



Die  
Bundesregierung

Agreement

## Statement by Chancellor Merkel on new measures related to the coronavirus

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen,

I held detailed discussions by telephone with the Minister-Presidents of the Länder this afternoon. All of us are aware of how serious the situation is. The coronavirus is continuing to spread in our country with alarming speed.

Today, we discussed the impact that our counter-measures are having. We do not yet have a vaccine or any medicine, so our counter-measures are exclusively focused, firstly, on the efforts that we are taking to prepare our healthcare system, above all our hospitals, for the anticipated continued rise in the number of cases and, secondly, on our own behaviour. This is currently the most effective means that we have at our disposal. This involves powering down public life as much as we possibly can and reducing to a minimum possible encounters between people in the course of which the virus could be passed from person to person.

As you know, the Federation and the Länder reached agreement on radical measures to this end on Monday. We agreed that we would take stock of those measures this weekend.

Today, on Sunday, we have seen in Germany that our cities, our traffic and our commercial and private lives look completely different than they did just one week ago. The overwhelming majority of people has understood that it is now up to each and every one of us and that each and every one of us can and indeed must do their part to help stop the virus.

Before I explain in detail the extended guidelines that the Federation and the Länder have agreed on today, it is important to me to speak directly to all those who are already abiding by the necessary rules of behaviour. Thank you for doing this. I know that this involves making a great deal of sacrifices, both economically and at a personal level, when shops have to close, when you cannot simply go out and socialise with others and, what is more painful still, when you're no longer allowed to pay a visit to grandparents or friends. We must all do without such things for a period of time.

I'm very moved by the fact that so many people are sticking to these rules of behaviour. By doing this, we are showing that we care for the elderly and for people with previous medical conditions. After all, the virus would do the most harm to them. In a nutshell, this is how we can save lives.

As I told you on Wednesday, the more dynamically the virus spreads, the more flexible we must be in adapting our measures. We must continue to learn as the situation develops, from the experts who continue to gain new insights from this epidemic each day, and by observing what is happening on the ground. Which measures are being implemented smoothly, and where are there still problems and why?

With this in mind, the Federal Government and the Länder have agreed today to extend once again the guidelines with respect to behaviour and freedom of movement and mobility that we must all abide by. We are thus continuing to systematically reduce public life and social contacts and ensuring that the same rules apply throughout Germany. Many members of the public have made it very clear to us that they would like to see this clarity also in our federal state. Everyone should know that all state levels in Germany – the Federation, the Länder and the municipalities – are working towards a major, vital objective: buying time in the fight against the virus.

It is for this reason that we have agreed today on the following additional guidelines that I would like to present to you now.

One. Members of the public are required to reduce their contact with people other than the members of their own household to an absolute minimum.

Two. In public, as far as possible, they must keep a distance of at least 1.5 metres, preferably two metres, from all those other than those mentioned in point number one.

Three. Visiting public places is only permitted alone, with one other person who does not live in your household, or when accompanied by the members of your own household.

Four. Travel to work or to provide emergency care, shopping for essentials, doctors' appointments, attendance of meetings, necessary appointments and examinations, assistance for others or sport and exercise individually out of doors, as well as other necessary activities will, of course, still be possible.

Five. Groups meeting for parties in public areas, homes and private institutions are unacceptable in view of the serious situation in our country. Compliance with social distancing is to be monitored by the authorities responsible for public order and the police, and violations will be penalised.

Six. Restaurants and cafés are to be closed. This does not include the delivery and collection of food that can be taken away and consumed at home.

Seven. Service providers in the personal care sector such as hairdressers, cosmetics studios, massage salons, tattoo parlours and similar establishments are to be closed, because physical proximity is unavoidable in these professions, and this is not in line with the guidelines we have put in place for ourselves. Necessary medical treatments will still be permitted.

Eight. It is important that all enterprises, particularly those open to the public, adhere to the hygiene regulations and implement effective protective measures for staff and visitors.

Nine. These measures will apply for at least two weeks.

These guidelines enable everyone, wherever they live, to know what is expected of them. Everyone needs to organise their movements and their lives in accordance with these clear stipulations for the coming weeks.

None of those of us who are in positions of political responsibility in our democracy ever wanted to have to come and confront our citizens with rules like these. But I must also add that these aren't simply random recommendations by the state. They are rules that must be kept in the interests of us all. The authorities responsible for public order will monitor compliance, and where they find that rules are being violated, there will be consequences and penalties.

I therefore reiterate my urgent appeal to all of you, and particularly to the minority who still seem to have had problems adhering to the rules in recent days:

Please, all of you, cooperate with us. Do what is right for our country. Show sense and compassion. Countless fellow citizens are working in our healthcare system or ensuring that our daily needs are met. We should keep on thanking them for this. But, above all, we owe it to them to do everything in our power to ensure that we give the virus as little chance as possible to spread.

Today, it is a great encouragement to see that millions and millions of people are making sacrifices out of solidarity and consideration for the most vulnerable. I am convinced that this sense of solidarity, this idea that "we look out for one another" will carry us all through this difficult time.

Thank you very much.