

## COVID-19 update 38 – 13-14/08/2020

**A compilation of press releases/articles on policies and best practices from various EU and national information sources, and information provided by our members**

### 1. EU MEASURES

The European Commission has **concluded exploratory talks with pharmaceutical producer Johnson & Johnson to purchase 200 million doses of a potential vaccine against COVID-19**. The envisaged contract would provide for the possibility for all EU Member States to purchase the vaccine, as well as to donate to lower- and middle-income countries or re-direct to EEA countries (Sources: DeHavilland, [Euractiv](#)).

Under the [State Aid Temporary Framework](#), the Commission has most recently approved:

- a €100 million [Hungarian](#) scheme to support companies affected by coronavirus outbreak;
- a €2 billion [Italian](#) guarantee scheme to support trade credit insurance market in the context of the coronavirus outbreak.

### 2. NATIONAL MEASURES

The **situation for travellers crossing the EU internal borders is changing by the day**. Stay up to date by consulting the EU's [reopen.eu](#) web portal for regular updates on national restrictions.

#### AUSTRALIA

Woolworths is taking a **proactive stance against COVID-19 in Australia**. The retailer is encouraging shoppers to **adopt precautionary measures including mask wearing and is promoting its new Q-Tracker crowd control app**. More than 35.000 customers have already installed the app to plan their safe shopping trips (Source: [IGD](#)).

#### AUSTRIA

The Austrian Federal Agency for Safety and Health Care (BASG) has identified problems with the coronavirus self-tests sold by drug store chains dm and Bipa in Austria. The agency takes issue with the label that the tests are “officially recognised” when in fact they are not accepted by authorities for returnees to Austria because the link between the result and the person tested cannot be established unequivocally. The tests will now have to be relabelled, but are not recalled (Source: [Lebensmittel Zeitung](#)).

#### BELGIUM

The Belgian capital has **now made face masks mandatory throughout the entire city of Brussels**. The rule applies to anyone over the age of 12 **in all publicly accessible places, except during sports and hard labour**, and including bicycle rides. The policy replaces a

previous system that mapped the severity of outbreaks by districts, which was considered confusing by residents (Source: [POLITICO](#)).

## FRANCE

Prime Minister Castex has asked **local governors to extend the obligation to wear a mask in outdoor public spaces as far as possible and to increase controls to ensure people are respecting the rules**. He also retracted the lifting of a ban on events involving more than 5,000 people, which will now remain in place until October 30 (Source: DeHavilland).

The **recovery plan for the French economy will include €3 billion for small and medium-sized businesses**, the country's Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire has announced in an interview on 12 August (Sources: DeHavilland, [Le Monde](#)).

After the two months of confinement, resulting in spectacular declines in sales compared to the same period in 2019 (-49% in March, -61% in April), the **French Do-It-Yourself market has had a good month of May and then a good June 2020**, according to newly released data of the Banque de France, published by FMB, the French Federation of DIY stores. **While sales of DIY items increased by nearly 30% in June, the sector as a whole is still in the negative for 2020** (Source: [LSA conso](#)).

## GERMANY

Bavarian authorities have admitted to **have failed to inform around 900 individuals who tested positive for the coronavirus of their results**. The tests had been conducted by volunteers of the German Red Cross. CDU Health expert Karin Maag called it “a tragic mishap that must be rectified immediately.” Opposition politicians called upon Bavaria’s health minister Huml to resign (Sources: [POLITICO](#), [BR](#)).

**First time users of e-commerce services in Germany are satisfied with their shopping experience**. This is the result of a [new study](#) by consumer research institute IFH Köln and Capgemini. **44% of Germans have stated that they had used e-commerce solutions for the first time** during the corona crisis. Asked about their experience over a longer time, “**corona-specific**” reasons have become less prevalent, and shoppers now state that **they appreciate the ease of use**, the comfort of home deliveries and the large choice of products, hinting that the success of e-commerce might be here to stay (Source: [e-tailment](#)).

The **food grocer delivery service HelloFresh has seen its revenue and order figures double in the second quarter of 2020**. Founder Dominik Richter is expecting even more growth for the rest of the year: “We see clear indicators that our customers have begun to develop new habits, including more HelloFresh meals per week” (Source: [e-tailment](#)).

The German Retail Federation (HDE) is **in favour of extending the temporary special rules for short-time work to 24 months due to the ongoing, and worsening pandemic**. Germany’s ruling coalition had announced it would present a longer term solution for the time after the scheme runs out on 1 January 2021 in September. **According to estimates by ifo institute, around 5,6 million workers, of which 240.000 employees in the retail sector, were on short-time working in July** (Source: [e-tailment](#)).

800 German entrepreneurs from the gastronomy and leisure sectors have **launched a constitutional complaint demanding that the State compensate companies that get into trouble through no fault of their own.** The entrepreneurs claim they have not, or insufficiently, been compensated for forced closures due to COVID-19, whereas big companies have received billions of Euros in State aid (Source: [Handelsblatt](#)).

## GREECE

The Greek government has ordered that all **bars and restaurants be closed between midnight and 7 a.m. and is now requiring tourists and returnees to provide a negative coronavirus test result,** following rising numbers of new infections (Source: DeHavilland).

## UNITED KINGDOM

According to a [new study](#) by the Imperial College London, **6% of England's population, amounting to around 3,4 million people, may have been infected with the novel coronavirus.** The country's death toll stands at 41.329 and is the highest in Europe, even after a new counting methodology subtracted 5.000 deaths from the official figure (Source: DeHavilland).

Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon expressed her **concern about large house parties that have taken place across the country in the past weeks.** She reminded everyone to stick to the rules about indoor household gatherings, the limit for which currently stands at **eight people from three different households** (Source: [POLITICO](#)).

## UNITED STATES

Researchers have found that **US consumers have become "disloyal" towards their usual brands.** According to a study by McKinsey, **more than 75% of US shoppers have tried new brands, venues and ways to shop during the COVID-19 pandemic.** However, according to the same study, these trends seem to be reversible and "complicated return policies" and "apps and websites that are difficult to navigate" remain the most important risks to binding consumers (Source: [e-tailment](#)).