

Decisions of the Council of Ministers on restrictive measures against the spread of COVID-19

During today's meeting, the Council of Ministers was informed by the Minister of Health, Mr Michalis Hadjipantela, of the current epidemiological situation in our country. In particular, Mr Hadjipantela informed the Council of Ministers that there is a steady improvement in epidemiological and clinical indicators at present, with a decrease in the number of positive cases, hospitalizations and deaths.

Nonetheless, as the Minister of Health explained, it is appropriate that there should be targeted relaxations in the measures in force, in the coming period. The change in weather conditions in the coming days, as well as the assessments of the scientific community, including references to a possible outbreak of seasonal infections in the winter, occurring at the same time as COVID-19, call for a careful lifting of restrictions, so as to minimize the possibility of spreading the virus in the community.

Taking into account all of the above and the fact that more time is needed to increase the number of citizens vaccinated with the 3rd dose and belong to groups with an increased risk of serious illness, the Council of Ministers has taken the following decisions:

1. Presence of spectators in football matches: Spectators may be present at football matches at a capacity of 75% of the stadium, provided that one of the following conditions is met:

- Certificate of complete vaccination (vaccination with both doses or vaccination with Johnson & Johnson's single-dose vaccine and after two weeks' time has elapsed), or
- Certificate of COVID-19 recovery in the last six (6) months, or
- Certificate of a negative result from a PCR examination, valid for 72 hours.

2. Operation of theatres, amphitheatres, cinemas and event halls: The operation of theatres, amphitheatres, cinemas and event halls is governed by the following:

- a) a maximum of 300 persons indoors with mandatory presentation of a SafePass, or
- b) a maximum of 350 persons outdoors with mandatory presentation of a SafePass, or
- c) with 75% of the capacity of the premises, provided that only persons who hold a full vaccination certificate or a COVID-19 recovery in the last six months' certificate or a negative PCR test certificate, valid for 72 hours, enter the premises.

3. Operation of premises/sites and holding of social events: Subject to the distancing measures and the health protocols and provisions of the Decree in force, the following apply:

- a. increase in the maximum number of persons indoors from 250 to 300 persons, with mandatory presentation of a SafePass, or
- b. increase in the maximum number of persons indoors from 450 to 500 persons, provided that only people with a full vaccination certificate or a COVID-19 recovery certificate within the last 6 months enter the premises.
- c. increase in the number of persons per table from 10 to 12.

The above changes to the maximum number of persons apply to the following:

- The presence of congregants during church or/and other forms of religious worship,
- Weddings, christenings and funerals,
- Events, including weddings and christenings in catering establishments, event venues, hotels and/or tourist accommodations, nightclubs, entertainment centres and music dance venues,
- Catering establishments: restaurants, taverns, cafes, pubs, snack bars and bars, coffee shops, restaurants within shopping centres, restaurants within hotels and tourist accommodations, canteens and/or sports clubs, cultural clubs, associations, societies, etc.
- Nightclubs, event venues, discos, clubs and music and dancing venues,
- The presence of spectators in matches held in stadiums and sports facilities (excluding football stadiums).

4. Extension of the remaining measures until 29 October 2021

The above decisions come into force on Saturday, October 9, and will be regulated by Decree.

The Ministry of Health continues to closely monitor the progress of epidemiological indicators and reassesses the data as developed on a regular basis. The aim is the maximum possible shielding and protection that will allow us to respond adequately to the needs that may arise in the run-up to winter.

08.10.2021