



**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

Member State governments **have disbursed only 15% of the €3 trillion in State aid approved by the Commission to help businesses in the first wave of the outbreak.** There are also large differences between Member States: Germany by far made the most money available to companies (almost half of all aid schemes approved by the Commission), whereas France actually paid out the most aid. (Source: [POLITICO Pro](#))

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

- a €110 million [Czech](#) rent compensation scheme to support businesses affected by the coronavirus outbreak;
- a €99,4 million [Danish](#) scheme to support cafés, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, venues and their suppliers in the context of the coronavirus outbreak;
- a €13 million [Polish](#) scheme to support companies active in the wood sector affected by the coronavirus outbreak;
- a €378 million [Slovenian](#) scheme to support farmers and other self-employed affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

EU health ministers have called for **better coordination in the fight against COVID-19 in a videoconference on 30 October.** They also discussed the **reform of the World Health Organisation (WHO)** in the aftermath of its much-criticised handling of the crisis in its early stage. German Federal Health Minister Jens Spahn is quoted as saying that the WHO must become “*more transparent, more effective and more potent*”. (Source: [Agence Europe](#))

Following the introduction of lockdowns in a number of European countries, a survey among 18 leading economists found that the **Eurozone economy is now expected to shrink by 2,3% in the fourth quarter of this year.** Previously, most Eurozone countries had forecast positive growth. (Source: [Financial Times](#))

## 2. NATIONAL MEASURES

Political intelligence firm DeHavilland has [updated its weekly overview](#) of the **epidemiological and economic situation in every EU Member State.** The document also gives a short **summary of the COVID-related political events of the past week and possible travel restrictions.** For more information on the current provisions regarding the crossing of Single Market borders, please consult the Commission’s [Re-open EU](#) web portal.

### AUSTRIA

Effective since 3<sup>rd</sup> November, **Austria has reintroduced a lockdown that significantly restricts public life. Cultural, sports and other leisure events will no longer take place.** Restaurants have to close, whereas **retail trade and services like hairdressers are allowed to remain open.** A curfew is imposed between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. except for essential reasons,

which however also include night-time walks. Violations of these rules can be fined with up to €1.450. (Source: [Der Standard](#))

## BELGIUM

Belgium is taking precautions to ensure a level playing field during the country's second lockdown. Back in spring, gardening and agriculture stores, among others, had sued the government for discrimination, arguing that it was unfair that large supermarkets and DIY chains had been allowed to stay open. The [Ministerial Decree](#) that imposes the new lockdown makes explicit reference to the **need to maintain a level playing field. Supermarkets are therefore not allowed to sell goods that are also sold in smaller shops that had to close because they are not considered essential.** (Source: POLITICO Pro)

Meanwhile, smaller retailers are adjusting to the new lockdown. A toy store in Hannut is offering **guided store visits via videocall**, while the owner of a nearby fashion store is personally delivering items to customers. **In Liège, a new e-commerce platform was created with the help of several local start-ups.** It will allow small retailers to avoid resorting to large platforms such as Amazon and is offered completely free of charge. The service offers several themes to brand one's store and free courses to get small retailers started. (Sources: [RTBF](#), [RTBF](#))

## BULGARIA

The European Commission has **sent a reasoned opinion to the Bulgarian government over a law obliging retailers to favour Bulgarian products.** The Commission argues the law is **in breach of EU single market rules.** The measures had been introduced to support local farmers during the early COVID-19 crisis and set high quotas for retailers to feature e.g. 90% of milk and dairy products from domestic producers. Bulgaria has two months to withdraw the law before the case is referred to the Court of Justice of the European Union. (Source: POLITICO Pro)

## FRANCE

Like Belgium, France has also **introduced anti-discrimination clauses into its latest lockdown decree.** Following protests from operators of "non-essential" stores, **some supermarkets have to close certain non-food sections starting 4 November. Sales of books and clothing will not be permitted.** A full list of permissible activities according to the two government decrees is available [here](#). (Sources: [Lebensmittel Zeitung](#), [FCA](#), [LSA conso](#))

To help smaller retailers in town centres or shopping malls which have to close, Auchan, with the help of its partners Mondial Relay and Ceetrus, will make its hypermarkets and collection points available to these merchants at no additional cost. For example, **booksellers are offered sales and storage space within Auchan hypermarkets** where they can take orders and hand over books ordered by their own customers. Additionally, all retail customers of Mondial Relay may make use of Auchan's hypermarket collection points. (Source: [LSA conso](#))

## GERMANY

**Less than €1 billion of the €25 billion made available as bridging aid for small and medium-sized enterprises** have so far reached their beneficiaries, according to the German

government's response to the parliamentary question of MP Michael Theurer (FDP). He is criticising that especially self-employed people seem to have been "overlooked" by the aid instruments. (Source: [Augsburger Allgemeine](#))

## GREECE

Since 3<sup>rd</sup> November, **restaurants and other venues in the country's most populous areas are closed for a month**. Retail businesses, schools and nurseries will remain open. Gyms, cosmetic studios, as well as cultural venues will also shut. The airport of Greece's second city Thessaloniki is temporarily closed. (Sources: [POLITICO](#), [France24](#))

## HUNGARY

The Hungarian government has reintroduced a **state of emergency, starting from 4 November**, which empowers the central government to take more direct action outside of the ordinary legislative procedure. Other measures include making **mask-wearing mandatory at indoor events, closing clubs, free parking and introducing a curfew between midnight and 5 a.m.** (Sources: DeHavilland, [Hungary Today](#))

## ITALY

From 4 November until 3<sup>rd</sup> December, **Italian shopping malls will be closed on weekends**, the number of seats on public transports halved, and movement to the most affected regions limited. The measures, which have yet to be made official, stop short of a nationwide lockdown and curfew. Instead, **stricter measures will be taken in the worst-hit regions which would include the closure of all bars and restaurants as well as most shops**. (Source: POLITICO Pro, [Reuters](#))

## THE NETHERLANDS

Effective on 4 November, stricter measures are being reintroduced in the Netherlands. People are **advised to remain at home as much as possible**, with all publicly accessible locations closed. **Retailers must close by 8 p.m. except for supermarkets and gas station stores**. Sales of alcohol and soft drugs are forbidden between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m. Face masks are mandatory in public indoor spaces and on public transport. Prime Minister Mark Rutte has further stated that schools could be closed and that curfews are possible in the most affected areas. (Sources: [NL Times](#), [NL Times](#))

## POLAND

Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has announced new measures in the face of the second wave of the outbreak of the coronavirus that has brought the Polish healthcare system to its limit. **In smaller shops, the number of customers will be capped at 1 person per 10 sqm sales space. In larger stores (above 100 sqm), the limit is 1 person per 15 sqm. All shops in malls will be closed** with the exception of grocery stores, pharmacies, drug stores

and services. The rules will be valid from 6 November until 29 November. Mateusz Morawiecki further appealed to his compatriots to stay home whenever possible. (Source: [Rzeczpospolita](#))

## PORTUGAL

Portugal's government has announced **new lockdown restrictions from 4 November for most of the country**, telling people to stay at home except for outings for work, school or shopping, and ordering companies to switch to remote working. (Source: DeHavilland)

## SLOVAKIA

Slovakia is **testing its entire population of 3,6 million citizens over the age of nine for the coronavirus using an antibody test**. While testing is officially voluntary, only those that test negative are allowed to return to their workplaces. **The 38.000 Slovaks (1% of the entire population) that tested positive last week are now in quarantine**. Prime Minister Igor Matovič insists the mass tests are a “smarter” solution than to “kill the economy”. (Source: [POLITICO](#))

## SWEDEN

Sweden is **considering further measures to curb the spread of the virus**. The country that had so far been known for its relatively lax countermeasures is imposing **tighter restrictions on seven regions**. The government advises against spending time with people other than those in the same household, as well as against going to gyms, shops, libraries, museums and similar indoor venues. (Source: [POLITICO](#))

## UNITED KINGDOM

Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a **month-long second coronavirus lockdown on 31<sup>st</sup> October. Effective 5 November, all English pubs, restaurants, non-essential shops and other venues have to close**. The measures are to remain in place until 2<sup>nd</sup> December when England will revert to its current regional approach to coronavirus restrictions. (Source: [POLITICO](#))

## UNITED STATES

Online retailer **Amazon has sold 37% more products this summer, with profits tripling**. Although COVID-19 measures have caused shipping costs to rise by 57% in the third quarter, the company expects **“unprecedented” Christmas sales this year**, according to CEO Jeff Bezos. (Source: [Retail Detail](#))