

**Message from Governor Cathy Berx: please respect the measures without distinction!**

*"To all of you, especially to those who have (younger) children and teenagers: please make them aware of the very serious situation we are actually facing and which will become even more worse in the next days/weeks. Preventing/slowing down further spreading of the virus to flatten the curve and to mitigate it, remain crucial.*

*Also younger people are vulnerable to Covid-19. As many newspapers state rightly: in the Netherlands, a 16-year-old Covid-19 patient lies in critical condition on intensive care. In Italy, half of the patients are younger than 65. Play time is really over. The pressure on our healthcare system is very real and we are only at the beginning.*

*From the daily reports of the police we know that still not all pubs and restaurants are closed, that a lot of youngsters are still playing in the streets and on squares in large groups. I beg you, please, stop that immediately. Follow all the measures consistently: pubs, restaurants... will remain closed, keep your distance, only leave your house for essential trips, alone or with your family or accompanied by one friend, don't come together, don't gather. The 24th of March was a bad day: the number of infections increased strongly. Unfortunately, the number of deceased too. The hospitals organise themselves in such a way that they can keep giving the best care to a lot of patients. They can't make that effort if we are not all and without distinction respecting the necessary measures.*

*I am fully aware that the efforts we are supposed to make ask a lot from the people and citizens. But they are nothing compared to what the doctors, (homecare) nurses and the rest of the medical staff in our hospitals have to perform today and in the coming weeks in very difficult circumstances. To overcome this crisis together, in solidarity and with an increased sense of responsibility with as few deaths as possible, remains our mission.*

*Furthermore: hang on, keep your head up, stay healthy and –I can't repeat it enough- respect the precautionary measures. Not only to protect many others and the healthcare system, but also and especially yourself and all who is dear to you. Good taking care of yourself and in doing so of others remains the explicit mission and message. Partying and hugging each other will have to wait until this crisis will be over!"*