

Norway to ease virus restrictions May 27

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Norway said Friday it would ease some virus restrictions on May 27, making it easier to serve alcohol in bars and invite guests home as the pandemic seems to be under control.

"I'm very happy today that we can see the beginning of the end of the

pandemic," Prime Minister Erna Solberg told reporters.

"We're gradually returning to normal life."

With declining COVID-19 cases and its vaccination campaign progressing, the Nordic country has decided to move to phase two of its four-step reopening plan next Thursday.

Bars will be allowed to sell alcohol until midnight, instead of 9:00 pm as now, and without any obligation to serve food. But patrons will have to remain seated and at a metre's (yard's) distance.

The recommended maximum number of guests in one's home will also be raised from five to 10—fully vaccinated or immunised people excluded—and an advisory against non-essential travel within Norway will be lifted.

The restrictions and recommendations being eased are nationwide, but stricter regional restrictions can be applied depending on local infection levels.

While the government continues to advise against international travel until July 1, a 10-day quarantine imposed on most people entering Norway will be eased somewhat for certain travelers.

People returning from European countries where the incidence rate is below 150 per 100,000 inhabitants in the previous 14 days will no longer be required to stay in a hotel during their quarantine.

The same will be true for Olympic and Paralympic athletes who travel abroad to train or qualify for the Games. In addition, their quarantine will be lifted if a COVID-19 test taken after three days is negative.

Norway also plans to introduce a vaccine passport in the first half of June that will allow holders more freedoms.

According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), Norway has one of the lowest [incidence rates](#) in Europe at 107.85 per 100,000 inhabitants.

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