

PM Orban says gov't far from considering nationwide lockdown

Prime Minister Ludovic Orban said on Friday that the government was far from considering nationwide lockdown, pointing out that in order to impose new restrictive measures the authorities must have very serious reasons.

"We are facing an increase in the number of [COVID-19] cases, we do not deny that. On the other hand, we have already thought of a set of measures related to this increase in the number of cases that we apply and are being implementing and we are analysing their effects. (...) We will have to have extremely serious grounds for imposing other restrictive measures, and what is being talked about with nationwide lockdown, we are far from such a decision. (...) I keep saying on every occasion that we can live normally, we can have a few restrictive measures on one condition - people following the health protection measures. It is simple if people follows the health protection measures: they can go to work, they can go to a show, they can live a life as close to normal as possible, on one condition - compliance with protective measures," said Orban when asked what the threshold of new COVID-19 cases is that would require new restrictions.

According to the prime minister, the degree of compliance with the health protection rules has increased. "The degree of compliance has increased and I really appreciate that. It can also be seen with the naked eye in the streets, not only in Bucharest, but everywhere where the [14-day cumulative COVID-19 cases per 1,000 population rate] of 3 has been exceeded, that an overwhelming majority of the public follow the rules, and if there are people who do not follow the rules, the authorities do their duty and fine them," said Orban.

He added that the government wants to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic while ensuring that the economy works as close to normal as possible.