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Consultation Committee decides on stricter measures and appoints COVID-19 commissioner

The federal government and the minister-presidents of the federated entities today examined the epidemiological situation of COVID-19. The Consultation Committee deems the situation particularly serious and has therefore decided to bolster the hygiene measures. The Consultation Committee has also appointed a COVID-19 commissioner.

1. Reinforced measures

The current trend in the pandemic is of particular concern: the number of contaminations, hospital admissions and deaths is rising. In order to avoid a general lockdown, the Consultation Committee decided, after examining CELEVAL's opinion, to reinforce various measures.

- Close contacts: limited to no more than three close contacts per month. A close contact is a contact with an unmasked person who is less than 1.5 metres away.
- Private gatherings at home: no more than four people, while complying with social distancing rules or, if that is not possible, while wearing a mask.
- Cafés, cafeterias and other places where drinks are served: no more than four people per table, except for people living under the same roof.
- Gatherings not organised outdoors: no more than four people, except for people living under the same roof.
- Closing time for cafés: 11.00 p.m.
- Additional awareness and compliance efforts to ensure these measures are applied everywhere.
- Teleworking is strongly recommended, multiple days a week.

These are the 'national core' measures. In provinces where the situation is worsening (according to the future barometer), the governor must propose additional measures in consultation with the interior minister and the COVID-19 commissioner. Such measures may apply to all or part of the province.

Strict compliance with these measures is absolutely necessary in order to protect our health and healthcare system, keep schools open as much as possible and protect the elderly and vulnerable. Failure to comply with these measures will result in even more stringent measures being required, which will in turn further constrain our social lives and seriously damage our economy. Everyone is responsible for complying with these measures.

These measures shall apply to the entire country from 9 October to 9 November inclusive, after which time they will be re-evaluated.

2. Appointment of a COVID-19 commissioner

The Consultation Committee has appointed Mr Pedro Facon as the COVID-19 commissioner. He will be

assisted by Ms Carole Schirvel, COVID-19 deputy commissioner. The Consultation Committee has instructed the COVID-19 commissioner to deploy the barometer as quickly as possible, specifically by modifying the sectoral protocols and incorporating a communication plan.

The COVID-19 commissioner will be responsible for coordinating the health policy of the federal authorities with the health policy of the federated entities. His term will last twelve months and can be further extended for periods of six months.

The curator will be assisted by an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary scientific committee, which may be supplemented by foreign scientists, and by a team of project managers, who will continually update knowledge about the virus in a structured way and monitor the social, economic and societal impact of the measures.

3. Development of the COVID-19 barometer

The Consultation Committee examined CELEVAL's work on the barometer. The COVID-19 commissioner is responsible for continuing the development of the barometer, specifically for modifying sectoral protocols and incorporating them in the barometer. At each stage (colour) in the barometer, the specific measures that apply to the various sectors must be clearly displayed.

The barometer can be launched once it is fully developed and has clear indicators and measures for each sector and target group, and once the mechanism has been subjected to a stress test.

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