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Government updates policies on internal border control and travel restrictions

Government Communications Department, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of the Interior  8.7.2020 18.47 | Published in English on 8.7.2020 at 19:50

PRESS RELEASE 481/2020

In its meeting on Wednesday 8 July, the Government also received a briefing on the epidemiological situation and heard a report on the safe entry of berry pickers.

The Government agreed that as of 13 July 2020, it would lift the restrictions on traffic at the internal borders between Finland and countries where the incidence of the coronavirus is similar to that in the countries where internal border control has already been lifted. As a general rule, the limit value is eight new cases of the disease per 100,000 persons in the previous 14 days.

Alternatively, the lifting of internal border controls and entry restrictions may be considered for countries with a maximum of 10 new cases of the disease per 100,000 persons in the previous 14 days.

Traffic between the EU Member States

Based on the current development of the epidemic, border control at the internal borders would be lifted for the following countries: the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Austria, Greece, Malta, Germany, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. Finland has already abolished internal border control for traffic between Finland and Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as for leisure boating.

The restrictions will continue to be in force to the extent that they are still necessary due to a serious threat posed by the epidemiological situation. Based on the current epidemiological assessment, internal border control and restrictions on entry into the country will continue at the land border between Finland and Sweden and for travel between Finland and the Czech Republic, France, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

Insofar as internal border control continues at the internal borders, return traffic to Finland, commuting and other essential traffic will be permitted.

Restrictions at the external borders to continue with certain exceptions

External border traffic between Finland and EU countries that do not belong to the Schengen area, as well as the United Kingdom, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican, will be subject to the same assessment criterion concerning the incidence of outbreaks as internal border traffic. In this case, in line with the Government's policy, unrestricted travel will be permitted between Finland and Cyprus, Ireland, Andorra, San Marino and the Vatican.

The restrictions will continue to be in force for travel between Finland and Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, the United Kingdom and Monaco.

On 30 June, the Council of the European Union approved a recommendation ('green list') on the lifting of restrictions on border traffic for non-EU countries, also known as third countries. The Council recommends that Member States lift the restrictions at external borders in a coordinated and gradual manner. The lifting of restrictions should begin on 1 July 2020 for the countries on the 'green list' in the recommendation.

Traffic between Finland and the countries on the green list will be opened up subject to certain restrictions if the number of new infections in the country on the list does not exceed 8 per 100,000 persons during the previous two weeks.

This means that as of 13 July, travel between Finland and Algeria, Australia, Georgia, Japan, New Zealand, Rwanda, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay and China would be permitted for work and other essential purposes for residents of these countries with similar restrictions as travel at internal borders.

For countries on the green list where the number of infections exceeds the criterion (Canada, Montenegro, Morocco, Serbia) and other third countries, the existing restrictions on external border traffic would remain in force.

Return traffic to Finland and other essential traffic will be allowed at the external borders. In addition, transit traffic will be allowed at airports. Family members of Finnish citizens may enter the country regardless of nationality.

Situation to be reviewed approximately every two weeks

If the epidemic situation so permits, the Government will review its decisions on border traffic restrictions in two weeks' time and, if necessary, make new decisions. The next changes in border traffic are scheduled to enter into force on 27 July.

At this time, the decision on internal border controls will be reviewed with a view to lifting internal border controls and restrictions on border traffic between Finland and those EU and Schengen countries where the number of infections is at most equal to the current or revised limit value on 13 July.

At the same time, unrestricted entry at the external borders would be permitted from those 'green list' countries where the incidence of infections does not exceed 8 new cases per 100,000 persons during the previous 14 days.

If necessary, the restrictions may be reinstated if the epidemic situation in a certain country deteriorates significantly.

Under section 9 of the Constitution of Finland, Finnish citizens always have the right to return to Finland, and everyone has the right to leave Finland if they so wish, provided that there is no legal impediment to this. However, the Government still recommends avoiding unnecessary travel to other countries, except for countries for which the restrictions on entry have been lifted.

Berry pickers will be allowed to enter the country

The entry of berry pickers at the invitation of companies will be permitted via both internal and external border traffic. The entry of berry pickers from Thailand will be permitted according to the country quota previously allocated to Finland. The Thai authorities announced earlier that Finland's quota is 3,000 pickers.

[Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare: COVID-19 situation as of 8 July 2020](#) PDF 1.6MB

[Gradual dismantling of restrictions on border traffic \(memorandum, Border Guard Headquarters\)](#) PDF 581kB

[Internal borders table \(Schengen states, situation as of 6 July 2020\)](#) PDF 307kB

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[Implementation practices for the EU and Schengen association countries in relation to the Council recommendation of 30 June, situation as of 3 July 2020](#) PDF 433kB

[Safe entry of foreign berry pickers for the 2020 season \(proposal by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs\)](#) PDF 139kB

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