**Covid-19 and Islands**

***Åland Islands,*** ***Finland***

1. What actions are being taken to protect the island community from Covid 19? In particular, how are travel restrictions being put in place and enforced?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Respondent | Date | Response |
| Petra Granholm  [petra@peace.ax](mailto:petra@peace.ax) | 26 March 2020 | Passenger ferries, for the most part, have stopped. |
| Petra Granholm  [petra@peace.ax](mailto:petra@peace.ax) | 8 April 2020 | * The Åland Islands (self-governed under Finland, pop.30 000) has a sea border with Sweden. On the 13th of March, the Finnish Government declared a state of emergency based on the Emergency Powers Act in Finland, and it also applies to Åland. The Finnish Government has decided to restrict traffic at Finland’s external borders starting on 19 March at 00.00. Finns travelling abroad are encouraged to return to Finland as soon as possible. Persons travelling to Finland are to be in quarantine for 2 weeks. At the beginning of these new restrictions, the Åland Government decided to recommend via sms also people travelling from mainland Finland to Åland to self-isolate for 2 weeks. Many people followed this recommendation voluntarily, but the Finnish Government strongly pointed out that the Åland Government has no competence to restrict citizen´s movement within Finland. * The Finnish capital region, Uusimaa/Nyland has the most Covid 19 cases and the Government has closed the region´s border between 28.3–19.4.2020. On 27 March, the Government submitted to Parliament two decrees concerning the Uusimaa region on the entry into force and the application of the restrictions on movement laid down in the Emergency Powers Act. The restrictions concern movement to and from the Uusimaa region. The movement restrictions in the Uusimaa region will enter into force on 28 March and remain in force until 19 April 2020. * On 7 April 2020, the Finnish Government decided to prolong the validity of the decision on the temporary reintroduction of border control at internal borders and the restrictions on traffic. The validity period was extended from 14 April 2020 to 13 May 2020. This causes problems for Åland healthcare, as the Åland hospital relies on medical personnel from Sweden. The restrictions would mean that Swedish medical personnel would be forced into 2 weeks quarantine and not allowed to work during this time. Because of this the Government requires the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to ensure that the operation of the Åland Hospital will be safeguarded in cooperation with the Government of Åland. Transfers of necessary doctors will be arranged from mainland Finland to Åland and assurance is given that the incoming staff will have sufficient knowledge of Swedish. The FinnHEMS helicopter in Turku will also serve Åland. * The pilots of the air ambulance used in Åland belong to the emergency medical and rescue personnel and are therefore not subject to the requirement to remain under quarantine-like conditions for 14 days. * Following the implementation of these decisions, other necessary and justified passenger traffic will continue to be allowed on scheduled flights from Stockholm, Helsinki and Turku to Mariehamn. It will also be possible to carry passengers on the shipping routes from Åland to mainland Finland. * Other necessary travel will include work that is important for the functioning of society or the security of supply and must be carried out without delay. * The implementation of these decisions will not prevent the production of globally critical health care equipment in Åland. Essential travel to work may continue, provided that the quarantine guidelines are followed. |

1. What actions will be taken should people on the island have Covid 19?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Respondent | Date | Response |
| Petra Granholm  [petra@peace.ax](mailto:petra@peace.ax) | 8 April 2020 | As of April 8 there are 9 confirmed cases and no deaths, but testing is limited as test has to be analysed on the mainland. There is a Corona-hotline and a special Corona-reception at the hospital, and people with symptoms but no clear indication of contamination source are advised to self-medicate and self-isolate. |

1. What actions are being taken to ensure that essential goods and services are provided to the island community?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Respondent | Date | Response |
| Petra Granholm  [petra@peace.ax](mailto:petra@peace.ax) | 8 April 2020 | The passenger ferry lines are closed, but goods traffic to the mainland works and some time after the shutdown of the ferry lines one of the ferries started operating taking goods to and from Sweden, but no passengers. |

1. What actions are being taken to ensure that people working on the islands, not only in the tourism sector, are sustained financially in the short term and in the long term?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Respondent | Date | Response |
| Petra Granholm  [petra@peace.ax](mailto:petra@peace.ax) | 8 April 2020 | * For companies, there are Åland Government plans to decide on a liquidity support system. * Temporary additional financial assistance to those who are entitled to unemployment benefits during 1.4-30.6.2020. |

1. What actions are being taken to ensure the mental well-being of people on the islands?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Respondent | Date | Response |
| Petra Granholm  [petra@peace.ax](mailto:petra@peace.ax) | 8 April 2020 | There are both the Corona-hotline at the hospital, and the state of emergency-hotline at the Åland Government. The Åland civil society sector, through the sustainability initiative Bärkraft.ax, is planning to strengthen its efforts through various actions. |

1. If you consider it appropriate, feel free to share any data about people who have Covid 19 on your island and of people who, sadly, have passed away because of Covid 19.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Respondent | Date | Response |
| Petra Granholm  [petra@peace.ax](mailto:petra@peace.ax) | 8 April 2020 | 9 confirmed cases and no deaths. |

1. If applicable, how are lockdown measures being relaxed?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Respondent | Date | Response |
| Dele Raheem  University of Lapland  [draheem@gmail.com](mailto:draheem@gmail.com) | 20 May 2020 | Primary schools resumed, outdoor activities allowed, researchers can do some work on agreed terms |

1. Is there anything else you want to share?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Respondent | Date | Response |
| Petra Granholm  [petra@peace.ax](mailto:petra@peace.ax) | 8 April 2020 | It is a peculiar time being autonomous, as Ålanders are used to rely on themselves, in particular within the fields of Åland legislative competence that include, for example, education. As the Emergency Powers Act is Finnish competence, all of a sudden many fields Åland normally administers themselves are now decided from Helsinki. |

**

*This information has been collated by the Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance in collaboration with Island Innovation and can be found at* [*https://www.strath.ac.uk/research/strathclydecentreenvironmentallawgovernance/ourwork/research/labsincubators/eilean/islandsandcovid-19/*](https://www.strath.ac.uk/research/strathclydecentreenvironmentallawgovernance/ourwork/research/labsincubators/eilean/islandsandcovid-19/)*.*