

Coronavirus: the first moves to ease lockdown

14 April 2020



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Slowly but surely, several countries are starting to plan for a gradual end to the lockdowns imposed to try and stop the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here is an overview:

China

The central Chinese province of Hubei, with the exception of its capital Wuhan, started lifting restrictions on people's movements on March 25, under conditions.

Wuhan, which led the world with an unprecedented quarantine lockdown in January, the month after the novel [coronavirus](#) first broke out there, finally lifted it on April 8.

City authorities have since put 70 of its residential neighbourhoods out of 7,000 back into quarantine after so-called "asymptomatic" people were detected there.

Hubei citizens have to show a green "health code" on their phone, meaning they are considered

healthy and can travel.

Czech Republic

Since April 7, Czech joggers and cyclists have no longer been obliged to wear protective masks.

Shops selling gardening and building materials and bicycles have been allowed to open since April 9.

Austria

Austria on Tuesday allowed small shops to reopen, with larger shops to follow in early May and restaurants in mid-May.

Only essential travel is permitted until the end of April and restrictions in schools and universities and on cultural events or public gatherings will last longer.

Italy

In Italy, confined nationwide since March 10, some businesses, like bookshops and laundrettes were allowed to reopen on Tuesday in some regions.

Spain

In Spain, where a March 14 lockdown will last at least until April 25, building and factory workers were allowed to go back to work on Tuesday, with the government distributing to them 10 million masks.

Since March 30, all non-essential economic activities have been halted. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said on Sunday "de-escalation" of lockdown measures "will start at the earliest in two weeks and will be very gradual and very prudent".

Denmark

Denmark will on Wednesday reopen its

kindergartens and [primary schools](#), with [secondary schools](#) to follow on May 10.

Other restrictions closing borders, bars, restaurants, shopping centres, banning gatherings of more than 10 people and limiting foreign travel will remain in place, in some cases for months, the government has warned.

France

France will start a partial deconfinement on May 11, with the gradual reopening of schools.

Universities, bars, restaurants and cinemas will remain closed, as will France's borders with non-European countries. Elderly and vulnerable people have been urged to remain at home.

Norway

Norway plans to progressively ease its restrictions from April 20, starting by reopening kindergartens and lifting a ban on living in holiday homes.

Some specialist health professionals will be allowed to go back to work. From April 27, high schools and universities will be partially reopened as will hair, massage and beauty salons.

Other confinement measures however will continue.

Portugal

In Portugal, which has been living under a [state of emergency](#) since March 19, the authorities are hoping for a gradual return to normal in May.

United States

Unless President Donald Trump takes a nationwide decision, deconfinement in the United States could take place on a state-by-state basis. Several states have warned that the reopening process will be a slow one to avoid a second outbreak.

Greece

Greece said on April 6 it hopes to be able to lift

some COVID-19 restrictions in May, if the public respects the current lockdown until then.

Switzerland

The Swiss authorities are due to announce on Thursday the first easing of measures by the end of April.

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