

Dutch 'end lockdown' as Covid measures eased

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The Netherlands will reopen indoor restaurants, museums and cinemas in a major easing of coronavirus restrictions that Prime Minister Mark Rutte said marked the "end of the lockdown".

The relaxation of the strictest Dutch COVID measures since the pandemic began will take place on June 5, four days earlier than planned, as numbers of cases fall and vaccinations rise.

"The easing taking effect on June 5 effectively marks the end of the lockdown," Rutte told a news conference.

"We are taking a calculated risk, if next week the sky falls and the numbers shoot up again then we have a new situation. But according to the outbreak management team that is unlikely."

The Dutch government had already allowed cafes to serve outside and ended a controversial curfew in April, while it allowed [sex workers](#) and zoos to operate again earlier this month.

Restaurants will now be allowed to serve indoors, and all catering outlets will be able to serve guests

until 10pm, Rutte said.

However they will not be allowed to show Euro 2020 football matches on big screens, he said.

Museums will now be allowed to open with one visitor per square metre, and theatres and cinemas can open with a maximum of 50 visitors. Larger venues with more than 1,000 seats can have 250 visitors.

Still [larger numbers](#) can be allowed if visitors are tested for coronavirus, as happened with the Eurovision Song Contest in Rotterdam in May.

The opening was taking place earlier than planned to give an extra weekend for restaurants and the cultural sector, Rutte said.

"We believe that such a weekend counts after being closed for so long. People, like me, look forward to concerts, eating in a [restaurant](#)."

The Netherlands recorded 25,255 new coronavirus infections in the week to Tuesday, down 28 percent. It has had 1.63 million cases overall and 17,566 deaths since the start of the pandemic.

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