

To: [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]@minvws.nl]; [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]@minvws.nl]
Cc: [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]@minvws.nl]; [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]@minvws.nl]
From: [redacted] 5.1.2e
Sent: Mon 9/7/2020 4:00:06 PM
Subject: FW: Doorst: Request for more information on COVID-19 on the islands in Greece
Received: Mon 9/7/2020 4:00:06 PM

Ook voor jullie. Op verzoek van de post in Griekenland heeft RIVM nog nader met het Griekse RIVM geschakeld, dat is zoals jullie kunnen zien geen aanleiding om het advies anders te laten worden. Wordt wel nauw gemonitord. Ingangsmoment oranje blijft zoals het er nu uitziet morgenochtend 9:00.

Overigens heeft VK net ook 7 Griekse eilanden op quarantaine gezet, we zijn dus in ieder geval niet de enige die nu iets doen.

Gr. [redacted] 5.1.2e

Van: [redacted] 5.1.2e <[redacted] 5.1.2e @rivm.nl>
Verzonden: maandag 7 september 2020 17:53
Aan: [redacted] 5.1.2e <[redacted] 5.1.2e @minvws.nl>; [redacted] 5.1.2e <[redacted] 5.1.2e @minvws.nl>
CC: [redacted] 5.1.2e <[redacted] 5.1.2e @rivm.nl>
Onderwerp: Doorst: Request for more information on COVID-19 on the islands in Greece

[redacted] 5.1.2a Wij
zien alleen maar een verslechtering in de cijfers. Ons advies verandert nu dan ook niet, maar we kijken wel of die verbetering die zij zien ook in de statistiekn naar boven komen. ECDC cijfers, die iets achter lopen, laten nog sterke stijgingen van de incidentie zien op de eilanden. Met het aflopen van het toeristenseizoen gaat het mogelijk in de komende weken wel verbeteren. We gaan het zien.

Groet

[redacted] 5.1.2e

Van: [redacted] 5.1.2e <[redacted] 5.1.2e @marshall.usc.edu>
Datum: 7 september 2020 om 17:11:14 CEST
Aan: [redacted] 5.1.2e <[redacted] 5.1.2e @rivm.nl>
CC: [redacted] 5.1.2e <[redacted] 5.1.2e @minvws.nl>; [redacted] 5.1.2e <[redacted] 5.1.2e @minvws.nl>; [redacted] 5.1.2e <[redacted] 5.1.2e @rivm.nl>; [redacted] 5.1.2e <[redacted] 5.1.2e @rivm.nl>; [redacted] 5.1.2e <[redacted] 5.1.2e @rivm.nl>
Onderwerp: Re: Request for more information on COVID-19 on the islands in Greece

Dear [redacted] 5.1.2e

Thank you very much for your email. I completely understand the concerns and I am hoping that my answers below will help with your decision making.

On Sep 7, 2020, at 5:48 PM, [redacted] 5.1.2e <[redacted] 5.1.2e @rivm.nl> wrote:

Dear Mister [redacted] 5.1.2e

I got your contact details through some email discussions that are going on at the moment with the authorities in the Netherlands. We have received the recent data and policy statement on the COVID-19 situation of the Greek islands. Thank you very much for that. In addition to the questions that were asked to you I would like to ask you for some additional information.

In the Netherlands we evaluate every week which countries carry risks of import of COVID to the Netherlands through travelers. We are monitoring through data from ECDC and if possible through national available data. If we see an increase of cases in a certain country or area we ask the embassies to provide us with more background information.

We have noted a higher incidence of COVID in Greece since the beginning of August, around 30/100.000/14 days. This incidence is not much higher than many other countries in Europe and much lower than for example Spain and France. So for this we do not see a big problem.

In ECDC reports we see a higher incidence in the areas of the islands, with an incidence around 50/100.000/14days. This is a reason for us to look a bit further at the situation in Greece.

I completely see your concern. Please keep in mind that the population in islands doubles or triples during the tourist season (which is exactly why we shared the adjusted population).

In the past weeks we have also noted an increase of cases that returned to the Netherlands from holidays in Greece. Last week we had 92 cases with a recent travel history to Greece. At the same time we received notifications by municipal health services in the Netherlands of multiple cases among groups of young people returning from Crete (Chersonissos), but other islands are mentioned as well.

We have asked for information about this through the Dutch embassy in Greece. The information we received describes a situation of:

5.1.2a

Typically (except for the points of entry where incoming visitors are being screened) islands have a few private labs where both locals and visitors can get a test when they are asymptomatic but “curious”. Furthermore, if anyone has COVID-like symptoms and present themselves at a local hospital they have to be tested by law free of charge. Therefore, to the best of my knowledge symptomatic patients who request a test will get one regardless of where they are.

5.1.2a

We do have a tracing platform that associates confirmed cases with recent travel exactly so that we can monitor the phenomenon that you are describing. Legally, we have to report on the location where the sample was taken but in the tracing database we do have information on where they arrived from (which is why we took measures in some islands, such as Paros mid-August where reported cases were not that high).

- The advise for Greek nationals to go into quarantine for a week after returning to the mainland after visiting the islands

Both our tracing data as well as our predictive models showed an increase mid-August and a projected increase towards the end of August. This is why to protect visitors and locals we sent a “flag” so that people get serious about distances masks etc and also protect the mainland and the origin countries in case the bad scenario did get realized.

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With this information we conclude that the situation concerning COVID on the islands in Greece is not stable and that there is an increased risk of catching COVID-19.

We appreciate the feedback and data that you provided to us. In addition we have the following questions to you:

1. Can you confirm that there is an advice for Greek nationals to go into quarantine after returning tot the mainland after visiting the islands?

This advice was very strongly given mid-August exactly because of the increase. Right now, our focus is on maintaining

the distances and masks in the urban centers and Attiki in particular since we see that the situation in the islands is greatly improving. There are two islands that we are closely monitoring and considering stricter measures: Zakynthos, Mallia, Hersonisos. Decisions on these will be made this week.

- 1.
2. What is the reason for giving this advice?

(Repeating from above)

Both our tracing data as well as our predictive models showed an increase mid-August and a projected increase towards the end of August. This is why to protect visitors and locals we sent a “flag” so that people get serious about distances masks etc and also protect the mainland and the origin countries in case the bad scenario did get realized.

- 2.
3. Can you tell us how COVID-19 testing is organized on the islands? Do tourists have access to the testing? Do you do contact tracing in connection to positive cases on the islands?

Typically (except for the points of entry where incoming visitors are being screened) islands have a few private labs where both locals and visitors can get a test when they are asymptomatic but “curious”. Furthermore, if anyone has COVID-like symptoms and present themselves at a local hospital they have to be tested by law free of charge. Therefore, to the best of my knowledge symptomatic patients who request a test will get one regardless of where they are.

Regarding tracing the protocol is as follows:

For every confirmed positive case

- The team of tracers follows up by phone, instructs isolation and follows a script filling out the required tracing information as specified by our central tracing platform. Information of course includes close contacts as well as potential spreading events that they attended so that both people and businesses are notified.
- The Institute of public health follows up to trace the case backwards (i.e. figure out if possible where the infection happened/ whether there was an unknown association with another confirmed positive).

- 3.

I am looking forward to your response

I hope that this is the information that you had in mind. Please let me know if there is something that I am missing.

Regards

5.1.2e, 5.1.2e
5.1.2e
National Public Health Institute of the Netherlands, RIVM
5.1.2e @rivm.nl
5.1.2e

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