Global Governmental Response to COVID-19 in accordance to WHO guidelines

Actions taken by Finland to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as of February 16, 2021.

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Our Organization

The UN Compliance Research Group is a global organization which specializes in monitoring the work of the United Nations (UN). Through our professional team of academics, scholars, researchers and students we aim to serve as the world's leading independent source of information on members' compliance to UN resolutions and guidelines. Our scope of activity is broad, including assessing the compliance of member states to UN resolutions and plan of actions, adherence to judgments of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines and commitments made at UN pledging conferences. We’re proud to present the international community and global governments with our native research findings on states’ annual compliance with the commitments of the UN and its affiliated agencies. Our goal as world citizens is to foster a global change towards a sustainable future; one which starts with ensuring that the words of delegates are transformed into action and that UN initiatives don’t remain ink on paper. Hence, we offer policy analysis and provide advice on fostering accountability and transparency in UN governance as well as tracing the connection between the UN policy-makers and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Yet, we aim to adopt a neutral path and do not engage in advocacy for issues or actions taken by the UN or member states. Acting as such, for the sake of transparency. The UN Compliance Research Group dedicates all its effort to inform the public and scholars about the issues and agenda of the UN and its affiliated agencies.
Purpose

The International Health Regulations (2005) are legally binding on 196 States Parties, including all WHO Member States. The IHR aims to keep the world informed about public health risks, through committing all signatories to cooperate together in combating any future “illness or medical condition, irrespective of origin or source, that presents or could present significant harm to humans.” Under IHR, countries agreed to strengthen their public health capacities and notify the WHO of any such illness in their populations. The WHO would be the centralized body for all countries facing a health threat, with the power to declare a “public health emergency of international concern,” issue recommendations, and work with countries to tackle a crisis.

Although, with the sudden and rapid spread of COVID-19 in the world, many countries varied in implementing the WHO guidelines and health recommendations. While some countries followed the WHO guidelines, others imposed travel restrictions against the WHO’s recommendations. Some refused to share their data with the organization. Others banned the export of medical equipment, even in the face of global shortages. The UN Compliance Research group will focus during the current cycle on analyzing the compliance of the WHO member states to the organization’s guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.
### School/educational institutions:
- Decision makers should consider the following if they decide to open or close schools: Current understanding about COVID-19 transmission and severity in children, Local situation and epidemiology of COVID-19 where the school(s) are located, School setting and ability to maintain COVID-19 prevention and control measures.
- Recommended to promote: Hygiene and environmental cleaning to limit exposure, Screening and management of sick students, teachers and other school staff, Communication with parents and students, Physical distancing at school, Tele-schooling and distance learning.

### Workplaces and institutions:
- Partial closure of workplaces as of early March.
- Hand hygiene: Regular and thorough handwashing, Hand hygiene stations.
- Respiratory hygiene: Promote respiratory etiquette, Develop a policy on wearing a mask or a face covering.
- Physical distancing: less people, implementing shifts.
- Reduce and manage work-related travels.
- Regular environmental cleaning and disinfection.
- Risk communication, training, and education: Provide posters, videos, and electronic message boards.
- Management of people with COVID-19 or their contacts: introduce thermal screening.
- Take more measures when it comes to jobs at medium and high risk.

### Public events:
- Restriction to host gatherings or events that exceed a large number of individuals. ex) sport games, religious functions, restaurants, etc.
- Planning phase: Liaison with all relevant stakeholders, Development of a preparedness and response plan, Assessment of capacities and resources.
- Operational phase: Modifications of the event, Risk communication, Surveillance of participants, aimed at detecting and managing individuals developing symptoms during the event.
- Post-event phase: Liaison between event organizers and health authorities.

### Public Transport:
- Reduce crowding, limit access to, or close public spaces, restaurants, sporting events, 24 sports clubs, entertainment venues, places of worship, 25 or venues with limited ventilation.
- Encourage physical distancing in public places and transportation.
- Reduce mixing between individuals and households.
- Communicate to recommend wearing masks in public.
### WHO Guidelines and Recommendations

**Public Information Campaign:**
- Communicate risk clearly with information on how to protect oneself and others.
- Simplify messages, encourage sharing of information.
- Engage with communities in decision-making and to strengthen engagement for public health measures.
- Identify local networks and engage communities, businesses, religious leaders, and local influencers.

**Domestic/International Travel:**
- Reduction in Travel to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- International travel should not occur unless in an emergency.
- Recommended to adhere to safety measures while travelling.
- Establish effective contingency plans and arrangements for responding to a Public Health Emergency.

**Testing Framework:**
- Set up testing centers in large venues or in checkpoints.
- Require travellers to self-quarantine after being tested.
- Molecular (e.g. PCR) testing of respiratory tract samples is the recommended method for the identification and laboratory confirmation of COVID-19 cases.
- To inform WHO policy on the use of immunodiagnostic rapid tests for COVID-19.

**Contact Tracing:**
- Set up relational databases linking lists of contacts to line lists of cases.
- Allow for tailored case investigation forms, contact listing forms, and contact follow-up forms to be set up.
- Used for self-checking and self-reporting of signs and symptoms by people through mobile phone apps or SMS technology.

**Lockdown/Curfew:**
- Implementation of curfew hours.
- Require citizens to stay in home unless of an emergency.
- Monitor locations to abide by the curfew hours.
This report draws on the methodology developed by the G8 Research Group, which has been monitoring G7/8 compliance since 1996 (the International Organisations Research Institute at the Higher School of Economics (IORI HSE) joined this multi-year project in 2005, and Bond University participated in 2014). The use of this methodology builds cross-institutional and cross-member consistency and also allows compatibility with compliance assessments of other institutions. The methodology uses a scale from −1 to +1, where +1 indicates full compliance with the stated commitment, −1 indicates a failure to comply or action taken that is directly opposite to the stated instruments or goal of the commitment, and 0 indicates partial compliance or work in progress, such as initiatives that have been launched but are not yet near completion and whose full results can therefore not be assessed. Each member assessed receives a score of −1, 0 or +1 for each commitment. For convenience, the scores in the tables have been converted to percentages, where −1 equals 0 percent and +1 equals 100 percent.
## Scoring Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>State does not comply with the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005), nor does it comply with any of the World Health Organization's guidelines and recommendations to curb the spread of the Coronavirus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>State complies with the IHR and partially complies with the WHO recommendations on combating the Coronavirus, through implementing policies and actions which adhere to at least two commitments of the WHO guidelines on curbing the pandemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1</td>
<td>State fully complies with the IHR and the WHO guidelines on combating the Coronavirus, through implementing policies and actions which adhere to all nine areas of the WHO guidelines on curbing the pandemic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No Compliance</th>
<th>Partial Compliance</th>
<th>Full Compliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Finland complied with the International Health Regulations (IHR) and fully complied with the World Health Organization’s guidelines and recommendations on curbing the Coronavirus (COVID-19), through implementing complying policies and actions in all nine commitment features. Thus, Finland receives a compliance score of +1.
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Finland

Lockdown/ Curfew

- **On 16 March 2020**, the Finnish government issued an announcement ordering the following:
  - All national and municipal sports and cultural facilities (including museums, libraries, swimming pools, youth centres and clubs) as well as day care services for the elderly, rehabilitative work facilities and workshops to close. This applied to private and third-sector operators and religious communities also.
  - Visits to housing services for the elderly and other at-risk groups were prohibited. Visitors were banned from care institutions, health care units and hospitals. Asymptomatic family members of children and critically ill individuals, family members of those in hospice care and spouses or support persons in the maternity ward are permitted to visit patients on a case-by-case basis.
  - General guidance was issued that persons over 70 years of age must refrain from contact with other persons to the extent possible (quarantine-like conditions), excepting the members of parliament, the state leadership and elected officials in local government.

- **On 27 March 2020**, the Finnish Parliament voted unanimously to temporarily close the borders of the Uusimaa region, which has the most confirmed cases.

- **On 30 March 2020**, the government extended the measures announced on March 16 until 13 May 2020. The extensions included that all restaurants must be closed as of April 4 2020. The restrictions apply to all restaurant operations except for preparing food for take away and for delivery by food couriers. These restrictions were remain in place until 31 May 2020.

- **As of 1st June 2020**, the Finnish government allowed the:
  - The gradual reopening of restaurants depending on the general epidemiological assessment.
  - Sports competitions and series can be resumed with special arrangements.
  - Opening public indoor premises: national and municipal museums, theatres, the National Opera, cultural venues, libraries, mobile libraries, services for customers and researchers at the National Archives, hobby and leisure centres, swimming pools and other sports facilities, youth centres, clubs, organisations’ meeting rooms, day care services for the elderly, rehabilitative work facilities and workshops.

- **On 23 June 2020**, based on the improved epidemiological situation the Government decided to lift the recommendation for persons over 70 to avoid physical contacts.

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- **On 11 December 2020**, Authorities tightened COVID-19 measures in Helsinki. Residents are advised not to exit the capital, cultural venues and entertainment facilities closed until at least February 28 2021. Restaurants were required to shut at 23:00 daily and operate at 75% capacity. Bars were required to shut down at 22:00 daily and operate at a 50% capacity.
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On 28 January 2020, Finland suspends all flight to Mainland China.

On 18 March 2020, Finland closed all its land borders. Entry by Air and land was restricted to citizens and permanent residents.

As of 27 March 2020, domestic travel to and from Uusimaa was prohibited without a valid reason. Police officers implemented the restriction with the assistance of the Finnish Defence forces.

On 15 April 2020, travel restrictions between Uusimaa region and the rest of the country were lifted.

As of 1 June 2020, essential travel to be allowed and work-related travel between Estonia and Finland.

As of 13 July 2020, the Finnish government lifted the restrictions on traffic at the internal borders between Finland and countries where the incidence of the coronavirus is similar to that in the countries where internal border control has already been lifted.

On 3 August 2020, a health information point at Helsinki Airport was opened for providing health counselling for arriving passengers.

On 6 August 2020, Finland's government re-introduced border controls for The Netherlands, Belgium, and Andorra.

On 20 August 2020, travelers arriving from high risk countries were banned from entering Finland unless for essential reasons.

On 2 September 2020, Authorities ease travel restrictions for certain countries Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Norway, Slovakia, Sweden, and the Vatican City, as well as residents of Australia, Canada, Georgia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Rwanda, Thailand, Tunisia, and Uruguay can enter without restrictions.

On 21 September 2020, more countries added to no restrictions upon entry list.

On 4 December 2020, people traveling from all Schengen Area plus other countries such as the UK or Andorra may not enter Finland unless they have legal residents or for essential purposes until December 13.

On 25 January 2021, Finland tightened travel restrictions. Travel with EU and Schengen Area countries, Andorra, Monaco, and San Marino is permitted for limited essential work only. All permitted travelers from the UK, Ireland, or South Africa may be requested to self-isolate for 14 days, and 10 days of self-isolation for arrivals from lower list countries. List of no restrictions countries limited to: Vatican City, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, and Iceland. Land borders with Norway and Sweden were ordered to shut.

On 16 February 2021, travel restrictions due to new COVID-19 strains were extended until further notice.
On 16 March 2020, the premises of schools, educational institutions, universities and universities of applied sciences as well as other education institutes were closed and contact teaching was suspended. As an exception, pre-primary education organised in schools and contact teaching for grades 1–3 continued for the children of parents working in sectors critical to the functioning of society or pupils requiring additional support. Parents and guardians who are able to arrange childcare at home were requested to do so. Government instructed online learning to take place.

On 23 March 2020, Matriculation examinations (final exams for upper secondary school) were carried out according to the condensed schedule.

On 30 May 2020, the Finnish government that preparations will be made for extending the exceptional arrangements in education until the end of term, if this is deemed necessary for containing the pandemic.

On 9 April 2020, the Finnish universities announced that due to the coronavirus situation, organising traditional entrance examinations is not possible without compromising the safety of those involved. The universities disseminated information on the changed admission procedures at the end of April, and increased the ratio of students admitted on certificates alone, reducing numbers of people attending admission tests. Similarly, universities of applied sciences across the country have decided that their entrance examinations in Spring 2020 are organised online.

On 29 April 2020, the Government decided to lift the restrictions on early childhood education and care and those on primary and lower secondary education. Contact teaching in early childhood education and care as well as primary and lower secondary education resume on 14 May 2020.

As of 4 May 2020, Borrowing of books and educational materials from libraries was permitted.

As of 1 June 2020, the Government recommended that higher education institutions and secondary level schools continue distance teaching until the end of the semester.

On 14 August 2020, In person teaching resumes for the 2020/2021 academic year. Schools prepare an emergency plan to close and convert to online learning if necessary.

On 16 March 2020, public events and gatherings with more than 10 people were banned and the public was strongly advised for not spending unnecessary time in public places. The authorities have allowed gatherings of specific groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, if deemed critical for functioning of the associations.

On 22 April 2020, the Government decided that public events and gatherings of more than 500 people should continue to be banned until at least 31 July 2020.

As of 1 June 2020, the restrictions on gatherings were eased from 10 to a maximum of 50 persons.

As of 1 July 2020, outdoor events where there are several sections or demarcated areas intended for audiences, a total audience of more than 500 persons may be permitted.

As of 1 August 2020, events with more than 500 persons may be organised in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

On 20 November 2020, Helsinki indoor meetings of more than 20 people were banned. Contact sports suspended and amateur-level matches and competitions canceled.

On 25 January 2021, gatherings in high risk areas like Helsinki limit gatherings to 10 people and 50 in low risk areas.
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### Public Info Campaign

- **On 28 February 2020**, THL has given general advice on hand hygiene, physical distancing and respiratory etiquette with printable instructions and videos for travellers and the general public. They have also advertised materials for use by public health officials functioning at national and local level. THL updates its website daily which has a Q&A section and general information about the disease, prevention and care for the public, health care professionals as well as for the media.

- **On 1 March 2020**, MSAH, Prime Minister's Office and other ministries have their own web pages for coronavirus information. Local authorities, i.e. municipalities, and hospital districts are responsible for communication and advice in their communities and regions on the local situation. In addition to official sources, Finland has also defined social media as a critical operator and has invited social media influencers to participate in disseminating timely and accurate information on social media.

- **On 14 April 2020**, the director of THL recommended via media the use of fabric face masks in public places, however neither THL nor MSAH has not issued a formal advice on the matter.

- **On 17 April 2020**, the Government launched Finland forward (Suomi toimii) -campaign which is a multi-agency project, led by the Prime Minister's Office. It is working to support day-to-day crisis communications. Its main form of action is putting together communications and sharing information.

- **On 24 April 2020**, the government organized a press conference for the country’s children on COVID-19. The conference was broadcasted on newspaper websites and the national broadcaster.

- **On 3 June 2020**, the government did not recommend the use of facemasks for the general public, but advised that it would be possible to use these in high risk situations (e.g. public transport and other closed spaces).

### Public Transportation

- **As of 27 March 2020**, arrivals through Airports or sea-ports are not allowed to leave using public transport, but they can leave using their own car. If a returning traveller does not have their own vehicle and is unable to arrange transport home, a charter bus or taxi may be provided.

- **On 1 April 2020**, bus companies have constructed on their own initiative measures for protection of drivers. While timetables have been changed and cancellation made, these are due to diminished number of passengers. Government measures can be communicated also via text messages as was the case of the closure of Uusimaa.

### Workplace and Institutions

- **As of 1 March 2020**, the COVID-19 epidemic was included in guidance from Confederation of Finnish Industries, for example, recommending that workers should be allowed to stay away from work on their own announcement.

- **On 16 March 2020**, Public-sector employees were instructed to work from home if their duties allow. Several private employers gave instructions for distance working earlier than the public sector.

- **As of 1 June 2020**, the Finnish government extended its recommendation on working from home.

- **As of 1 August 2020**, the Government’s recommendation on extensive remote work would has ended.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testing Framework</th>
<th>Contact Tracing</th>
<th>Vaccine</th>
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<tr>
<td>✤ On 12 March 2020, due to limited testing capacity THL issued a guidance on focusing testing on patients with severe respiratory tract infection symptoms and healthcare and social welfare personnel.</td>
<td>✤ On 31 March 2020, THL announced using the WHO ICD-10 code for coronavirus suspects.</td>
<td>✤ On 02 December 2020, Finland vaccine plan was announced. Health workers and workers in nursing homes will be the first to get vaccinated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ On 15 April 2020, with increased testing capacity, THL and hospital districts redefined these official guidelines to promote more aggressive testing and identification of all symptomatic COVID-19 patients, including those with mild symptoms.</td>
<td>✤ On 22 April 2020, the government of Finland made explicit statement on moving to test, trace, isolate and treat –strategy expanding testing and contact tracing and continues to prepare the use of a mobile app.</td>
<td>✤ On 26 December 2020, Finland received its first batch of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Rollout began with health workers.</td>
</tr>
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<td>✤ On 22 April 2020, Finland approved use of the Novodiag COVID-19 rapid and automated COVID-19 test.</td>
<td>✤ On 28 April 2020, MSAH prepared a proposal for a roadmap for the introduction of a mobile application to support the tracing of coronavirus infections in Finland.</td>
<td>✤ On 6 January 2021, Finland approved the use of the Moderna vaccine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ As of 29 April 2020, testing capacity exceeded 5,500 daily tests. Efforts are made to further increase capacity to 7,000 tests a day.</td>
<td>✤ As of 12 May 2020, MSAH prepared a draft proposal to amend the Communicable Diseases Act in order to create legal basis for the mobile application</td>
<td>✤ On 29 January 2021, Finland grants approval to the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ As of 12 May 2020, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland has initiated development of a rapid test for the new coronavirus together with MeVac, the joint vaccine research centre of the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa (HUS) and the University of Helsinki.</td>
<td>✤ On 5 June 2020, The THL, Tampere University and University of Eastern Finland begun a collaboration to carry out an online course of contact tracing to support municipalities and hospital districts with the growing demand of contact tracing after implementing more extensive testing. The course is targeted for health and social care personnel and students but is open for all. The course started with 1600 participants.</td>
<td>✤ On 3 February 2021, the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine was limited to those under the age of 70. Doses of all COVID-19 vaccines will be administered at a 12-week interval.</td>
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<td>✤ As of 29 July 2020, a health counseling and COVID-19 testing point is being set up at the Helsinki-Vantaa International Airport, announced the City of Vantaa, where the airport is located. National daily testing capacity was increased to 14,000 tests.</td>
<td>✤ On 12 May 2020, MSAH prepared a draft proposal to amend the Communicable Diseases Act in order to create legal basis for the mobile application</td>
<td>✤ On 7 February 2021, Finland received the first batch of the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine (24,000 doses).</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ On 21 August 2020, Finland increased testing capacity to 20,000 daily test.</td>
<td>✤ On 12 May 2020, MSAH prepared a draft proposal to amend the Communicable Diseases Act in order to create legal basis for the mobile application</td>
<td>✤ On 3 February 2021, the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine was limited to those under the age of 70. Doses of all COVID-19 vaccines will be administered at a 12-week interval.</td>
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<td>✤ On 18 January 2021, Finland introduced rapid COVID-19 testing at borders with Sweden.</td>
<td>✤ On 5 June 2020, The THL, Tampere University and University of Eastern Finland begun a collaboration to carry out an online course of contact tracing to support municipalities and hospital districts with the growing demand of contact tracing after implementing more extensive testing. The course is targeted for health and social care personnel and students but is open for all. The course started with 1600 participants.</td>
<td>✤ On 7 February 2021, Finland received the first batch of the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine (24,000 doses).</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ As of 16 February 2021, Germany has conducted a total of 557,562 tests per 1 million people.</td>
<td>✤ On 31 August 2020, Finland launched its contact tracing app “Corona Blinker”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Sources


https://www.uudenmaanliitto.fi/tietopalvelut/uusimaa-tietopankki/vaesto/perustietoja_vaestosta_ia_vaestomuitoksista


https://www.covid19healthsystem.org/countries/finland/livinghit.aspx?Section=1.1+Health+communication&Type=Section

