

## Rationale for Government Resolution No. 315 of 26 March 2021

The current epidemiological situation is still unfavorable and the risk of the further spread of COVID-19 in the population is still very high despite the continuous decline in cases.

Yesterday's value of 7,853 (25 March 2021) is almost 3,000 fewer cases than last week (10,651; 18 March 2021), and the trend of the last two weeks, in which we have seen relatively lower daily values in week-on-week comparisons, continues.

Given the still very high values, it is crucial for the epidemic to be slowed down and for the current decline to continue.

Another important indicator of the overall population burden is the number of cases in the 65+ age category where, despite the continued decline, we are still seeing high figures; the share of the total is stable, around 15 to 16%.

From an overall perspective, the current situation is still deemed a very high risk and "fragile", because despite the continued decline we are still seeing very high daily figures of COVID-19 cases, especially as concerns the number of cases in the senior category (65+), albeit with a declining tendency.

The value of the 7-day average had dropped below 8,000 cases, and is currently at 7,636 (the lowest value since 14 February 2021). It applies also for this indicator that despite the gradual decline, from a long-term perspective we are still at very high values.

Regionally, the highest figures yesterday in descending order were reported in Central Bohemia (1,108), South Moravia (917), Ústí (848), Prague (796), Moravia-Silesia (755), South Bohemia (729), Pardubice (492), Vysočina (457), Zlín (371), Plzeň (369), Liberec (365), Olomouc (358), Hradec Králové (232), and once again the least in the Karlovy Vary region with 31 cases. Yesterday's listed regional values are lower compared to the figures reported in past weeks (the 10th and 11th calendar weeks) on the same day (Thursday).

Reviewing the current developments in individual regions of the Czech Republic, we can observe certain, albeit much smaller differences. It still applies that in the regions of Bohemia, most regions (except the Prague, Hradec Králové and Karlovy Vary regions) are still reporting above-average seven-day incidence values, both compared to the national average (499.9) and to the Moravian regions. In regions in Bohemia, the seven-day incidence value is currently between 500 and 700 cases per 100,000 inhabitants over 7 days (except the Prague, Hradec Králové and Karlovy Vary regions), while in the Moravian and Silesian regions it ranges from 400 to 500 cases in the same parameter.

In the past 7 to 10 days, however, we have seen an overall decline in cases in Bohemian regions, reflected in the values of seven-day incidence; in a week-to-week comparison this decline ranges between 25 and 40%.

The total national week-on-week decline is -26%, which is a more substantial reduction, but it must be noted that the values are dropping from very high figures, so from an overall perspective the curbing of the epidemic is slow. This situation is still very "fragile" given the consistently very high number of cases.

A relatively positive indicator of the current situation is the 7-day incidence value, because in past weeks the number of cases per 7 days per 100,000 inhabitants exceeding 1,000 cases was observed in almost 30 districts, whereas now there is not a single district above this value. The number of districts with an incidence higher than 500 cases per 100,000 inhabitants is also declining, and this value is currently higher in 44 districts, whereas on 17 March 2021 it was higher in 64 districts.

The situation is evaluated as high risk despite the continuing decline in new cases in Central Bohemia, Ústí and South Bohemia, not only because of the still relatively high total numbers, but primarily because of the high number of cases in the senior population group and the number of hospitalizations, both overall and particularly in ICU.

The situation in the Karlovy Vary region is stable according to current figures, and we can see a continuous decline; the reported numbers of newly-detected cases in the past 7 days are relatively lower compared week-on-week, the difference is about 50% and the number of cases per 7 days converted to 100,000 inhabitants is below 200 cases. We have seen significant progress in the Cheb district, where the current seven-day incidence values are 75% lower compared to the values observed in February. The current situation in this district is best described by the daily average, which is below 20 cases in the past 7 days, while in early February it was more than 180 cases; the decline in the seven-day incidence is also remarkable, as it is currently below 300 cases per 100,000 inhabitants (109), while at the start of February this value was more than 1,400 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. A decline is being observed even outside the Cheb district in the remaining districts, namely Sokolov and Karlovy Vary, where the seven-day incidence is below 250 cases per 100,000 inhabitants in both districts. Despite the aforementioned positives in the development of the epidemiological situation in the Karlovy Vary region, the strain on hospitals in the region remains enormous and the situation in inpatient and intensive care is still high risk despite the current improvements.

Another region where we have seen a decline in the past 7 to 10 days is the Hradec Králové region, by 40% in a week-on-week comparison; the situation has improved most in the Trutnov district, as best indicated by the seven-day incidence which has dropped below the limit of 250 cases per 100,000 inhabitants (243) and the daily average number of cases is around 40, while at the start of February the average daily number of cases came close to 250. Compared to the Trutnov district, we can see slightly higher values in the other districts of the Hradec Králové region, which range from 300 to 500 cases per 100,000 inhabitants per 7 days in the same parameter (Náchod, Rychnov, Hradec Králové, Jičín), but even here there is a continuous decline, especially in the Náchod and Hradec Králové districts that, together with the Trutnov district, were among those worst affected; the 7-day incidence in these districts is currently below 350 cases per 100,000 inhabitants.

A similar situation can be observed in the Plzeň region, where in week-on-week comparisons the values are currently about 40% lower, but despite the consistent decline, we rate the overall risk as high given the higher daily figures (daily average = 421). There is still a heightened risk in all the districts of the region, and the 7-day figures per 100,000 inhabitants in the entire region are around 500 cases.

We are currently observing a decline in the week-on-week evaluation of the entire belt of northeastern and northern Bohemia because, in addition to the Hradec Králové region, where there has been a continued and marked decline over a longer time period, a decline has also been seen over the past week in the Pardubice and Liberec regions, by about 30 to 35%; both regions report an average of less than 500 cases per day, which is reflected in the monitored 7-day incidence parameter, which has dropped below 650 cases per 100,000 inhabitants per 7 days in both the Pardubice and Liberec regions. Despite this progress, it applies that the risk is still deemed high in these regions.

Notwithstanding the decline in the past week, a significant number of cases are still being reported in the Ústí region, where the average daily increment is almost 800 cases (798), which despite a 17% week-on-week decline is still among the highest values compared to the other regions; we still rate the risk in this region as very high, especially because of the impact/high number of cases in the senior/vulnerable population group (daily average of 122 cases in 65+).

Among the most heavily afflicted parts of the Czech Republic, despite the decline in the past 7 to 10 days, is the City of Prague with more than 800 cases per day on average, and Central Bohemia with more than 1,210 daily cases on average in the past 7 days; both these regions hold the highest rank in terms of their number of daily increments. In both of these regions, we

rate the current risk as very high, not only because of the highest daily case numbers; a high risk is indicated especially in the average daily number of cases in the 65+ age group; the daily average of detected cases in this age and risk category, given the higher probability of more severe illness and subsequent hospitalization, is over 120 cases in both parts of the country, and these too are the absolutely highest figures compared to the other regions. Such high numbers are subsequently projected into the number of hospitalizations, both overall and in intensive care units.

A high to very high risk is observed in the South Moravian region, which reports an average of over 750 cases (757); we are now seeing a decline in this region, but it is very gradual, and high figures are still being reported including cases detected in the senior group (65+), which account for about 15% of the total number, and are subsequently projected also in the number of hospitalizations, which are by far the highest in the country in South Moravia.

High detections, i.e. between 600 and 700 cases, are reported daily on average in the Moravian-Silesian (707) and South Bohemian (618) regions. Despite the high daily numbers, the Moravian-Silesian region is one of those least affected in the country converted to cases per 100,000 inhabitants, whereas South Bohemia (-24%) is one of the most afflicted regions in this indicator (672 cases per 100,000 inhabitants).

The Pardubice (457), Olomouc (432), Vysočina (408), Liberec (396), Zlín (326), Hradec Králové (271) and Karlovy Vary (82) regions are below the limit of 500 cases.

Despite the continuing decline, a high risk for further development, especially in hospital care, is indicated by the number of cases in vulnerable/senior population groups (65+) where we observe a higher share in the total daily numbers ranging from 15 to 16%; in absolute figures this is 1,100 to 1,200 cases per day (1,165; average 7-day value), which is still a risky value despite the said decline, because these are very often persons who suffer simultaneously from multiple chronic diseases. This increases the probability of later hospitalization of these persons and a more severe course of illness (30-35%). The most cases in this age category are reported in Central Bohemia (156), Ústí (122), the City of Prague (119), South Moravia (119), Moravia-Silesia (113) and South Bohemia (95).

The age structure is still essentially the same, cases are largely registered in the younger to middle-aged generations. More than one third of all cases fall within to 30 to 49 year age category. The share of the number of cases in the 6 to 15 year age group is still between 8 to 9% of the total; in absolute figures this is about 700 cases daily on average in the past week. For pre-school children (0 to 5 years), the share in the past month has been around 3 to 4% of the total.

The number of hospitalizations is starting to decline gradually, the main cause being the overall decline in cases among vulnerable and senior groups (week-to-week decline - 25%); the number of hospitalizations may be expected to decline further in the next week, and the number of released patients will strongly outweigh the number of new admissions. On the previous day (25 March), 500 new patients were admitted to hospital. This is a much lower figure than in the previous week, when more than 700 people were newly admitted to hospital.

The total number of hospitalizations has a continuous declining trend, but this changes nothing about the fact that the total strain is still very high; there are currently 7,965 patients in hospital.

We continue to observe differences between the regions, which reflect the current development of the epidemiological situation in these regions, projected into the decline which is very gradual; for the number of hospitalizations in the regions where the epidemic is now peaking are still rising. The situation is fairly stable in those regions which were most affected in the previous period, namely the Karlovy Vary and Hradec Králové regions.

From an overall perspective, however, it still applies that almost all the regions are under severe strain, especially in the intensive care segment, where hospitalizations are no longer rising, but

rather declining, but the burden is still immense, as described in the text below.

The numbers of hospitalizations requiring intensive care are crucial in terms of a comprehensive view of the entire load, because they reflect the current impact of the epidemic and document the current degree of risk; there are presently 1,723 patients in intensive care, which despite the slight decline is a major, enormous burden and the situation remains critical; the same applies to patients who require high intensive care (ventilated patients + ECMO: 890 + 24 patients), which remain at very high and risky values.

Despite the overall decline, given the still fairly high detection in the senior group, the development of the epidemiological situation indicates a high degree of risk and high strain on hospitals, especially in the area of providing intensive care. The current number of patients in ICU confirms the lasting high degree of risk, which is further backed by the number of persons in severe condition of the total hospitalized number, this being over 23%.

From an overall perspective, the burden on hospitals is still very high, especially in the intensive care segment where capacities are very restricted; for this reason, relocations and transports of patients between the regions continue.

Despite an improvement in the overall number of hospitalizations, we are still seeing a high risk situation in the Karlovy vary region, where the figures for both total hospitalizations and ICU cases remain very high, and ICU capacities are still at their limit. There is also higher pressure on inpatient capacity in the Ústí region, where there is likewise a very high number of total hospitalizations, as is the case with ICU. High hospitalization figures are also seen in Prague and Central Bohemia, especially in ICU where the numbers are at their highest values since the start of the epidemic. In the City of Prague, there are currently 307 patients in intensive care, and 162 in Central Bohemia.

We are also seeing very high patient numbers in South Moravia, with 1,000 currently in hospital and 213 in ICU; both these values are considered high risk in terms of inpatient and intensive care capacity given the development of the situation in this region. High ICU patient number are also being reported in other regions such as Moravia-Silesia (165), Ústí (163), Hradec Králové (96), Liberec (96), Olomouc (106) and South Bohemia (109), where the situation is similar to South Moravia, i.e. the current numbers a high risk given the development in this region.

The situation around hospital care is still highly unfavorable or critical, given not only the high number of total hospitalizations, but especially the number of patients in severe condition that require intensive care. This puts immense pressure on inpatient and intensive care capacities, not just as concerns the current lack of available beds, but also professional staff for this highly specialized care.

For the foregoing reasons and in accordance with the extension of the state of emergency until 11 April 2021, the effectiveness of the government's currently valid crisis measures is also extended for the same amount of time.