

Spanish Parliament authorizes a new extension of the state of alarm

Until May 24

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USPA NEWS - The Congress of Deputies authorized this Wednesday, May 6, a fourth extension of the state of alarm until 00:00 hours on May 24, requested by the Government of Spain for the management of the health crisis caused by COVID-19. After undergoing a new vote, the extension request was approved with 178 votes in favor, 75 votes against and 97 abstentions.

Finally, the Government obtained the support of the Basque nationalists (PNV, Spanish acronym) and the centrist party Ciudadanos, in addition to two formations of the Mixed Group, which groups party representatives who have not obtained a sufficient number of seats to form a parliamentary group own. The main opposition party, the conservative Popular Party, abstained from the vote, although its leader, Pablo Casado, warned the Prime Minister that this is the last time that he supports an extension of the state of alarm. Conservatives believe that the General Health Law, the Special Measures Law and the Civil Protection laws are sufficient to manage the return to normality, without the need to restrict the mobility of Spaniards.

The debate began with the intervention of the President of the Government, Pedro S  nchez, who argued that, "in light of the main indicators available, the experience gained at the national level, the experience in other countries and the knowledge provided by experts in the health and epidemiological field, it is considered appropriate to advance in the gradual de-escalation of extraordinary measures to restrict mobility and social contact and facilitate a recovery, as quickly as possible, of social and economic activity."

"The progression of the measures, or their eventual regression, will be determined based on the evolution of various indicators, both health, epidemiological, social, economic and mobility. In addition, these measures may be applied in specific territorial areas, be it the province, the island or the territorial unit of reference in the process of de-escalated," he added.

The Spanish Government contemplates the possibility that the Health Minister, Salvador Illa, "in view of the evolution of the sanitary, epidemiological, social, economic and mobility indicators," will agree "on the progression of de-escalation measures" for a concrete territory, according to the different regions. In the framework of these decisions, people may move through a specific territory (province, island or territorial unit of reference) without prejudice to the justified exceptions for movements between territories. In any case, in these "journeys the instructions of the health authorities must be respected."

This Wednesday, seven regions had announced their intention to request the transition to phase 1 of unconfinement starting next Monday. However, the two main regions, Madrid and Barcelona, prefer to wait one more week to go to phase 1. Madrid considers it necessary before decongesting the ICUs in the region, and Catalonia believes it is rash to lift the confinement because, in their opinion, they have not yet the circumstances for it occur.

During phase 1 of de-escalation, Spaniards will be able to meet in groups of up to 10 people both on the street and at home. The bars will be able to open their terraces and serve 50% of customers, who still will not be able to enter inside. The stores will be able to open and serve customers without an appointment, and trips to second residences within the same province will be allowed. Travel between different provinces will continue to be prohibited.

Step by step, Spain is moving towards the normalization of its activities. But the health authorities warn that they must not lower our guard because the Coronavirus is still present. COVID-19 has been in Spain since mid-February, as recognized by the Ministry of Health. And it continues killing: in the last 24 hours there were 244 deaths, up to a total of 25,857 since the pandemic began. The total number of infected so far amounts to 220,325. And the number of people healed amounts to 126,002.

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