



**KINGDOM OF BELGIUM**  
Federal Public Service  
**Foreign Affairs,  
Foreign Trade and  
Development Cooperation**

**our reference**

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The Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, presents its compliments to diplomatic missions, consular posts as well as to international organizations established in Belgium and has the honour to communicate to them new elements regarding the exit strategy announced by the National Security Council on 24.04.2020.

The current restriction measures will remain in force until the start of the exit period. The exit will take place gradually and the dates and transitions from one phase to the next are indicative and reversible, depending on the spread of the virus and the status of national public health.

The start of the exit period is planned for 4 May.

In attachment you will find a summary of the most important measures announced, as well as the basic principles on which this strategy is based.

The information communicated is consistent with that which the Protocol Directorate is currently aware of. Certain terms have not yet been set out in detail. As soon as this information is available, the Protocol Directorate will publish it on [its website](#).

The Prime Minister's statement of 24.04 is available [via this link](#) in French, Dutch German and English.

The Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation seizes this opportunity to renew to diplomatic missions, to consular posts and to international organizations established in Belgium the assurances of its highest consideration.

Done in Brussels on 27/04/2020

To the diplomatic and consular missions and  
to international organizations established in Belgium



## Annex

The National Security Council convened on April 24<sup>th</sup> at the Egmont Palace in order to decide on Belgium's exit strategy from the corona crisis, starting from May 4<sup>th</sup>. **This exit will take place gradually and the dates and stages mentioned are indicative and reversible.** The Belgian authorities stress the fact that the virus is still present in the territory and remains a danger to all.

### **Basic principles :**

a) Every measure not explicitly abolished will remain in force. The following measures will thus remain in force during all phases:

- the restriction on contact between persons (staying at home except for essential journeys etc.);
- social distancing;
- good hygiene practices, also known as « barrier gestures ».

b) Wearing a mask. Covering one's mouth and nose will be part of the good practices during the exit period. This can be accomplished by means of a so-called comfort mask or other (scarf, bandana). This practice is :

- strongly recommended in public spaces;
- mandatory in public transport for travellers of ages 12 and older. This measure will enter into force on May 4<sup>th</sup>;
- mandatory in school, for pupils of ages 12 and older ; and for school staff starting from May 18<sup>th</sup>.

c) Public transport usage will increase. In order to avoid crowding, it is advised to :

- use one's own means of transportation (walk, bicycle, car, etc.) so as to give priority to those persons most in need of public transport;
- avoid rush hours.

### **Exit strategy**

All of the dates listed below are subject to change based on the status of public health and the evolution of the virus.

#### **1. Phase 1 – a (May 4<sup>th</sup>, estimated)**

- Restarting economic activity :  
Teleworking will remain advisable. For industries and the business-to-business sector (B2B), it is possible to compensate for the inability to respect the social distancing rules in a company, by complying with a series of sanitary recommendations, which include wearing a mask.
- For shops and the sector of hotels, restaurants and cafés there is no change in rules, with the exception of fabric stores and haberdasheries which may reopen.
- Daily life : outdoor physical exercise will be allowed with a maximum of two persons in addition to those living together under the same roof, provided that they respect the social distancing . It will also become possible to carry out other outdoor sports activities that do not involve physical contact. However, access to changing rooms, communal showers as well as cafeterias will remain forbidden.

#### **2. Phase 1 – b (May 11<sup>th</sup>, estimated)**



Reopening of shops. This will be planned to take place under conditions to be set during consultation with the sectors and social partners

No reopening of professions involving physical contact.

### **3. Phase 2 (May 18<sup>th</sup>, estimated)**

- Shops : there will be an analysis of whether and under which conditions professions involving physical contact (such as hairdressers) will be able to reopen.
- Daily life : for team sports, outdoor training will be allowed but only with a recognized sports club and while respecting certain recommendations. Some possibilities will also be examined :
  - The possibility to have a private gathering at home,
  - The possibility to allow a higher number of people to attend a wedding or funeral.
  - The possibility to allow more than two persons to carry out an outdoors activity, etc.
- Reopening museums may become possible, also subject to certain conditions.
- As regards education : resuming classes will take place in a highly gradual way, with May 18th as a start date. Not all pupils will be affected. Every community will be responsible for executing this decision. This may serve as inspiration for international schools.

### **4. Phase 3 (June 8<sup>th</sup> at the earliest, estimated)**

#### **Several issues will need to be examined :**

- The terms under which a possible and gradual reopening would take place of restaurants and after that cafés and bars, subject to strict conditions.
- The various summer activities including non-essential travel abroad etc.

What is already certain, is that mass events such as festivals will not be authorized before August 31<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Conditions for success**

In order to ensure that the exit takes place under the best possible conditions, testing and tracing will play a predominant role.

As regards testing or screening , the goal is to be able to offer a laboratory test to all persons displaying symptoms and of whom a physician suspects that they have become infected, to persons with a strong exposure to the virus due to their professional occupation, as well as to those persons exposed to the virus after intensive contact with an infected.

As regards tracing, this will be done on a voluntary base and via regional call centers. These will supply the data to a national database.