Bulgaria

WCO/Bulgarian Customs Agency
19.03.2020

Mandatory 14-day quarantine (17.03.2020)
Bulgaria has issued an Ordinance N130 which establishes nationals of which countries shall be placed in quarantine for a period of 14 days. All Bulgarian nationals or foreign nationals having their permanent, long-term or extended residence on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria and their family members arriving from certain countries shall be placed in quarantine for a period of 14 days either at their home or at a placement facility at which said persons have stated they would reside. For the list of countries and exemptions refer to the website.

Start date: 17.03.2020
End date: not available

Temporary ban on the entry of third-country nationals into the territory of Bulgaria (19.03.2020)
Bulgaria has issued an Ordinance N138 temporarily prohibiting the entry of third-country nationals into Bulgaria. The entry into the territory of Bulgaria shall be temporarily prohibited from 00:00 hours on 20 March until 17 April 2020, inclusive, to all third-country nationals at all border crossing points and with any means of transport, including aviation, maritime, rail and road. The ban on entry into the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria of persons arriving from the following EU Member States and Schengen countries shall be placed in quarantine for a period of 14 days either at their home or at a placement facility at which said persons have stated they would reside.

Start date: 20.03.2020
End date: 17.04.2020
Contact information:

Remarks from the International Road Transport Union
07.05.2020
On 7 May, the Bulgarian government put into force the following deconfinement measures:

The following special check-points, initially established at all entries and exits of the town of Bansko and of all regional centres, have been lifted: Blagoevgrad, Burgas, Varna, Veliko Tarnovo, Vidin, Vratsa, Gabrovo, Dobrich, Kardzhali, Kyustendil, Lovech, Montana, Pazardzhik, Pernik, Pleven, Plovdiv, Razgrad, Ruse, Silistra, Sliven, Smolyan, Sofia, Stara Zagora, Targovishte, Haskovo, Shumen, Yambol.

People and drivers can freely enter and exit these cities with no delays.

The use of a facial mask is already mandatory in closed public spaces. Nevertheless, people and drivers who are in open public places are required to comply with the requirement of social distancing and all anti-epidemic measures, and wear a protective mask in case there is a need to be in contact with others.

The border health authorities stopped issuing instruction notes to non-Bulgarian drivers entering Bulgaria; this will reduce waiting times at border crossing points.

The regime for non-Bulgarian drivers coming from a country with registered COVID-19 cases, is currently as follows:

- Drivers of goods vehicles transporting goods destined for the Bulgarian market should enter the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, unload the goods transported (and load goods for the return trip, if need be), and immediately leave the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.

- Transit through the Republic of Bulgaria is only permitted on routes determined by the Road Infrastructure Agency.

The deadline for leaving the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria cannot exceed 24 hours from entry into the country.

Measures apply immediately and until further notice.

Source: AEBTRI

24.04.2020
Until 13 May, Bulgaria introduced a new obligation making the use of facial masks mandatory for all, including drivers, in open or closed public spaces.

In addition, measures applying to drivers have also been slightly amended. The following regime is in place for non-Bulgarian drivers coming from a country with registered COVID-19 cases:

- drivers of goods vehicles transporting goods destined for the Bulgarian market should enter the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, unload the goods transported and/or load goods, and immediately leave the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria; and

- drivers of goods vehicles transporting goods destined for other countries are permitted to transit through the Republic of Bulgaria on a route determined by the Road Infrastructure Agency.

The border health authorities shall issue an instruction note to drivers passing through the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria specifying:

- the date and time at which they should leave the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria; and

- the border crossing point at which they have to exit.
10.04.2020

Today, the Bulgarian Road Infrastructure Agency has issued an order temporarily suspending the official holidays driving ban for trucks over 12 tonnes.

In addition, the Bulgarian Government has granted further temporary tolerance concerning the enforcement of driving and rest time rules for drivers under Reg. (EC) 561/2006 regarding the national and international transport of goods. This exception applies from 17 April 2020, 00:00 to 17 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;
- 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 weeks and at least two of them should be regular weekly rests
  - 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.

Source: AEBTRI

08.04.2020

Restrictions

In a new order issued on 6 April, the Minister of Health has confirmed the temporary entry ban for all third country (non-EU) nationals through all border crossing points by all means of transport. Entry bans apply to all persons coming from the following countries, irrespective of their nationality: Italy, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Lichtenstein and Luxembourg.

The following categories are excluded from the prohibitions above:

a) Bulgarian citizens, family members of Bulgarian citizens, persons with permanent, long-term residence status in the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria and members of their families;

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

Source: AEBTRI
c) Transport personnel engaged in the carriage of goods, aircraft crews engaged in commercial air transport and other transport personnel, as appropriate;
d) Foreign officials (Heads of State, Government, etc.) and members of their delegations, as well as diplomats, officials of international organisations, military personnel and humanitarian workers carrying out their duties;
e) Persons travelling for humanitarian reasons;
f) Nationals of Member States of the European Union and Schengen States (including San Marino, Andorra, Monaco and the Vatican) and third-country nationals directly involved in the construction, maintenance, operation and security of strategic and critical infrastructure of the Republic of Bulgaria; and
g) Frontier workers and seasonal farm workers.

Transit through the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria is allowed for:
a) Nationals of Member States of the European Union and Schengen States (including San Marino, Andorra, Monaco and the Vatican) and their family members in order to return to their country of residence;
b) Third-country nationals who hold a long-term residence permit in another Member State of the European Union or in a Schengen country (including San Marino, Andorra, Monaco and the Vatican) and their family members in order to return to their country of residence;
c) Citizens of Serbia, the Republic of Northern Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey in order to return to their country;
d) Transport personnel engaged in the carriage of goods, aircraft crews engaged in commercial air transport and other transport personnel, as appropriate, to which the special rules apply.

Bulgarian truck drivers arriving from a country with registered Covid-19 cases are subject to the 14-day quarantine period. During the quarantine period they are permitted to transit Bulgaria for the purpose of carrying out or completing international transport:
   i. to transit through the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria;
   ii. to be in the cab of the truck;
   iii. to drive the truck;
   iv. to carry out loading and unloading activities; and
   v. to leave the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria before the quarantine period has ended.

The following regime has been introduced for non-Bulgarian drivers - citizens of the above countries or coming from them or having passed through the territory of such a country:
   i. drivers of goods vehicles transporting goods destined for the Bulgarian market should enter the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, unload the goods transported and/or load goods, and immediately leave the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria; and
   ii. drivers of goods vehicles transporting goods destined for other countries are permitted to transit through the Republic of Bulgaria on a route determined by the Road Infrastructure Agency.

The National Toll Administration shall issue an instruction note to drivers passing through the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria which shall specify:
   · the date and time at which they should leave the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria; and
   · the border crossing point at which they have to exit.
The determined deadline for leaving the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria may not exceed 24 hours from the issuance of the instruction note.

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 where the truck and the driver must stay until the ban is abolished, after that he has to leave the country.

On 30 March 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 a quarantine has been announced in the respective Greek border region.

Special check-points have been established at all entries and exits of the town of Bansko and of all regional centres: Blagoevgrad, Burgas, Varna, Veliko Tarnovo, Vidin, Vratsa, Gabrovo, Dobrich, Kardzhali, Kyustendil, Lovech, Montana, Pazardzhik, Pernik, Pleven, Plovdiv, Razgrad, Ruse, Silistra, Siliven, Smolyan, Sofia, Stara Zagora, Targovishte, Haskovo, Shumen, Yambol.

People can enter and exit these cities only to work, for medical reasons, care of their relatives, and to buy essential basic products and medicines.

Truck drivers are allowed to pass through these check points but delays are possible.

Relieves

The Bulgarian Government has granted a temporary tolerance concerning the enforcement of driving and rest times for drivers under EU Regulation 5612006 to the national and international transport of goods. This exception applies from 19 March 2020, 00:00 to 16 April 2020, 24:00. Measures lifted are the following:

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

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

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

On 13 March 2020, Bulgarian authorities introduced a state of emergency in the country. Currently the state of emergency has been extended until 13 May.

Source: AEBTRI

31.03.2020

In a new order, from 00:00 on 20 March 2020 until 17 April 2020, the Minister of Health has temporarily prohibited entry into the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria of all third country (non-EU) nationals through all border crossing points by all means of transport. Transport personnel engaged in the transport of goods are excluded from the scope of this order.

The prohibition of entry of EU nationals from countries with registered infected persons with COVID-19 and the respective arrangements for drivers coming from these countries, previously announced, remains in force (official information available here). Bulgarian citizens, as well as persons with either long or permanent residence in Bulgaria, and their families, are exempt from this ban. They will be subject to a 14-day quarantine either at home or any other accommodation of their choice. A special regime has been arranged for the truck drivers (official decree here):

- Bulgarian truck drivers are also subject to the 14-day quarantine, unless they are returning to one of the countries on the list. In this instance they must remain in quarantine until they leave;
- Non-Bulgarian drivers - citizens of the above countries or coming from them - can load and unload goods, but should then immediately leave the territory of Bulgaria. The duration of their movement through the territory of the country should not exceed 24 hours;

- All trucks transiting the country, irrespective of their nationality, are escorted by police. In addition, all foreign trucks entering Bulgaria are escorted by police to their unloading point.

In addition, according to an additional order published by the Ministry of Health, entry and transit of trucks registered and coming from the Islamic Republic of Iran are temporarily forbidden.

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 quarantine measures have been announced in the respective Greece border region.

Special check-points have been established at all entries and exits of the town of Bansko and of all regional centers: Blagoevgrad, Burgas, Varna, Veliko Tarnovo, Vidin, Vratsa, Gabrovo, Dobrich, Kardzhali, Kyustendil, Lovech, Montana, Pazardzhik, Pernik, Pleven, Plovdiv, Razgrad, Ruse, Silistra, Sliven, Smolyan, Sofia, Stara Zagora, Targovishte, Haskovo, Shumen and Yambol.

People can enter and exit these cities only for work, for health purposes, care of their relatives, necessity to obtain basic products and medicines. Truck drivers are allowed to pass through this check point but delays are possible.

Source: AEBTRI

In a new order, from 00:00 on 20 March 2020 until 17 April 2020, the Minister of Health has temporarily prohibited entry into the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria of all third country (non-EU) nationals through all border crossing points by all means of transport. Transport personnel engaged in the transport of goods are excluded from the scope of this order.

The prohibition of entry of EU nationals from Italy, Spain, France, UK, Germany, Netherlands and Switzerland and the respective arrangements for drivers coming from these countries, previously announced, remains in force.

Source: AEBTRI