbies taking place in August at the earliest</p>	Regulation of group hobbies takes place through the management of facilities (municipalities) and the Communicable Diseases Act (RSAA)

Current status of a measure or restriction	Modification, easing or dismantling of a measure or restriction	Review/objective	Comments
1.2.4 Education and training			
Distance learning in elementary education (higher comprehensive school)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Transition to contact teaching Municipalities and education providers may decide locally on transitioning to distance learning when this is necessary to prevent the spread of the epidemic.	As soon as the epidemic situation allows, based on an assessment on the region,	Section 58 of the Communicable Diseases Act (RSAA or municipality) Basic Education Act (Municipality or education provider)
Secondary distance learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Transition to contact teaching Education providers may decide locally on transitioning to distance learning when this is necessary to prevent the spread of the epidemic.	As soon as the epidemic situation allows, based on an assessment on the region,	Section 58 of the Communicable Diseases Act (RSAA or municipality), recommendations in Sections 6 and 9 General Upper Secondary Schools Act and the Act on Vocational Education and Training (education providers)

Current status of a measure or restriction	Modification, easing or dismantling of a measure or restriction	Review/objective	Comments
Distance learning in higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Transition to contact teaching <p>Higher education institutions may decide locally on transitioning to distance learning when this is necessary to prevent the spread of the epidemic.</p>	As soon as the epidemic situation allows, based on an assessment on the region,	<p>Section 58 of the Communicable Diseases Act (RSAA or municipality), recommendations in Sections 6 and 9</p> <p>Universities Act and Universities of Applied Sciences Act (higher education institutions)</p>
Liberal adult education and basic education for adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Transition to contact teaching <p>Municipalities and education providers may decide locally on transitioning to distance education when this is necessary to prevent the spread of the epidemic.</p>	As soon as the epidemic situation allows, based on an assessment on the region,	<p>Section 58 of the Communicable Diseases Act (RSAA or municipality)</p> <p>Act on Liberal Adult Education (administrators of educational institutions) on liberal adult education, see also section 1.2.3</p>

Current status of a measure or restriction	Modification, easing or dismantling of a measure or restriction	Review/objective	Comments
Distance learning in basic art education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Transition to contact teaching Operating situation: baseline, acceleration and spreading stages. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – gradual dismantling Education providers may decide locally on transitioning to distance learning when this is necessary to prevent the spread of the epidemic.	As soon as the epidemic situation permits, based on the assessment on the region, basic art education for children and young people is examined first, and then basic art education for adults is examined.	Section 58 of the Communicable Diseases Act (RSAA or municipality) Basic Art Education Act (education providers) See also section 1.2.3

1.3 Recommendations and good practices

Current status of a measure or restriction	Recommendation or good practice	Review/objective	Comments
National recommendation to work remotely	Assessment according to the epidemic situation at the beginning of June, new assessment in August where necessary	According to the epidemic situation	Last review on 23 December 2020 (Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health), review by 30 June
Recommendation for citizens to wear face masks	Assessment according to the epidemic situation at the beginning of June, new assessment in August where necessary	According to the epidemic situation	Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare
Protection of risk groups	The recommendation needs to be remain valid until further notice	To be continued until further notice	Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare guidelines (municipalities)
Recommendation to suspend short-term student exchange	Assessment according to the epidemic situation at the turn of April and May	According to the epidemic situation	Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare
Travel recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Government policy recommendation “Avoid unnecessary travel abroad” – Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare recommendation to some countries “Avoid all travel” 	Mitigating the Government policy (for example, “Take particular care in the face of a pandemic”), followed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' country-specific media release on travel in cooperation with health authorities (Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare), and the impact of the epidemic situation on travel safety and tourism in different countries could be better taken into account.	According to the global epidemic situation	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare

Current status of a measure or restriction	Recommendation or good practice	Review/objective	Comments
Advice and guidance for workplaces	Enhanced counselling and guidance on health-safe operating models will continue	Permanent activities	Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, Occupational Safety and Health Division
Avoiding close contact and safety distance	The recommendation needs to remain valid until further notice.	To be continued until further notice	
Special care for hand and coughing hygiene	The recommendation needs to remain valid until further notice.	To be continued until further notice	
Koronavilkku application which renders the interruption of infection chains more efficient	The application shall be used until 30 December 2021 if the epidemic situation so requires.	In use until further notice	The Act enabling its use will be valid until 31 December 2021
Applying for the coronavirus test on a low threshold	The recommendation needs to remain valid until further notice.	To be continued until further notice	
Closure of public spaces	Assessment in accordance with the epidemic situation	Continuous review, overall review at the turn of April and May and in early June	Regional and local recommendations and state (Ministry of Finance) and municipal decisions

2. Temporary provisions in force

Regulation in force	Situation on 15 April 2021
2021-04-18	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment: Closure of restaurant facilities and other food and beverage service businesses (validity will not be extended)
2021-04-30	Ministry of Finance: VAT exemption for goods used to prevent, test and treat COVID-19 infections
Extension in preparation.	Ministry of Transport and Communications: Temporary amendments to certain transport regulations (Acts 406-408)
2021-05-31	Ministry of Finance: Electronic procedures in municipal decision-making (electronic meeting) (corresponding permanent regulation is included in HE 242/2020 vp)

Regulation in force	Situation on 15 April 2021
2021-06-30 Extension in preparation.	<p>Ministry of Justice: Exceptions to acts on limited liability companies, housing cooperatives, cooperatives and associations and certain other community laws</p> <p>Ministry of Justice: Limitation of the maximum recovery costs for non-consumer claims</p> <p>Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment: Eligibility for labour market support for entrepreneurs</p> <p>Ministry of Transport and Communications: Temporary amendments to the Act on Transport Services, the Pilotage Act and the Act on Ships' Crews and the Safety Management of Ships</p> <p>Ministry of Transport and Communications: Amendment to the Act on Ships' Crews and the Safety Management of Ships (Act 228/2021)</p> <p>Ministry of Transport and Communications: Amendments to the Pilotage Act and the Pilotage Decree (Acts 199/2021 and 121/2021)</p> <p>Ministry of Transport and Communications: Suspension of air transport oversight</p> <p>Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: Necessary temporary restrictions on restaurant facilities and other food and beverage service businesses</p> <p>Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: Temporary hygiene requirements of the Communicable Diseases Act, restrictions on the use and closure of facilities and restrictions on the number of passengers in means of transport</p> <p>Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: Changes in unemployment benefits (mediation of unemployment benefits, extension of the advance payment procedure, increased protected portion, mobility allowance)</p> <p>Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry: Procedures for organising meetings for participants' associations under the Act on Jointly Owned Forests and the Act on Joint Property, and for organising certain meetings in accordance with the Reindeer Husbandry Act, procedures for arranging executive meetings referred to in the Real Estate Formation Act</p>
2021-07-31 Extension in preparation (excluding Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry).	<p>Ministry of Education and Culture: Exceptional teaching arrangements in primary education</p> <p>Ministry of Education and Culture: Temporary amendments to the Universities Act, the Act on Universities of Applied Sciences and the Act on Vocational Education and Training</p> <p>Ministry of Education and Culture: The Act on Financial Aid for Students and the Act on the School Transport Subsidy</p> <p>Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry: Temporary amendments to the Hunting Act (Act 304/2020)</p>

Regulation in force	Situation on 15 April 2021
2021-09-30 The extension will be assessed.	Ministry of Justice: Amendments to the Bankruptcy Act Ministry of Justice: Consumer credit interest rate cap and prohibition of direct credit marketing
2021-12-31 The assessment of the extension is not yet topical.	Ministry of Justice: Reduction, limitation and suspension of the enforcement of recovery proceedings Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment: Amendment to the maximum duration of start-up grants Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment: Laid-off workers' eligibility to unemployment benefits Ministry of Transport and Communications: Extension of halving fairway dues Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: Koronavilkku mobile application Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: Operating conditions for unemployment funds (Act 723/2020) Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: Coronavirus research compensation rate Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry: Amendments to the Fishing Act (Act 303/2020) Ministry of Finance: Postponement of transitioning to ESEF reporting by stock exchange companies
2022-03-31	Ministry of Transport and Communications: Fixed-term passenger car scrapping fee Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment: Studies leading to a higher education degree as labour market training
2022-12-31	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment: Provision of travel service combinations

3. Descriptions of the stages of the epidemic situation

Baseline – no increase in epidemic severity

Low incidence of infections, manageable infection chains, individual new cases

Hybrid strategy measures

Hygiene measures, observing safety distances

Interruption of infection chains based on the test, trace, isolate and treat strategy:

- increasing testing capacity and streamlining the process
- commissioning the Koronavilkku application
- risk-based communication, testing and quarantine decisions (cf. airports)
- face mask recommendation for citizens (level 1) based on the authorities' consideration for areas with infections for at least two consecutive weeks
- targeted national and regional information campaigns (e.g. the Koronavilkku application)
- travel restrictions
- material preparedness (procurements)
- actions by the authorities in accordance with the Communicable Diseases Act.

Acceleration stage – the epidemic begins to accelerate

Regional incidence of cases has increased, there are several local and regional infection chains

Criteria that can be used to assess the epidemic situation

- 7 days' case total of 10–15/100,000 inhabitants or 14 days' case total does not exceed 25/100,000
- positive samples > 1%
- mass exposures identified
- as a rule, the sources of infection can be investigated and the transmission chains can be stopped
- the need for hospital care can be met without special measures.

Additional measures in the Hybrid strategy

- increasing testing capacity to identify index cases and asymptomatic infected persons
- adding infection tracing resources
- regional recommendation to work remotely and face mask recommendation
- local and regional information campaigns
- proactive and sufficiently extensive local and regional restrictions, timely testing, tracing speed and, where appropriate, targeting high-risk exposure situations, and quarantine measures required by mass exposure play a key role.

Spreading stage – accelerating epidemic

The epidemic continues to accelerate, cases spread in the population regionally or more extensively, tracing becomes more difficult

Criteria that can be used to help assess spread in the population

- 7 days' case total of 15/100,000 or 14 days > 25–50/100,000 for at least two consecutive weeks
- the proportion of positive samples is > 2%
- less than half of the sources of infection can be determined
- the need for hospital care is increasing, and the number of new intensive care cycles is expected to increase.

Additional measures in the hybrid strategy

- maximum regional recommendations and restrictions to implement immediately
- remote work and (extensive) face mask recommendation
- if the situation escalates and/or cannot be contained by regional measures:
- national restrictions and recommendations; communication campaign; release of material stocks; preparedness for increasing treatment capacity throughout the country; emergency conditions and the Emergency Powers Act as the last resort.

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