

Statement by the President of the Republic Mr. Nicos Anastasiades following the extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers

At today's meeting, the Council of Ministers reviewed the situation as it unfolds given the growing spread of the coronavirus.

Based on the World Health Organization's data and on the situation as it is unfortunately changing daily, both in Europe and in Cyprus, the Council of Ministers considers that Cyprus is facing a state of emergency.

To this end, in addition to the measures already taken and to everything that was announced in the context of my address last Friday, the following decisions were made with a view to safeguarding public health and ensuring the economic survival of working people, businesses, economically vulnerable groups and the economy at large.

With regard to protecting the population from a further spread of the disease, the following decisions were taken:

- 1.** Entry into the Republic of Cyprus of those persons that I have mentioned in my address, will only be granted to those who, upon their arrival, submit a medical certificate that they have been tested for coronavirus by certified medical centers from their country of origin. Those who fulfil these conditions will be placed under a 14-day compulsory quarantine at accommodation facilities designated by the Republic of Cyprus.

I would like to make absolutely clear that no one will be allowed to enter the Republic of Cyprus unless they meet and accept the above conditions.

Students who opt to stay in their places of study, will be granted a 750 allowance.

This decision shall enter into force at 6p.m. on March 16, 2020 and shall apply until April 30, 2020. Our decision shall also apply to those who use the crossing points between the free and the occupied areas, except for purely humanitarian reasons and following approval by the Minister of Interior.

2. It has been decided, initially, to allocate of the amount of 100 million euros for reinforcing the public health sector.

3. To suspend the operations of businesses of the private sector.

4. Assessing the situation as it now stands and on the basis of the decisions already taken, the Government has decided to adopt a comprehensive exceptional financial Support Programme for the working people, the small and medium-sized enterprises and in general of all Cypriot businesses.

The “Support Programme” that has been formulated is structured and specific, both in range as well as in expenditure, and it is valued at 700 million euros, an amount equal to the 3% of the GDP.

Once more, I would like to extend my gratitude to the political parties and our social partners for their contribution to the formation of the Support Programme.

5. With regard to the public sector, the Ministers have been authorized to proceed to the structuring of an emergency operations plan.

6. In relation to the issue of church attendance and the measures decided by the Government, I informed His Beatitude the Archbishop of Cyprus, who, realizing the seriousness of the situation, will make announcements this afternoon.

On behalf of the government, I have given instructions for the inter-ministerial committee to be in constant consultation, while the Cabinet will be ready at any time to take any further decisions that are deemed necessary.

The times are critical. As I have said in my address, measures alone do not suffice to safeguard public health and its impact.

What is needed, and I would like to stress this once again, is a sense of responsibility and social solidarity on the part of each and every one individually to deal with the critical situation we are facing.

We are experiencing a state of emergency and I want to repeat what I have said in my address on Friday:

I have no doubt that, with the State's determination and the social sensitivity that as people we have repeatedly demonstrated at critical moments, we will succeed in overcoming this ordeal.