

Case study on political interventions during the pandemic

On 14 March 2020, the National Government of Spain announces that the entire population of the country (around 47 million) will be confined to a lockdown to curb the spread of Covid-19. Citizens can leave their homes only to buy groceries and pharmaceutical products, go to banks or hospitals, take care of dependent persons, or walk their dogs. Additionally, while in the streets, they must be unaccompanied at all times, and while they can go to work, most workplaces are to be closed to the public.

As of 2 May 2020, fixed timetables regulate leaving homes for non-essential physical exercise. People who need special attention and people aged 70+ can go out between 7 and 8pm accompanied by one person. The outing has to take place within 1 km from home a distance of 2 meters must be kept from other people. Adults and teenagers aged 14 and over can go out for physical activities once a day between 6am and 10am or between 8pm and 11pm. In villages with less than 5,000 inhabitants, the different time frames do not apply, and everyone can go out under the same conditions between 6am and 11pm.

Please reflect on the following questions:

- What are the particular strengths of these lockdowns?
- What are their particular weaknesses?
- What impacts do these regulations have on
 - the life of individuals?
 - the social contacts of people of different ages?
 - the economy of a country?
- Are there conflicting interests between different groups in society?
- Are there unfavourable side-effects that should have been dealt with from the very beginning?
- Were there also favourable side-effects?
- What lessons can be learned in this context from the Covid-19 experience?