



Bessastaðir,
24 March 2020

A message from the President of Iceland
to staff in commerce, tourism and related sectors

Dear shop and commercial staff,
tourism staff,
and those in other services,

I send you our warmest greetings. I wish those who are now experiencing illness a good recovery. And I also send sincere greetings to those who are now in preventive quarantine.

Here in Iceland various measures have been introduced in response to the viral pandemic which now rages around the world. Restrictions have been placed on travel, and on numbers of people in shops, restaurants, and so on. And now more stringent rules have taken effect regarding social distancing in general. No longer can we go about our business when it suits us, travel around at will, or enjoy social gatherings.

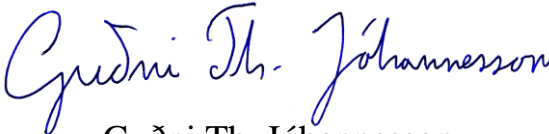
These new requirements have had a heavy impact upon people in the commercial sector; and the tourist sector, which has been rapidly expanding in recent years, is now vulnerable.

You have experienced all these impacts. You have been under great pressure during these difficult and demanding days. Yet you have carried out your work in spite of adversity, and done so admirably. And for that I thank you. I urge all the people of this country to comply in every way with rules and instructions, and to show people in the service sector courtesy and respect at all times.

Our situation is likely to grow worse before we gain the victory in this battle. Yet we shall be victorious, and then the sun will rise again over our society. We will once again come together to celebrate special occasions, we will travel and shop, and enjoy meeting people when we are out and about.

Yes, the sun will rise, and visitors from abroad will come to Iceland again. And then we will ask them, as before, how they like Iceland, and their answer will be that on this sublimely beautiful island live likeable people who have made a fine society for themselves.

My dear friends: on behalf of Eliza and myself I reiterate warm greetings, and we express our good wishes to all of you.


Guðni Th. Jóhannesson