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, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg.

The following categories are excluded from the prohibitions above:

- Bulgarian citizens, family members of Bulgarian citizens, persons with permanent, longterm residence status in the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria and members of their families;
- Medical professionals, medical scientists and social workers, if the purpose of their journey is linked to their professional work;
- Transport personnel engaged in the carriage of goods, aircraft crews engaged in commercial air transport and other transport personnel, as appropriate;
- 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;
- Persons travelling for humanitarian reasons;
- 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
- Frontier workers and seasonal farm workers.
Transit through the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria is allowed for:

- 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;

- 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;

- Citizens of Serbia, the Republic of Northern Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey in order to return to their country;

- 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:

- to transit through the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria

- to be in the cab of the truck;

- to drive the truck;

- to carry out loading and unloading activities; and

- 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:

- 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 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, Sliven, 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 561/2006 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:

- 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 break requirements by imposing a break of 45 minutes after 5 and a half hours; and
- 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