



Government [announces](#) phased easing of public health restrictions



[Supports](#) for businesses impacted by Covid-19

COVID-19 Easing of Restrictions – latest update

In line with the plan set out in [COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#), the Government has today announced the phased easing of some restrictions for the month of April, to commence on 12th April.

From **12 April**:

- Full return to in-school teaching
- Two households permitted to meet outdoors for social and recreational purposes (excluding private gardens).
- Travel restrictions to be relaxed within own county or within 20km of residence if crossing county boundaries
- All residential construction can recommence
- ELC and school aged childcare services to be added to the list of essential services for construction activity

From **19 April**:

- Expansion of elite sports to include training for and playing of National Governing Body sanctioned and organised adult intercounty National Gaelic Games Leagues not including under 20 or minor competitions

From **26 April**:

- Outdoor sports facilities and visitor attractions to reopen
- Underage non-contact outdoor training in pods of 15
- Maximum attendance at funerals capped at 25 people
- Those with full protection from the vaccine may visit indoors with one other household who also has full protection.

From **4 May**:

- Full re-opening of construction activity
- Phased return of non-essential retail commencing with click & collect and outdoor retail (garden centres/nurseries)
- Recommencement of personal services on a staggered basis
- Reopening of museums, galleries and libraries.

You can read more about this [here](#) and can check out Chambers

Oireachtas Business

Recently discussed / considered Bills & Acts

- [Climate Action and Low Carbon Development \(Amendment\) Bill 2021](#) (Dáil, completed first stage)
- [Road Traffic \(Amendment\) \(Electric Scooter Trials\) Bill 2021](#) (Dáil, Second Stage)
- [Residential Tenancies Bill 2021](#) (Seanad, completed fifth stage)
- [Family Leave and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2021](#) (Dáil, completed fifth stage)
- [National Standards Authority of Ireland \(Carbon Footprint Labelling\) Bill 2021](#) (Dáil, Second Stage)

→ All recently considered Bills and Acts can be accessed [here](#)

→ All Parliamentary Questions can be browsed [here](#)

Consultations

Chambers Ireland March submissions

- [Submission](#) to NESC on Climate and Biodiversity Challenges and Opportunities
- [Submission](#) to Irish Water on the National Water Resources Plan
- [Submission](#) to the Department of Transport Policy Paper/TRL report on eScooters
- [Submission](#) to Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment on the proposed Summary Rescue Process

Upcoming submissions for April

- [Consultation](#) on the redesign of Ireland's Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme
- [Consultation](#) on Good Practice Principles for Community Benefit Funds under the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme
- [Call](#) for Expert Evidence - Climate Action Plan 2021

European Political Developments

 [Report](#) on the latest Euro Summit (25 March)

 [Report](#) on the latest Tripartite Social Summit (24 March)

→ ECH remarks following the Tripartite Social Summit can be accessed [here](#)

 Implementing the protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland: a [synopsis](#)

Brexit Updates

1. European Parliament set date to ratify EU-UK FTA

The European Parliament will finally grant its consent to the [EU-U.K. post-Brexit trade deal](#) at a plenary session starting April 26. It has been [confirmed](#) by Parliament President David Sassoli that there “will be no extension to that date”.

In March, political group leaders in the Parliament [decided](#) to postpone their ratification vote after the U.K. unveiled plans to unilaterally extend grace periods on post-Brexit customs checks at Northern Ireland’s ports for at least six months. The Commission said in a statement at the time that such a move marked the “second time” the U.K. government had been “set to breach international law” after a heated [row over the border erupted in 2020](#).

EU national governments and the British parliament have already [approved the deal](#) and the European Parliament’s ratification is the final step before the agreement legally comes into full force. Officials said that a majority of MEPs appear ready to give their consent. The text must first go through the Parliament’s foreign affairs and trade committees before the April plenary session

2. Commission sends letter of formal notice to the UK for breach of obligations under the Protocol

The European Commission sent a [letter of formal notice](#) to the United Kingdom for breaching the substantive provisions of the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland, as well as the good faith obligation under the WA. This marks the beginning of a formal infringement process against the UK.

The UK has been given one month to submit its observations to the letter of formal notice. Under Article 12(4) of the Protocol, the Court of Justice of the European Union has full powers provided for under

European Council Updates

25-26th March meeting

- EU leaders met via video conference to take stock of the COVID-19 epidemiological situation. They also discussed transatlantic relations together with US President Joe Biden.
- The situation in the Eastern Mediterranean, relations with Russia, the single market, digital agenda and the international role of the euro were also on the agenda
- EU leaders underlined the importance of a strong and fully functioning single market and the need to boost the competitiveness and resilience of EU industry, including SMEs, to accelerate the green and digital transitions and to address strategic dependencies. The update of the European industrial strategy should take into account the lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis and support the economic recovery.
- EU leaders reiterated their commitment to reaching a consensus-based global solution on **international digital taxation** within the framework of the OECD by mid-2021. They confirmed, however, that the EU would be ready to move forward if the prospect of a global solution was not forthcoming. In that context, the leaders also referred to the Commission’s upcoming proposal on a **digital levy**, with a view to it being introduced by 1 January 2023 at the latest.
- A full report of the meeting can be accessed [here](#).
- Statements of the members of the European Council available [here](#).
- Remarks by President Charles Michel are available [here](#).

In other news

- [New EU funding programme](#) for research and innovation launched– set to run from 2021-2027 with a proposed budget of €100bn.
- European Commission proposes a [Digital Green Certificate](#) to facilitate safe free movement inside the EU
- Commission [launches](#) European Innovation Council to help turn scientific ideas into breakthrough innovations.