

Bulgaria: Coronavirus related special procedures

Updated on 2/10/2020

Restrictions

- The use of facial mask (or other means covering the nose and the mouth - including cloth, scarf, helmet, etc.), is mandatory in all closed public places (except eating and drinking establishments). Nevertheless, wearing of protective masks in open public places is highly recommended.

- On 13 May Bulgarian authorities lifted the „state of emergence“ and introduced „emergency epidemic situation“ for the period from 14 May till 14 June. **The “emergency epidemic situation” has been extended until 30th of November.**

- In an order in force from 1st of October till 30 of November the Minister of Health has confirmed the temporary prohibited entry into the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria of all foreign nationals through all border crossing points by all means of transport.

The following categories are excluded from the prohibition above:

- Bulgarian citizens, citizens of Member States of the European Union, UK, Schengen States (including San Marino, Andorra, Monaco and the Vatican) and their family members (including persons who are in actual cohabitation with them); citizens of Australia, Canada, Georgia, Japan, New Zealand, Ruanda, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay, UAE, Ukraine, North Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Kosovo, Bosna and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Moldova, Israel, Kuwait, Belarus and Turkey; persons with permanent and long-term residence status in the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria and members of their families, persons with visa “D”, as well as persons who hold a residence permit in a Member State of the EU, UK or Schengen State (including San Marino, Andorra, Monaco and the Vatican) and their family members;

- Medical professionals, medical scientists, social workers and their managers if the purpose of their journey is linked to their professional work;

- Workers involved in the delivery of medicinal products, medical devices and personal protective equipment, medical equipment, including its installation and maintenance;

- **Transport personnel engaged in the carriage of passengers and goods**, aircraft crews engaged in commercial air transport and other transport personnel, as appropriate, including vessels crews and persons involved in vessels maintenance;

- Officials (Heads of State, Government, etc.) and members of their delegations, as well as diplomats, administrative and technical staff of missions of foreign countries, officials of international organisations, military personnel, personal of security and public order services and humanitarian workers, carrying out their duties, as well as their family members;

- Persons travelling for humanitarian reasons ("humanitarian reasons" exist when not allowing into the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria or leaving it by a foreigner shall cause a serious danger to his/her health or life due to objective circumstances, or to the integrity of his/her family, or the best interest of the family or of the child requires his/her admission or stay in the country);

- Representatives of trade, economic and investment activities and persons directly involved in the construction, maintenance, operation and security of strategic and critical infrastructure of the Republic of Bulgaria, in the implementation of projects

certified under the Investment Promotion Act, analyses of projects of potential investors and other activities relevant to the country's economy, certified by a letter from the Minister of Economy or another minister responsible for the respective activity, persons involved in shipbuilding and ship repair; as well as their family members;

- Seasonal farm workers and workers in tourism sector;
 - Cross-border workers;
 - Persons traveling due to educational reasons
 - Persons organizing and participating in international sport events;
 - Foreign citizens traveling to receive a decree on acquired Bulgarian citizenship, certified by a letter of the Minister of Justice;
 - Persons organizing and participating in international cultural events.
- The above mentioned persons, excluded from the prohibition of entering the country are allowed to transit through the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Transit is allowed only where immediate leaving the territory of Republic of Bulgaria can be guaranteed.

• All persons who are allowed to enter Bulgaria and arriving in Bulgaria with a departure point in EU, UK, Schengen States (including San Marino, Andorra, Monaco, the Vatican), Australia, Canada, Georgia, Japan, New Zealand, Ruanda, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay, UAE, Serbia, Belarus and Turkey are exempted from the requirement to present a PCR test for Covid-19.

• All persons who are allowed to enter Bulgaria and arriving in Bulgaria with a departure point in third countries (except mentioned in the previous paragraph), are allowed to enter Bulgarian territory only after presenting a proof of negative PCR test. The test should be dated within 72 hours before entering. The proving document must contain:

- the names of the person according to the identity document he travels with;
- name, address and other contact details of the laboratory performed the test;
- date on which the test was performed;
- method of the test, written with Latin letters (PCR); and
- negative result, written with Latin letters (Negative).

Exception to the PCR tests:

a) Bulgarian citizens and citizens of other EU Member States, UK, and Schengen States (including San Marino, Andorra, Monaco and the Vatican) who are:

- Persons travelling for humanitarian reasons;
- Representatives of trade, economic and investment activities and persons directly involved in the construction, maintenance, operation and security of strategic and critical infrastructure of the Republic of Bulgaria, in the implementation of projects certified under the Investment Promotion Act, analyses of projects of potential investors and other activities relevant to the country's economy, certified by a letter from the Minister of Economy or another minister responsible for the respective activity, persons involved in shipbuilding and ship repair; as well as their family members;

b) Bus drivers performing international transport of passengers;

c) Truck drivers performing or completing international transport of goods by their entering on the territory of Bulgaria;

d) Vessels crew members who are Bulgarian citizens;

e) The following persons, regardless of their nationality:

- Medical professionals, medical scientists, social workers, and their managers if the purpose of their journey is linked to their professional work;

- Workers involved in the delivery of medicinal products, medical devices and personal protective equipment, medical equipment, including its installation and maintenance;

- Officials (Heads of State, Government, etc.) and members of their delegations, as well as diplomats, administrative and technical staff of missions of foreign countries, officials of international organisations, military personnel, personal of the security and public order services and humanitarian workers, as well as their family members, carrying out their duties;

- Cross-border workers;

f) Short-term business trips abroad of state administration officers, carrying out their duties;

g) Members of the aircraft crews, performing flights from and to the public airports in Bulgaria and persons engaged in the aircraft maintenance;

h) Persons transiting the territory of Bulgaria.

Bulgarian citizens, persons with permanent and long-term residence status in the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria and members of their families, who do not present a proof of negative PCR test dated within 72 hours before entering shall be quarantined for a period of 14 days at home or other accommodation where the person has indicated that he/she will reside, with a prescription issued by the director of the relevant regional health inspectorate or a person authorized by him.

- In cases where drivers of goods vehicles, which are allowed to transit Bulgaria, but due to a ban by a neighbouring state cannot leave Bulgaria, a place will be determined by Agency "Road Infrastructure" where the truck and the driver must stay until the ban is abolished, after that he has to leave the country.

On 30.03.2020 and until further notice the border crossing point between Bulgaria and Greece "Zlatograd-Thermes" has been closed due to the spread of COVID-19 and announced quarantine in the respective Greece border region.

Relieves

On 14th of April 2020 Bulgarian Agency "Road Infrastructure" has issued an order temporary suspending the official holidays driving ban for trucks over 12 tones.

In addition Bulgarian Government has granted further temporary tolerance concerning the enforcement of driving and rest times for drivers under EU Regulation 561/2006 to the national and international transport of goods. This exception applies from 17 April 2020, 00:00 to 31 May 2020, 24:00. Measures lifted are the following:

- Art. 6(1): replacement of the maximum daily driving limit of 9 hours with one of 11 hours;

- Art. 7: replacement of the minimum daily break requirements by imposing a break of 45 minutes after 5 and a half hours; and

- Art. 8(6): possibility to take two consecutive reduced weekly rest periods of minimum 24 hours, provided that:

- the drivers take at least 4 weekly rests within these 4 consecutive week and at least two of them should be regular weekly rests; and

- the two reduced weekly rests should be compensated before the next rest period.

- Derogation to Article 8(8) of Regulation 561/2006: possibility for the driver to take the regular weekly rest in the vehicle, as long as it has suitable sleeping facilities for each driver and the vehicle is stationary.

• The Bulgarian government granted temporary tolerance concerning the enforcement of driving and resting times for drivers under the EU Regulation 561/2006 to the national and international transport of goods. This exception applies from 19/03/2020 00:00 to 16/04/2020 24.00. Measures lifted are the following:

- Art. 6(1): replacement of the maximum daily driving limit of 9 hours with one of 11 hours;

- Article 7: replacement of the minimum daily breaks requirements by imposing a break of 45 minutes after 5 and a half hours;

- Art. 8(6): reduction of the regular weekly rest period from 45 hours to 24 hours.

The Bulgarian Road Infrastructure Agency has published an interactive map of the green corridors for road transport of goods transiting the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. The map contains useful information on rest areas and the respective number of parking slots, sanitary facilities, possibility to buy food, availability of internet connection, lighting, video surveillance, fuel station, nearest emergency services, number of slots for refuelling refrigerated trucks, etc.: <http://www.api.bg/index.php/en/green-corridors> or <https://www.bgtoll.bg/en>.