

Greece to gradually ease virus lockdown

April 28 2020

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on Tuesday announced a gradual easing of coronavirus lockdown rules from May 4 but said implementation would be monitored daily.

"Having contained the first wave of the virus, we are now ready to move to the second phase, the gradual de-escalation of measures," Mitsotakis said in a televised address.

Around 10 percent of the businesses that were closed last month will be allowed to reopen, including bookshops, electronic goods stores, vehicle testing centres and hair salons.

Most other retailers will reopen on May 11 and shopping centres will be allowed to resume trading on June 1, Mitsotakis said.

Final-year school pupils will return to class on May 11 and churches will reopen on May 4—but with limited capacities. Church services will not resume fully until May 17.

"Exit from quarantine will be carried out step by step. Nobody can rule out a potential revival of the threat," he said.

The shops must allow for spacing of at least two metres (6.6 feet) between customers and Greeks are obliged to wear masks on [public transport](#), in hospitals and other closed communal areas.

Officials have so far recorded 138 deaths, with 40 people still in

[intensive care](#).

If there is a need for new restrictions, the government will prioritise local lockdowns instead of nationwide measures, Mitsotakis said.

"If the rules are not followed... we may return to new restrictions," said deputy minister for civil protection Nikos Hardalias.

Greece imposed a nationwide lockdown on March 23, closing down schools, hotels, cafes, museums, [archaeological sites](#) and most shops and restaurants.

Supermarkets, banks and food delivery outlets are among the few businesses still operating, and Greeks must inform the authorities when leaving their homes or risk fines.

The easing of lockdown rules from May 4 means that Greeks will be able to move freely within their region of domicile, though restrictions still apply on moving between prefectures.

The country expects its national output to fall by between five and 10 percent because of the crisis.

The loss of tourism revenue is a major part of the contraction, as the sector accounts for around a quarter of the economy.

Mitsotakis said year-round hotels and restaurants would be able to reopen on June 1. Open-air archaeological sites and [theme parks](#) will resume operation on May 18.

But the Greek leader said it was "unlikely" that large gatherings including festivals and sports events with fans would resume during the summer.

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