

The Cabinet of Ministers is planning the start wide-ranging restriction reductions with the field of education

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Covid-19

Cabinet of ministers



On Tuesday, 16 February, the Cabinet of Ministers approved a one-time support benefit to families in the amount of 500 euros for each child. During discussions on future management of the Covid-19 pandemic, assuming there will be no increase in the number of infections, the Cabinet of Ministers has conceptually agreed that a regional approach to the application of safety measures should be developed at least for the field of education. In addition, changes have been made to the testing approach and the capabilities of SPKC data analysis have been improved.

In order to make the decision-making process and discussions more accessible to the public and the media, the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers was open and could be watched live on the website of the Cabinet. It is planned to continue to ensure open Cabinet meetings, in which issues related to the management of the Covid-19 pandemic are discussed (as far as possible). The audio of the open part of government meetings on other issues has been available for live listening since March last year.

99 In support to Latvian families with children, the Cabinet of Ministers has decided to pay a one-time support benefit to families in the amount of 500 euros for each child. This benefit will be paid regardless of the number of children in the family, its income, or other indicators. The number of children for whom support will be paid is estimated at 364,097. The government has allocated 182 million euros for the payment of this benefit. This decision has yet to be approved by the Saeima. The benefit is planned to be paid by 31 March this year.

Considering that in Latvia, in accordance with the vaccination plan approved by the Cabinet of Ministers, wider and wider parts of public are receiving the vaccine, the government has decided to change the testing approach. As the need to test the vaccinated population decreases, it is planned to continue to monitor the spread of the disease and focus more on next most important groups for the economy, such as educators, company employees who work in direct contact with customers etc., whilst also

expanding testing in the regions.

The Cabinet of Ministers has also approved the establishment of a secure system for transferring information on people's occupation from the State Revenue Service to the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (SPKC). This will help the SPKC to better understand in which workplaces Covid-19 is more prevalent, thus enabling the government to make more accurate decisions on necessary safety measures.

The prevalence of Covid-19 in Latvia remains high, significant burdening the healthcare system, where the provision of scheduled services is still limited. Although the increase in morbidity has slowed down, Latvia is still in one of the worst positions in Europe. In assessing the possibilities to review safety measures and restrictions, the Cabinet of Ministers has agreed that reducing them would be too risky before the cumulative number of new cases drops below 200 for a two-week period, in accordance to the "traffic light system". The current figure of 577.1 is almost three times higher.

☞ Consequently, the Cabinet of Ministers has conceptually agreed on a regional approach in the field of education. A detailed decision should be made at the meeting of 18 February, however, it is planned that local governments, where the cumulative number of new infections does not exceed 200 for a two-week period, may decide to resume full-time education for 1st-4th year students. At the same time, schools must meet a number of epidemiological safety requirements.

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