

## Special Annex to the 30<sup>th</sup> EMN Bulletin

### EU Member States & Norway: responses to COVID-19 in the migration and asylum area

January – March 2020

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM AND RESETTLEMENT	
(Member) State	Response to COVID-19
<b>Belgium</b>	On 17 March, in consultation with the Minister for Asylum and Migration, the Immigration Office <a href="#">decided</a> not to register any new applicants for international protection. These registrations normally take place at the arrival centre (located in the Petit-Château in Brussels), which therefore closed its doors to new arrivals. The aim was to prevent people from gathering in groups outside the center or in the waiting rooms.
	The Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons ( <a href="#">CGRS</a> ) is closed to the public and announced that personal interviews have been postponed until further notice. Personal interviews held through video conference with applicants in detention centers will take place. Questions about applications for international protection and personal interviews can be addressed to the Helpdesk Asylum Procedure by e-mail.
	The Federal Reception Agency (Fedasil) <a href="#">adapted</a> its instructions and <a href="#">preventive measures</a> for asylum seekers and staff working already staying in the reception facilities, as well as for the external visitors.
<b>Bulgaria</b>	The State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers (SAR) has introduced measures to reduce the COVID-19 pandemic. Information about the COVID-19 symptoms, spreading, and prevention) has been provided to the staff and the accommodated protection applicants. Information materials, translated into Arabic and Persian, have been provided to the accommodated foreigners. Disinfectants and protective equipment were distributed to the employees and the accommodated foreigners. The entry of external persons into the territorial units of SAR is forbidden. All events inside and outside the agency's territorial units have been suspended. The quarantine measures introduced by the Ministry of Health are strictly complied with. The health status of all foreigners accommodated in the centre is monitored every day.
	The conduction of all procedural actions on applications for international protection, which require the asylum seekers and/or their legal representatives, consultants, etc. to attend physically, have been suspended. Newly-arriving asylum seekers are registered, providing them with access to international protection proceedings. However, they are isolated for a period of 14 days and their health status is monitored during this period.
	SAR has notified the EU Member States of the temporary suspension of admitting foreigners from other Member States and, respectively, sending foreigners to other Member States under the Dublin Regulation.
	The State Agency for Refugees has temporarily suspended the acceptance of transfers to the country and, accordingly, the implementation of transfers under the Dublin Regulation.

<p><b>Cyprus</b></p>	<p>Following a decision of the Council of Ministers, dated 15 March 2020, asylum authorities have suspended their services, which are now limited to emergency cases, as of 17 March 2020. The examination of the pending applications and the issuance of decisions continue as normally, and, when necessary an interview through teleconference is conducted. The Civil Registry and Migration Department issues no new residence permits except in cases of extreme urgency, however the Asylum Service continues to issue decisions on the asylum applications.</p> <p>The offices of the Asylum Service are still open to the public for emergency cases. However, people are kindly requested to avoid visiting the public offices unless it is absolutely necessary.</p>
<p><b>Czech Republic</b></p>	<p>Limitations and postponement of all administrative operations in connection with applicants for international protection were implemented. Dublin transfers were stopped. At the Bělá-Jezová facility, which has so far been operating in dual regime as a foreigner detention facility and a residential facility, a specific temporary reception center with special regime was established. This facility will automatically accommodate all detained foreigners and new international protection applicants who will have to stay there for a period necessary to contain possible infections and to make appropriate medical tests. At the same time, a ban on visits to all facilities of the RFA MOI was introduced (exceptions, for example for legal counsellors, were possible).</p>
<p><b>Germany</b></p>	<p>The <a href="#">impact</a> of the pandemic in connection with the asylum procedure at the BAMF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepting asylum applications in writing in standard cases in order to comply with the need to avoid contact. A prerequisite for this revised procedure is that applicants must have registered in an initial reception facility of the Federal <i>Länder</i>, where a proof of arrival (Ankunftsnaehweis) is also issued.</li> <li>• Transfers to and from Germany under the Dublin Regulation are suspended until further notice.</li> <li>• Temporary suspension of asylum procedure counselling.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Estonia</b></p>	<p>All migration proceedings are temporarily <a href="#">suspended</a> as of 16 March. In the field of asylum, personal interviews have been suspended and the Dublin transfers have been postponed.</p>
<p><b>Spain</b></p>	<p>Border traffic: The Government issued an Order to restrict passenger access across Spain's external borders, specifically those located in ports and airports. The Order foresees "the closure, on a temporary basis, of the land posts enabled for the entry and exit of Spain through the cities of Ceuta and Melilla." <a href="#">Read analytically</a></p> <p>Service restrictions: The Asylum and Refugee Office (OAR) announced that access to the public is suspended until further notice. For this reason, there will be no interviews in the coming weeks. The procedures carried out by national police and the Social Work Unit of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration in the same building are also suspended. <a href="#">See announcement here</a></p> <p>On Dublin Regulation, transfers were suspended effectively since March 17, although the incoming and outgoing requests are being dealt with.</p> <p><b>Specific measures on second instance</b></p> <p>12 March Service restrictions: Presidents of the Criminal, Contentious and Social Chambers to inform the President of the National Court on suspension of trials as well as judicial actions, in line with instructions given by the Permanent Commission of the General Council of the Judiciary.</p>

On 14 March and in view of the public health emergency situation caused by COVID-19, the Government has adopted the measures declaring the state of alarm. These measures have a direct impact on the operation and management of the Asylum National Reception System. To facilitate the implementation of these measures, an Instruction has been issued to facilitate the management of the Reception System and adapt it to the current state of alarm, also responding to suggestions and proposals from the collaborating entities of the System.

All these measures are temporary and apply only during the validity of the state of alarm.

The most relevant measures are the following:

1. Temporary suspension of the obligation to have documentation in force to continue receiving the aid from the System, when the reason is the impossibility of renewing said documentation (Instruction of the GD Police 1/2020: The citizen service for the issue of documentation for foreigners is cancelled, except in duly justified urgency cases. Likewise, the previously booked appointment system is suspended and the appointments that were already reserved are cancelled).
2. Possibility of requesting access to the Reception System when it has not been possible to make the expression of will to request asylum, by application of the Instruction of the GD Police 1/2020.
3. Suspension of access to the 2nd phase, when there is still no housing solution found.
4. Stop the clock provision of the 15-day period for abandoning the reception system after notification of the denial of international protection or the end of the perception of benefits, regardless of the phase in which the person is.
6. Application of the principle of the “best interest of the minor” in the adoption of any decision in the framework of the management of the Reception System, when compliance with the requirements established by the Management Manual is not possible due to the suspension of deadlines for processing administrative procedures.
7. The suspension of all transfers of beneficiaries of the system to temporary reception places in any province, although there may always be extremely vulnerable circumstances that advise excepting this measure.
8. The person in charge of each subsidized entity within the framework of the International Protection Program is empowered to authorize the movement of the staff to attend to the basic needs of the people accommodated in the different devices.
9. The suspension of all group activities
10. The Entities must communicate a proposal for care based on minimum services, prioritizing that users have coverage of their basic needs, access to everything necessary to be able to stay safe at home, information and telephone advice, and other services that can be provided remotely.
11. The Entities must ensure that all the beneficiaries of the System they serve, receive and understand the measures adopted within the framework of the declaration of the State of Alarm, effectively, in a language they understand.
12. In the event that any reception device is in a situation of special pressure, the coordinator will contact the Secretary of State of Migrations (SGAH) to assess the actions to be carried out.
13. In exceptional and properly justified cases, the entity may directly incur expenses related to the needs covered by the financial aid especially those related to maintenance, basic needs and rent.

<b>Finland</b>	The Finnish Immigration Service cancelled all asylum interviews as of 16 March. Asylum seekers will be informed of a new appointment for an asylum interview as soon as it is possible to conduct them again.
<b>France</b>	The emergency <a href="#">law</a> to tackle the COVID-19 outbreak dated 23 March 2020 and its related decree dated 25 March 2020 provide a 90 days extension of the validity of asylum application attestations (proof of registration of the asylum request ) which expire between 16 March and 15 May 2020.
<b>Greece</b>	With the aim of preventing the negative impact deriving from the transmission of the COVID-19 and, therefore, to protect both employees and the public as regards the front office function in Migration Services, the reception of the public was suspended for one month, as of 12 March 2020, As necessary, there is a focus on remedying subsequent dysfunctions with regard to legal migration procedures and on ensuring the legality of stay for third-country nationals. The ministerial decision regarding the extension of residence titles of third country nationals, so as to ensure their legal status of residence, was issued on 30 March 2020.
<b>Croatia</b>	Access to the reception centres is temporarily restricted for persons who are not necessary for the normal functioning of the facilities. Translated leaflets with instructions from the Croatian Institute of Public Health were posted in the buildings. All necessary jobs related to asylum within the competence of the Ministry of Interior have to be performed. Dublin transfers to and from Croatia are suspended.
<b>Hungary</b>	The lodging of asylum applications is suspended since 28 February.
<b>Ireland</b>	On 27 March, the Department of Justice and Equality published an <a href="#">FAQ</a> document outlining information on the impact of COVID-19 on immigration and international protection services. On 13 March, all substantive international protection interviews were suspended and all <a href="#">scheduled interviews</a> up to and including 17 April were cancelled. Appeal hearings scheduled at the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT), who has published <a href="#">a FAQ document</a> for applicants, were suspended until 19 April. Applicants for international protection can continue to report to the International Protection Office (IPO) for initial processing in order to access follow-on services. Contingency arrangements have been put in place for residents of the accommodation system for protection applicants. A dedicated team has been put in place in the International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) unit of the Department of Justice and Equality, in collaboration with the HSE, to manage COVID-19 in accommodation centres. Actions include the provision of public health advice, including translations, to all accommodation centres and moving residents from emergency accommodation to dedicated accommodation centres. The Department of Justice and Equality, in collaboration with the HSE, will pilot an off-site self-isolation facility for centre residents suspected of having the virus, or who have the virus with mild symptoms.
<b>Italy</b>	Police offices remains open to public to lodge asylum applications. Reception facilities are required to take the necessary precautions and to implement the necessary hygienic and sanitary requirements. This include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• informing migrants, through cultural mediators and translated informative material, on the conduct that shall be adopted to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keeping a safe distance of at least two meters;</li> <li>• providing personal hygiene products;</li> <li>• cleaning and sanitizing the premises on a regular basis.</li> </ul> <p>If a person presents COVID-19 symptoms, he/she will be treated in public medical facilities. This is valid for all medical problems in general with the aim to safeguard individual and collective health, as the Immigration Law provides.</p> <p>Each organisation shall ensure that the personnel is equipped with protective gear while delivering their services in migration centres.</p> <p>Some initiatives connected to <b>humanitarian corridors</b> have been suspended due to the health emergency. For example, sixty-six people had to arrive in February from Niger on a humanitarian flight from Caritas Italiana and UNHCR but the arrival was blocked by a government decision.</p>
<b>Luxembourg</b>	Opening hours of the reception desks of several public administration institutions have been <a href="#">adapted</a> , including the ones that deal with migration and asylum issues.
<b>Malta</b>	<p>As of 13 March, as part of the preventive measures that have been put in place to minimise the spread of COVID-19, the Office of the Refugee Commissioner has been closed for face-to-face appointments and services until further notice. This includes the issuance/renewal of Asylum Seekers' Documents and protection cards/certificates, registration/lodging of new applications, and personal interviews.</p> <p>In order to mitigate any adverse effects on new asylum seekers, while the aforementioned measures are in place, the Office of the Refugee Commissioner is taking note of all new requests for international protection by capturing essential data related to the applicant (e.g. name, surname, nationality, date and place of birth). Applicants will be contacted for registration/lodging once COVID-19 related measures have been eased/lifted. In the meantime, their status as asylum seekers is being confirmed via email in case this is required by government entities.</p> <p>The status of 'old' asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in Malta is also being confirmed via email in case this is required by government entities.</p> <p>Moreover, the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers has adopted a number of important measures, namely, coordination of the COVID 19 response was centralised both with regards to decision-making, procurement and storage of Personal Protection Equipment; posters/flyers with informative material in English, Somali, Bangladeshi, French and Arabic on COVID 19 to be delivered in all centres; curfew in all centres was imposed to limit movement; security personnel guarding the gate in every centre is monitoring the access of every person coming in the centre including staff/ residents etc. by checking their temperature; an emergency response team was established; vulnerable staff were taken from the centre and allocated other work; and age assessments, psychosocial intervention sessions, and activity team sessions have been suspended until further notice, to name but a few.</p>
<b>The Netherlands</b>	Asylum procedure has been <a href="#">suspended</a> in any case up to and including 6 April. The application centre in Ter Apel has been closed and third-country nationals who arrive in the Netherlands to apply for asylum no longer have access to asylum procedures and

	<p>reception by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, as the asylum procedure has been suspended because of the COVID-19.</p> <p>Because the asylum procedure has been suspended, the registration of third-country nationals has been limited to what is necessary. After the registration, third-country nationals are taken to the <a href="#">emergency accommodation</a> location in Groningen where they are offered accommodation and necessary facilities.</p>
<b>Norway</b>	<p>Reception centres in Norway have increased preparedness measures, including extra housing spaces and temporary prolongation of operation contracts in order to prevent the government from moving asylum seekers unnecessarily between facilities. Due to risk of a COVID-19 outbreak in reception centres, efforts have been made to ensure social distancing as well as providing quarantine and isolation spaces if needed. Health authorities in Norway has advised UDI to reduce occupancy rates in reception centres.</p> <p>The National Police Immigration Service and the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration have started conducting registration interviews and asylum interviews through Skype. The first asylum interview using Skype was held on 1 April. The applicants are interviewed from the reception they live in, the interpreter is connected from another location and the UDI's employees are in the interview rooms in Oslo.</p> <p>Cases already referred for planned selection missions will be screened and prepared, thus travel for interview missions can be undertaken as soon as restrictions are lifted. Cases referred and accepted for the dossier quotas will be processed and cleared for departure awaiting reception capacity and viable departure options. A limited number of referred cases will be assessed to determine if some can be accepted on a dossier basis or via Skype interviews instead of mission interviews.</p> <p>The arrival of resettled refugees (quota refugees) is suspended. For the same reason, selection missions have also had to be postponed. The situation will be assessed again after Easter. In addition to travel restrictions, the receiving municipalities have reduced their resettlement capacity. Planned resettlement will resume as soon as travel restrictions are lifted and when municipalities regain their capacity to receive the refugees. When arrivals to Norway resume, we anticipate some sort of quarantine in an initial phase. Currently the quarantine for Norwegian nationals returning from abroad is 14 days, and similar restrictions are likely to apply for arriving refugees. However, we will have to return with further information on how this will be implemented once decisions have been made and we see how the current situation develops further.</p> <p>Norway is continuing to send and receive requests from EU+MS, though both categories are in lower numbers than normal. Most likely the lower numbers in received and sent requests are due to limited secondary movements between EU +MS as a result of the introduced stricter border controls and other measures. Norway also receives and conducts Dublin transfers, however also lower in numbers. The persons transferred to Norway are subject to 14 days of quarantine. Norway has suspended any incoming transfers from Member States that have suspended Dublin transfers. In practice, however, regarding the restrictions for airline traffic, few transfers are being implemented. The last implemented transfer from Norway was on the 19 March.</p>
<b>Portugal</b>	<p>Interviews of applicants for international protection, and transfers under the Dublin Regulation were suspended on 10 and 13 March, respectively. Following the declaration of state of emergency, Asylum and Refugee Office remains open only for the</p>

	presentation and registration of new requests for international protection and determined the suspension of legal deadlines in international protection processes.
<b>Sweden</b>	The Migration Agency has suspended all resettlement during March and April as a result of the travel restrictions and the strained situation in the municipalities. This suspension affects 400 quota refugees who will travel to Sweden at a later date.
	A maximum of 50 persons at a time may visit the Service Centres at the Migration Agency. All play areas for children are closed until further notice.
	Oral interviews in cases concerning asylum or residence permits was stopped from 30 March until 14 April. After that, oral interviews has in some cases been reinstated, but with precautions, such as that the applicant is at the facilities of the Swedish Migration Agency, but in another room than the official, and the interview is conducted over video.
<b>Slovenia</b>	Communication with various stakeholders is established via electronic systems (computers, telephones). The Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants (Office), with interpreters' assistance, performed preliminary interviews with the applicants accommodated in Asylum Centre and its branches to inform them about the COVID-19. Several information sessions also took place with the staff, including the doctor who presented in detail various protection measures in case of contagion. The Office also translated the notices of the National Health Institute and put them on visible spots where the residents can see them. The Office also provided a sufficient quantity of protection equipment and masks and organized more frequent and thorough cleaning as well as the disinfection of accommodation facilities and working environment of the staff. Integration counsellors informed in writing all the persons under international protection that the office hours are suspended, and communication is established via telephones and other electronic systems.
	Mandatory quarantine for all new arrivals is applied.
	The competent authority will take into account only urgent asylum applications. In this case, the application for international protection could be lodged only once the quarantine period has ended and the medical examination was conducted. All personal interviews are temporarily cancelled.
	No suspension nor restrictions regarding the Dublin procedure were applied. However, due to closed airport and no connections operating no transfer are executed/received. Slovenia is sending requests to other countries (number of requests sent is however lower due to less applications registered).
<b>The Slovak Republic</b>	Asylum seekers are provided by the face protection mask and the information leaflet "How to stay healthy". The asylum seekers are informed about the situation of the COVID-19 by the social workers and mediators (including interpreting of the information on the current situation, measures and restrictions in the Slovak Republic). The undertaking of the medical check-up at the reception centers precedes other procedures.
<b>UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND VULNERABLE GROUPS</b>	
<b>(Member) State</b>	<b>Response to COVID-19</b>

<b>Croatia</b>	Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy initiated the process of amending the Protocol on the Treatment of Unaccompanied Minor in the part relating to the initial health examination carried out during the identification procedure so that an unaccompanied minor should be examined by an epidemiologist.
<b>The Slovak Republic</b>	Unaccompanied minors with unknown travel history were placed in quarantine until further notice. Interpreting is carried out exclusively in the form of conference call. Schooling for UAMs is ensured under the same conditions as for Slovak citizens - in online form. Visits of relatives and associated persons in the reception facility are prohibited.
<b>INTEGRATION</b>	
<b>(Member) State</b>	<b>Response to COVID-19</b>
<b>Spain</b>	<p>Integration programs are being carried out except for those that require in-person actions, which have been suspended as long as the emergency situation is activated.</p> <p>The extraordinary temporary measures included in our national rule that declares Alarm Status (state of emergency) have a direct impact on the development and operation of the projects.</p> <p>The establishment of the remote work formula that each entity or federation considers most appropriate for the development of each project has been authorized, provided that the activities to be carried out allow it.</p> <p>Therefore the only activities suspended are: group activities and those that objectively cannot be carried out by telephone or telematic means, or under any other form of remote work.</p> <p>The rest of the programs that are not affected continue their ordinary course.</p>
<b>Portugal</b>	Order no. 3686-A/2020 of 25 March <a href="#">determined</a> that during the state of emergency, the services of the National Support Centers for the Integration of Migrants remain in operation, with face-to-face assistance.
<b>LEGAL MIGRATION</b>	
<b>(Member) State</b>	<b>Response to COVID-19</b>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<p>In reference to COVID-19, the following legislative provisions have been adopted in Bulgaria:</p> <p>Long-term and permanent residence permits for third-country nationals and documents issued for EU citizens and their family members which expire from 13 March 2020 to 31 October 2020 will be extended by six months. Residence permits are valid only in the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria and certify only the right of residence for the extended period.</p> <p>Third-country nationals, whose prolonged residence permit in the Republic of Bulgaria expires within the state of emergency, may apply for residence extension within 14 days after the cancellation of the state of emergency. In this case, when a third-country national applies for long-term or permanent residence, the term of the declared state of emergency shall not be considered for interrupted. Third-country nationals whose prolonged residence permit expires within the state of emergency may enter the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria without visa for the period of 14 days after the cancellation of the state of emergency.</p>



	Third-country nationals' right of residence in Bulgaria shall be withdrawn when it is established that a third-country national, who has been granted a long-term or permanent residence permit, has been absent from the territory of the EU Member States for a period of 12 consecutive months, except in cases of declared state of emergency.
<b>Cyprus</b>	<p>Following a decision of the Council of Ministers, dated 15 March 2020, migration authorities have suspended their services, which are now limited to emergency cases, as of 17 March 2020. Therefore, no applications for the issue or renewal of residence permits and/or entry permits are accepted for submission, except in cases of extreme urgency. Furthermore the issuance of residence permits and entry permits has also been suspended.</p> <p>Third-country nationals who possess residence permits or tourist visas, whose validity has expired within a reasonable period of time and cannot be renewed or extended or for the third-country nationals who cannot be repatriated, no measures will be taken against them. Furthermore, they will continue to have full access to their rights, including access to labour market and health system.</p>
<b>Czech Republic</b>	On 12 March, the government responded to the COVID -19 epidemic by declaring state of emergency for one month. All foreign nationals legally staying in Czechia are allowed to remain in the country until the state of emergency ends. The government crisis management measure that came into force on 14 March suspended the intake of applications for visas and residence permits at all embassies and granting of any new visas or residence permits.
<b>Germany</b>	<p>EU citizens and their families and persons who are not EU citizens who have a long-term right of residence in an EU Member State are allowed to travel through Germany to reach their home country or country of residence.</p> <p>The cross-border flow of goods and cross-border travel for work purposes or to carry out professional contractual services are not affected by entry restrictions, regardless of nationality (including for commuters). In such cases, the need to cross the border for work must be proved by carrying appropriate documentation (e.g. work contract, project contract/documents, permit for frontier workers).</p> <p>Seasonal/harvest workers are not <a href="#">allowed</a> to enter Germany within the current border control system. However, there are exceptions to this: in April and May, each month 40 000 seasonal workers are allowed to enter Germany under certain conditions to meet urgent agricultural needs.</p>
<b>Estonia</b>	<p>Foreigners who have a legal basis for staying in Estonia as of 12 March and whose return to their home country is restricted, can continue to stay in Estonia temporarily. These foreigners whose return to their country of residence is not restricted, have to leave Estonia before their basis of stay is expired. Applications for visas, extension of stay, residence permits, rights for stay. New applications are accepted but no decisions are taken with respect to them. In exceptional cases applications can be submitted in a service office of the PBGB and these applications will be processed. Applications for short-term employment can be submitted at the police self-service portal. PBGB will continue processing applications for short-term employment for foreigners who are currently staying in Estonia.</p> <p>With the <a href="#">decision</a> of the Government foreigners, who work in Estonia with a visa or visa-free will not be able to return to Estonia after 17 March. In case they're already in Estonia they have the <a href="#">possibility</a> to stay and work until their registration ends or leave as they wish.</p>

<p><b>Spain</b></p>	<p>The Royal Decree 463/2020 of 14 March established the state of alarm. Several subsequent 15-day periods have applied approved by Parliament. The current ongoing state of emergency is due to expire on May 10. On the basis of this royal decree, the administrative deadlines and limitation and expiry periods have been suspended.</p> <p>Foreign offices are not open in public, although online paperwork has been pushed. In this context, a number of measures have been carried out to expedite the granting of work authorisation to those third-country nationals, who are in a regular situation in our country, professionals from two key sectors during the crisis, health and agricultural. These measures have been as follows:</p> <p><b>Physicians</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An urgent streamlining and prioritization measure has been introduced in the processing of all files (initiated applications) of foreign nationals, with a professional profile of doctors.</li> <li>• A Protocol of Action has also been established between the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Universities (March) with the aim of streamlining the procedures for the approval of qualifications of those citizens with procedures of foreign affairs in progress.</li> </ul> <p><b>Agricultural sector</b></p> <p>The granting of authorizations in this sector has been streamlined. Labour authorizations for migrant workers whose work permits are concluded between the declaration of alarm status and 30 June 2020 have been automatically extended for work in the agricultural sector.</p> <p>An automatic right to work has been granted from the declaration of the alarm state until June 30, without immigration procedures, to those TCN, between 18 and 21 years, whose regular status in Spain did not entail the right to work (young people who come from mena situation, students)</p> <p>Alongside this and as a result of external border restrictions, the collective management programme for hiring at origin has been suspended. This program, once the alarm state is lifted and border restrictions disappear can be reactivated.</p>
<p><b>Finland</b></p>	<p>Finland <a href="#">suspended</a> the reception and processing of ordinary visa and residence permit applications in the missions.</p> <p>The government proposed to temporarily change the Alien’s Act and the Seasonal Workers Act. If adopted, the temporary legislative change would allow legally staying third-country nationals to work in important sectors (e.g. seasonal work in agriculture and other natural produce) in order to secure emergency supply and the functioning of the labour market by alleviating labour shortages in these sectors.</p> <p>Finland <a href="#">implemented</a> changes in the submission of residence permit applications and in the operation of service points of the Finnish Immigration Service due to COVID-19.</p>
<p><b>France</b></p>	<p>The emergency <a href="#">law</a> to tackle the COVID-19 outbreak dated 23 March 2020 and its related decrees of 25 March provide a 90 days extension of the validity for long-term visas, residence permits, temporary stay authorizations and receipts of residence permits which expire between 16 March and 15 May 2020 since all prefectures and related migration offices are closed.</p>
<p><b>Croatia</b></p>	<p>Regarding the procedures for issuing temporary/permanent residence on the territory of Republic of Croatia, applications lodged within the territory are still accepted and processed. Foreigners are informed not to come personally to the premises of police</p>

	<p>administrations / police stations, but to rather contact officials via e-mail or telephone to get further instructions/information. All employers are to submit applications for residence and work permits in line with relevant provisions of the Aliens Act, only by email.</p> <p>For registration of short-stay, persons are urged to use only the e-Visitor application, or to register via e-mail and submit a scanned travel document and other relevant documents. Visa application/issuance of visas until further notice is suspended, except for holders of diplomatic and official passports, as well as family members of Croatian nationals (spouse and children).</p>
<b>Ireland</b>	<p>The Department of Justice and Equality confirmed in a <a href="#">FAQ</a> that immigration services “do not require State authorities to gather or communicate information in relation to the immigration status of any person seeking access to essential healthcare or other public services related to COVID-19. As such immigration concerns of undocumented foreign nationals should not be construed as a barrier or “firewall” to seeking essential healthcare.”</p> <p>A change to immigration permission of current “Stamp 3” holders who respond to and qualify under the HSE’s “Be on Call for Ireland” campaign will be <a href="#">considered</a>. Non-EU “Stamp 2” holder students who lost their employment due to COVID-19 can apply to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection for the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment.</p> <p>On 20 March, the Dublin office for immigration registration closed and registration appointments in police stations for non-Dublin residents were discontinued. All registrations due for renewal between 20 March and 20 May are automatically <a href="#">renewed</a> for two months.</p> <p>On the same date, it was decided that visa applications would <a href="#">temporarily stop being accepted</a>, except in certain priority or emergency situations. Visa applications made online continue to be valid and will continue to be processed. However, a visa will not issue until travel restrictions are lifted.</p>
<b>Italy</b>	<p>In line with Article 9 of the Decree-Law No 9 of 2 March 2020 “Emergency support measures for families, workers and enterprises related to the epidemiological emergency by COVID-19”, several services for foreigners are suspended for 30 days from the entry into force of the Decree. Specifically, the suspension includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the deadlines for the conclusion of the administrative procedures relating to the granting of authorisations, including the one for residence;</li> <li>- the deadlines for the submission of the application for the first issue and renewal of the residence permit provided for, respectively, in eight working days from the entry of the alien into the territory of the State and in at least sixty days before the expiration or sixty days after the expiration of the permit.</li> </ul>
	<p>In line with Article 103(2) of Decree-Law No 18 of 17 March 2020 “Measures to strengthen the National Health Service and provide economic support for families, workers and businesses related to the epidemiological emergency by COVID-19” (the so-called “Recover Italy” decree), all certificates, attestations, permits, concessions, authorizations and licensing acts, expiring between 31 January and 15 April 2020, shall remain valid until June 15, 2020. This includes residence permits for migrants.</p> <p>Visa Application Centres in China run by ESP are temporarily closed. The Italian diplomatic and consular posts in the country only accept a limited number of visa applications for special and urgent cases, i.e. exclusively for family reunification with EU citizens, humanitarian reasons and official purposes</p>

<b>Lithuania</b>	Several NGOs have taken an initiative to provide key information on COVID-19 to migrants and ethnic minorities living in Lithuania in <a href="#">English</a> , <a href="#">Russian</a> , <a href="#">Arabic</a> , and <a href="#">Dari</a> .
<b>Luxembourg</b>	On 18 March 2020, the grand-ducal regulation <a href="#">came into force</a> , introducing a series of measures to combat Covid-19. Among others, it introduces derogations into laws concerning migration and asylum, for example, the period of validity for visas, temporary residence permits, residence cards and residence permits, which expire after 1 March 2020, is extended for the duration of the state of crisis.
<b>Latvia</b>	Foreigners residing in Latvia whose legal residence period has expired after 13 March may reside during <a href="#">the state of emergency</a> without obtaining a new document and retaining the right to employment established by the residence permit or visa.
<b>Malta</b>	<p>The Expatriates Unit and the Central Visa Unit is not accepting new residence and work permit applications from third-country nationals unless they are highly skilled. The customer care desk will also not be meeting the public but will be providing a service via email and telephone. The renewal of employment-related residence permits must be carried out online, save for exceptional circumstances. Residence and work permits of all third-country workers in the health and care sectors are being automatically extended for three months.</p> <p>Applicants requesting to extend their visas or apply for a residence permit for purposes other than employment must request a confirmation via email.</p>
<b>The Netherlands</b>	<p>The <a href="#">IND desks</a> are only open for urgent matters up to and including 6 April</p> <p>Clients can only make an appointment at an IND desk to collect their first legal residence document. Clients who are staying in the Netherlands on a short-stay visa and cannot leave the country can apply for an extension by telephone.</p>
<b>Norway</b>	<p>Regulations concerning rejection and other aspects relating to foreign nationals without a residence permit has been introduced. The regulations stipulate that foreign nationals without a residence permit may be rejected for reasons of public health, due to outbreaks of the hazardous and widely infectious disease COVID-19. This means that all foreign nationals without a residence permit, who are not covered by any of the exemptions foreseen by the regulation, will be rejected without further consideration of the risk of infection posed by each individual. Government website <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>The police immigration office has been closed. If you had booked an appointment with the police before 14 April regarding an application for residency, citizenship or EEA registration, your appointment has regrettably been cancelled. For the moment, we do not know when the service can re-open, or when you can make a new appointment.</p>
<b>Poland</b>	<p>On 31 March 31, the Act providing, inter alia, special solutions for foreigners in Poland entered into force. The <a href="#">regulations</a> will allow people who want to pursue their current purpose of stay or cannot leave Poland due to the spread of the COVID-19 to stay legally in the country. Until the end of the 30th day following the date of cancellation of the last condition state (epidemic emergency status or epidemic status), the following will be extended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- legal stay of foreigners on the basis of national visas and temporary residence permits that would end during the period of epidemic emergency or epidemic status,</li> <li>- deadline for submitting applications for legalization of the stay,</li> <li>- validity of work permits already issued, seasonal work permits and declarations of entrustment of work to a foreigner.</li> </ul>

	<p>The introduction of the state of epidemic emergency in Poland, followed by the state of epidemic, does not affect in any way the residence rights of citizens of European Union Member States, countries of the European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA), the Swiss Confederation and family members staying with them. These rights are not dependent on having any permits or documents.</p> <p>All foreigners who after the suspension of international flights had been remaining outside the territory of Poland and who are spouses of Polish citizens, children of Polish citizens, people with a Pole's Card, persons with the right of permanent or temporary residence in the Republic of Poland or a work permit could have benefited from <a href="#">Lot do domu</a> action – the operation carried with the support of Polish government for Polish citizens and foreigners who lead their life in Poland.</p>
<b>Portugal</b>	<p>All documents expired since 24 February are valid until 30 June according to Decree-Law 10-A/2020, issued in 13 March 2020. The Immigration and Borders Service (SEF) has put in place, since 30 March, a management plan for appointments and schedules which determines that, on the date of the declaration of the State of National Emergency (18 March), all foreign citizens with pending applications in the Service are in a situation of regular residence in national territory.</p> <p>This plan also established the need to close all SEF branches, starting on 30 March, considering the need to reduce the risks to public health associated with care, both for SEF staff and applicants.</p> <p>SEF continues to provide in-person assistance only for requests considered urgent. That is, citizens who need to travel or who prove the urgent and urgent need to leave the national territory, for imponderable and unavoidable reasons and citizens whose documents have been stolen or lost.</p> <p>The Service will also proceed with the rescheduling of appointments, which were scheduled until 27 March, starting next 1 July, in chronological order, thus guaranteeing equal treatment.</p> <p>More detailed information is available in English at <a href="https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/covid-19/">https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/covid-19/</a>.</p>
<b>Sweden</b>	<p>In view of the recommendations by the Public Health Agency, the Swedish Migration Agency has decided that persons contact the Swedish Migration Agency primarily by email, telephone or through e-services. The opening hours for telephone contact with the agency's contact centre have changed. Meanwhile the agency is adding more resources to staff telephones and email. Some of the Swedish Migration Agency's offices have changed their opening hours.</p> <p>The Swedish Migration Agency has decided that visa applications should, as a rule, be rejected as a result of the Government's ordinance to introduce a temporary entry ban to Sweden. The decision applies to third-country nationals. The decision will remain in effect as long as the Government's decision on a temporary entry ban remains in effect or until further notice. In some exceptional cases, people may still be granted a visa.</p>
<b>The Slovak Republic</b>	<p>Only renewal of a temporary residence permit, granting of a permanent residence for unlimited period and preapproved applications on the ground of specific consideration are currently processed.</p>
<b>SCHENGEN, BORDERS &amp; MANAGEMENT OF THE EU EXTERNAL BORDERS</b>	
<b>(Member) State</b>	<b>Response to COVID-19</b>
<b>Austria</b>	<p>In March 2020, Austria reintroduced temporary <a href="#">border controls</a> and <a href="#">restrictions</a>. Thus, persons entering Austria are required to present a medical certificate proofing that they were tested negative for COVID-19. These restrictions had an immediate impact on the Austrian economy, in particular the <a href="#">agriculture sector</a>, which is dependent on migrant workers. Furthermore, the number of</p>

	asylum applications significantly decreased since asylum seekers are denied <a href="#">entry</a> into Austria without the above-mentioned medical certificate.
<b>Belgium</b>	Belgium <a href="#">decided</a> to temporary reintroduce Schengen border controls at its borders.
<b>Cyprus</b>	As of 15 March, entry into Cyprus is banned, except for Cypriot citizens, legal residents, EU citizens and third-country nationals that work or study in Cyprus, designated diplomatic personnel and special cases. Furthermore, entry into Cyprus will only be granted after the submission of a medical certificate that they have been tested for COVID-19 by certified medical centres from their country of origin.
<b>Czech Republic</b>	On 16 March, border controls were reintroduced and a ban was put on entry of foreign nationals into the territory of the Czech Republic except for those who had already had temporary residence over 90 days or permanent residence or who had been employed in the Czech Republic as cross-border workers (so-called pendlers).
<b>Germany</b>	Germany has ordered travel restrictions for entries from outside the Schengen area and temporary checks at the internal borders with France, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Denmark with effect as of 16 – 17 March 2020. Travelers who are not German citizens, may enter Germany only if they have an urgent reason (such as medical treatment or death of a family member) to do so and should provide suitable proof. Travel for tourist purposes by third-country nationals with a Schengen visa is no longer permitted.
<b>Estonia</b>	<p>As of 12 March, the Government has <a href="#">declared</a> an emergency situation in Estonia. As of 17 March, Estonia temporarily <a href="#">reintroduced</a> border controls on the whole border in order to contain the spread of the COVID-19. According to the Government order Temporary restriction on crossing the state border due to the spread of the coronavirus causing the COVID-19 disease crossing of the state border for the purpose of entering Estonia is allowed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for persons who have Estonian citizenship, Estonian residence permit or right of residence or whose permanent place of residence according to the population register is in Estonia.</li> <li>• for foreigners who are asymptomatic and who are employees of diplomatic missions or consular posts of foreign states in Estonia or their family members or foreigners arriving in Estonia in the framework of international military cooperation.</li> <li>• for foreigners who are asymptomatic and who are directly involved in transporting goods and raw products, including loading of goods or raw products. [entry into force 26.03.2020]</li> <li>• for foreigners who are asymptomatic and who are providing health services or other services necessary for responding to an emergency.</li> <li>• for foreigners who are asymptomatic and who are directly involved in international carriage of goods and passengers, including a crew member and a ship's crew member servicing an international means of transport and a person performing repairs or warranty or maintenance work on such a means of transport. [entry into force 26.03.2020]</li> <li>• for foreigners who are asymptomatic and who are servicing travel groups and who are directly involved in the provision of passenger transport services. [entry into force 26.03.2020]</li> <li>• for foreigners who are asymptomatic and whose purpose for arriving in Estonia is related to ensuring the continuity of a vital service. [entry into force 26.03.2020]</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for foreigners who are asymptomatic and whose arrival in Estonia is related to the maintenance or repair of or warranty or information and communication technology work on equipment of a company operating in Estonia if this is necessary for ensuring the operation of the company. [entry into force 26.03.2020]</li> <li>• allowed for foreigners who are asymptomatic and whose border crossing serves the purpose of going to work or from work to their place of residence, moving between the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Latvia. (entry into force 26.03.2020) By way of an exception, the Police and Border Guard Board may allow the state border to be crossed for the purpose of entering Estonia by a foreigner:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) who is asymptomatic and whose direct blood relative in the ascending or descending line or spouse is an Estonian citizen or a person holding an Estonian residence permit or right of residence;</li> <li>2) who is asymptomatic and whose entry in the country is justified under a special request.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p>As of 17 March, Estonia temporarily <a href="#">suspended</a> the issuing of Schengen visas and long-stay visas. During the emergency situation, previously issued and valid visas cannot be used to enter Estonia. In exceptional circumstances and on humanitarian grounds it is possible to apply for a visa and to enter Estonia with an issued visa.</p> <p>Government has given a <a href="#">permission</a> to include the Defence League in defending the external borders due to the emergency situation in the country.</p>
<p><b>Spain</b></p>	<p>Transport operators will reduce their offer by at least 50% and limit the number of persons in every trip. No restrictions for the carriage of goods The authorities may temporarily requisition all kinds of goods necessary for the fulfilment of the purposes of the state of alarm. Temporary restriction of non-essential travel from third countries into the Spanish territory is also applied. The Government decided to restrict passenger access through Spain's external borders, specifically those located in ports and airports. Access will only be allowed through these border points, in addition to the Spanish and residents in Spain, to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Residents of the European Union or Schengen Associated States, who go directly to their place of residence.</li> <li>b) Holders of a long-term visa issued by a Member State or Schengen Associated State who apply to it.</li> <li>c) Cross-border workers.</li> <li>d) Healthcare or elderly care professionals who go to carry out their work activity.</li> <li>e) Personnel dedicated to the transport of goods, in the exercise of their work activity and the flight personnel necessary to carry out commercial air transport activities.</li> <li>f) Diplomatic, consular, international organizations, military personnel and members of humanitarian organizations, in the exercise of their functions.</li> <li>g) People traveling for imperative family reasons duly accredited.</li> <li>h) Persons who document documentary reasons of force majeure or situation of need, or whose entry is permitted for humanitarian reasons</li> </ol> <p>Specific exceptions on land borders with Andorra and at the crossing checkpoint with Gibraltar. Temporary closure of Ceuta and Melilla's land border crossing points, both entry and exit.</p>

	<p>Introduction of border controls at the land borders.</p> <p>The entry into national territory through the land borders will only be allowed to the following individuals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Spanish nationals;</li> <li>2. Residents in Spain;</li> <li>3. Cross-border workers;</li> <li>4. In case of force majeure, duly accredited with documentary evidence.</li> </ol> <p>Foreign personal accredited as a member of diplomatic missions, consular offices and international organizations located in Spain, are exempted from these measures in their displacements, provided these are displacements linked to the performance of official duties.</p> <p>Prolongation of border controls at Spanish internal land borders</p> <p>The following categories of persons are exempted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spanish citizens</li> <li>• Residents in Spain</li> <li>• Residents in other Member States or Schengen Associated Countries going to their place of residence</li> <li>• Frontier workers</li> <li>• Healthcare and elderly care professionals going to their work</li> <li>• Those able to prove with documents being subject to force majeure or state of necessity</li> <li>• Staff of diplomatic missions, consular offices and international organizations seated in Spain, accredited as such and travelling in the scope of their official mission.</li> <li>• Transport of goods</li> </ul>
<b>Finland</b>	Finland <a href="#">restricted</a> cross-border traffic - retired border guards and police officers may be called back to work.
<b>France</b>	On 17 March 2020, France <a href="#">decided</a> to limit all (international) trips and establish controls at its external and internal borders. Thus, all non-EU and non-Schengen nationals cannot enter France and the EU, until 15 April 2020 unless they have a compelling reason to enter or legally reside in France and hold a valid French residence permit.
<b>Croatia</b>	The Decision on the temporary ban on crossing the state border at the border crossings the Republic of Croatia in order to protect the population of the Republic of Croatia from COVID-19 has been in place since 19 March 2020 and shall be implemented for 30 days. Persons are temporarily prohibited from or restricted in crossing the state border at all border crossings of the Republic of Croatia, with certain exceptions. Transit works and truck carriers transiting through Republic of Croatia have organised escorts.
<b>Hungary</b>	Hungary reintroduced border controls on its internal borders. Entry of non-Hungarian nationals to the country's territory is limited. Hungary also suspended visa issuance worldwide for an indefinite period with the exception of travel for diplomatic purposes.
<b>Italy</b>	The first measure - at the end of January - was the closure of direct flights with China.



	<p>Later the core measures regarded the schools and non-essential services' lockdown, the rules the citizens and the employers were asked to follow for limiting the virus spread. Among those, the obligation to stay at home and to support smart working procedures. The version of the Decree-Law published in G.U. on 25 March 2020 on restrictions for COVID-19 provides for "<i>restrictions or prohibitions on expulsion and entry into municipal, provincial or regional territories, as well as into national territory</i>". The decree provides restriction of the movement of persons, including by provide limitations on the possibility of moving away from one's own residence, domicile or residence if not for individual travel limited in time and space or motivated by work needs, situations of need or urgency, health or other specific reasons.</p> <p>For the entire period of the sanitary emergency deriving from the diffusion of virus COVID-19, the Italian ports do not assure the necessary requirements for the classification and definition of Place of Safety ("safe place"), in accordance with the provisions of the Hamburg Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, for cases of rescue carried out by naval units flying a foreign flag outside the Italian SAR area.</p>
<b>Lithuania</b>	<p>The Government decided to <a href="#">declare quarantine</a> on the entire territory of the Republic of Lithuania effective from 16 March 2020 until 13 April 2020. Temporary controls at the EU's internal borders were <a href="#">introduced</a> during this period. Entry of foreigners is not allowed with some exceptions, and Lithuanian citizens shall not be allowed to leave. Transit of persons returning to their country of residence through the territory of Lithuania will be allowed until the end of the quarantine in formed groups.</p>
<b>Latvia</b>	<p>As of 17 March, the movement through border crossing points at the external border of the EU, and through the border crossing points for local border traffic is prohibited, except for carriage of goods.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>From 30 March to 14 April, the National Armed Forces, and the National Guard, provides support to the State Border Guard in order to limit the spread of Covid-19.</p>
<b>Norway</b>	<p>The Norwegian government has temporarily reintroduced border control at Norway's internal Schengen border. Several border-crossing points will now perform border checks. A prolongation of the border control is valid for 20 days from 26 March 2020. The Government has closed the border to foreign nationals who does not have a residence permit in Norway. They will be turned away at the border under provisions of a Norwegian law relating to the control of communicable diseases. Temporary entry and exit controls will also be introduced at the internal Schengen border.</p>
<b>Poland</b>	<p>As of 15 March, and until further notice, border control at the internal border has been temporarily <a href="#">re-established</a>. The Polish border with Germany, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia can only be crossed at designated places.</p> <p>Both on the internal border and on the external border (border crossing with Belarus, Russia and Ukraine) restrictions are applied for foreigners on entry to Poland. All international flights have been suspended since 15 March until further notice.</p> <p>People crossing the Polish border and directed to a mandatory 14-day quarantine do not need to fill in location cards. Their data are entered by Border Guard officers directly into the database during the inspection.</p> <p>As a <a href="#">rule</a>, a mandatory 14-day home quarantine must be given to all persons coming to Poland. During the border check, each traveller is obliged to provide the Border Guard officer with the address at which he will quarantine. It can be a place of collective quarantine if, for example, the traveller is not able to serve it in the place of residence. This information is entered directly into the database and automatically forwarded to the appropriate services that will verify that the quarantine obligation is being fulfilled.</p>

<b>Portugal</b>	Documentary control of people at the borders in the context of the epidemic situation caused by COVID-19 was <a href="#">established</a> . The <a href="#">Order no. 3298/C/2020</a> determines the prohibition of disembarkation and licenses for the land of passengers and crew of cruise ships in national ports in the context of the COVID-19.
<b>The Slovak Republic</b>	As of 13 March, police controls including medical check-ups are carried out at all internal borders with neighboring countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland) until further notice to prevent the spread of COVID-19. All international airports are closed for passengers and international rail and bus transport have also been suspended. TCNs are refused to enter (apart from those who have authorization to stay in the territory of the Slovak Republic or are holders of the local border traffic permit). EU citizens are not allowed to enter except of those with an authorized stay.
<b>IRREGULAR MIGRATION &amp; RETURN</b>	
<b>(Member) State</b>	<b>Response to COVID-19</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	Fedasil temporarily suspended <a href="#">voluntary returns</a> and closed its five return desks in Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, Charleroi and Liège until further notice. The number of forced returns has dropped significantly. Removal became difficult because of COVID-19 measures. As a result, about 300 foreigners – almost half of the detainees – were released from detention centres (excluding residents who have committed crimes). Only lawyers are still allowed to visit residents.
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<p>On a national level, general anti-epidemic measures were determined by orders of the Minister of Health. There are rooms in the specialised homes for temporary accommodation of foreigners, where the newly arrived foreigners are accommodated. They are isolated in quarantine by all other foreigners for the period of 14 days in order to prevent a possible spread of the infection. When the quarantine period expires and there are no symptoms of Covid-19, foreigners are moved to the common rooms where the other foreigners are accommodated.</p> <p>When there is a newly accommodated foreigner, a primary medical examination is performed, following a medical protocol and completing a special form. The foreigners that are in quarantine shall not be mixed with the other accommodated foreigners during meals and walks. There is a separate medical office for all newly arrived foreigners. External visits are prohibited during the quarantine. Currently foreigners may meet with lawyers but contacts may be limited, if the epidemiological situation becomes more complicated.</p> <p>If there are symptoms of Covid-19, the doctor, who has examined the foreigner, must notify the responsible officers in the Medical Institute of the Ministry of Interior and reports the case by phone. The officer evaluates the reported symptoms and makes an assessment to send a specialised transport to take the foreigner to a hospital for a test.</p> <p>Until now there have been no cases of infected detained migrants with Covid-19 in the specialised homes for temporary accommodation of foreigners. In case there are such cases, the foreigners shall be treated in a hospital.</p> <p>The execution of return decisions and the voluntary return of third-country nationals are severely hampered by the worldwide epidemic situation for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frontex ceased all joint return operations.</li> <li>• Civil aviation cancelled flights to many destinations</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diplomatic missions of most countries in the Republic of Bulgaria have stopped regular work, which is why foreigners with imposed compulsory administrative measures or who wish to voluntarily return to their country cannot be provided with travel documents.</li> </ul>
<b>Cyprus</b>	Although there is no official suspension of returns, since 21 March, no returns can be executed, due to the ban of all passenger flights in and out of the island.
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Due to COVID-19, the Ministry of Interior uses only VCI to do interviews with detained TCNs. All forced returns that require police escorts for travel has been suspended. Third-country nationals who are assessed to be able to return to their country of origin without a police escort shall be still forcibly or voluntarily returned. Departure from the Czech Republic depends on available flights and other conditions in countries of transit.
<b>Estonia</b>	The execution of return decisions is done on a case by case basis.
<b>Spain</b>	Voluntary return programs are still running but with many difficulties due to the ban of many international flights. However, voluntary return to those countries that still allow them, returns are being made. The rest of the organizational activities of entities managing voluntary returns are being carried out by telephone or by any other form of remote work.
<b>Greece</b>	Greece continues returns to the degree that conditions regarding international aviation and transfers allow so, taking into account any special factors of each case. The same approach is followed by IOM for voluntary returns.
	As of mid-March, readmission operations to Turkey and return of Turkish citizens are suspended, due to Notice of the Turkish Authorities and until further information reaches us from their side.
	Transport of detainees have been restrained and limited to absolute necessary cases.
	The entrance in the detention centres have been prohibited to all visitors and organisations, except for staff members.
<b>Germany</b>	Due to COVID-19, voluntary returns via the REAG/GARP programme cannot take place until further notice – initially until May 31, 2020.
<b>Croatia</b>	Scheduled returns are suspended. Due to the current situation arising, a certain number of aliens on short-term stay cannot leave the Republic of Croatia within the time limit prescribed by the Aliens Act, for objective reasons. Accordingly, such aliens will not be subject to any measures prescribed by the Aliens Act.
<b>Ireland</b>	Applications for voluntary return are not currently being processed by the Department of Justice and Equality. Existing applications will be kept open and new applicants can express an intent to avail of voluntary return which will be recorded on the Department of Justice and Equality systems. Full applications can be made at a later stage. Individuals can also apply to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for assisted voluntary return and IOM will handle applications as best they can in the current circumstances, an <a href="#">FAQ document</a> released by the Department of Justice and Equality explains.
<b>Italy</b>	Despite the health emergency Italy has registred the <b>entry into national territory of asylum seekers that</b> follows illegal channels, over legal restrictions have no effect. In fact, 2.794 migrants arrived on the Italian coast from 1 January 2020 until 30 March (see <a href="#">statistical data</a> ), even through small autonomous landings. For all migrants, the health protocol for COVID-19 is applied: health control and quarantine for 14 days.

	<p>Detention centres for repatriation are required to take the necessary precautions and to implement the necessary hygienic and sanitary requirements. This include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• informing migrants, through cultural mediators and translated informative material, on the conduct that shall be adopted to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19;</li> <li>• keeping a safe distance of at least two metres;</li> <li>• providing personal hygiene products;</li> <li>• cleaning and sanitizing the premises on a regular basis.</li> </ul> <p>If a person presents COVID-19 symptoms, he/she will be treated in public medical facilities. This is valid for all medical problems in general with the aim to safeguard individual and collective health, as the Immigration Law provides.</p> <p>All detention centres shall ensure that the personnel is equipped with protective gear while delivering their services.</p>
<b>Lithuania</b>	<p>Foreigners, whose period of legal residence expired during the declared quarantine and who were unable to depart from Lithuania in due time through no fault of their own, will not be subject to a return decision, as well as, administrative liability for irregular stay. Foreigners to whom the decision regarding the return has been adopted, but the period for the voluntary departure expired during the quarantine, may stay in Lithuania during the quarantine. However, they will be <a href="#">required</a> to depart after the end of the quarantine within the established period of toleration.</p>
<b>Luxembourg</b>	<p>On 26 March 2020, the grand-ducal regulation <a href="#">came into force</a>, suspending time limits in jurisdictional matters before the judicial, administrative, military and constitutional courts during the state of crisis – that is, until 24 June 2020, at the most. In the area of migration and asylum, all time limits before the administrative courts are suspended with the exception of those relating to detention disputes.</p>
<b>Malta</b>	<p>With regard to return, kindly note that since all travel to Malta has been suspended as from 21 March, returns have been automatically affected. Malta has suspended escorted forced returns; however subject to the availability of flights, those who are assessed to be able to return to their country of origin or other safe third country will still be forcibly returned. Such situation is being continuously monitored by the pertinent Maltese authorities and appropriate measures will be taken in line with the developing circumstances.</p>
<b>Norway</b>	<p>Escorted return operations are suspended. Other types of return remain but are limited due to available flights and travel restrictions in third countries. IOM voluntary returns are still available, also limited due to available flights and travel restrictions in third countries. Return and legal counselling in reception centres has ceased.</p> <p>The National Police Immigration Service (PU, in Norwegian) has released more than ten people from their National Police Immigration Detention Centre for reasons relating to the current COVID-19 outbreak. The foreigners who were released had little or no criminal history, and cannot be returned immediately, partly because of a limited number of flights as well as the entry restrictions in different countries.</p>
<b>Poland</b>	<p>Voluntary returns will be postponed.</p>
<b>Sweden</b>	<p>The return operations are not yet suspended in Sweden. There are, however, few possibilities to carry out any returns. More and more countries have closed their borders and if that is not the case, there is the disruption of avian transport. The situation is also</p>

	changing rapidly which flights that are available or which countries that are still open. The Swedish Police Authority responsible for the forced returns are making efforts to find alternatives, such as chartered aircraft. An assessment is always done to consider the risk of spreading COVID 19. The collaboration between the different authorities involved in return is considered crucial and dialogue takes place regularly for an update of the situation.
	To protect detainees and the agency's employees, the possibility of visits to the detention centres is limited.
<b>The Slovak Republic</b>	As of 16 March, implementation of the assisted voluntary returns as well as forced returns has been suspended until further notice.

<b>USEFUL WEBSITES</b>	
<b>(Member) State</b>	<b>Response to COVID-19</b>
<b>Cyprus</b>	All information about COVID-19 can be found in the dedicated website of Press and Information Office <a href="https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/en/">https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/en/</a> and of Cyprus' Presidency <a href="https://www.covid19.cy/">https://www.covid19.cy/</a>
<b>France</b>	The Ministry of the Interior provides updated information regarding the COVID-19: <a href="https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/">https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/</a> <a href="https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Immigration/Informations-Coronavirus-a-destination-des-etrangers-Questions-Reponses">https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Immigration/Informations-Coronavirus-a-destination-des-etrangers-Questions-Reponses</a> The Interministerial Delegation for the Reception and Integration of Refugees (DiAir) provides several information to support refugees and vulnerable persons during the COVID-19 crisis : <a href="https://accueil-integration-refugies.fr/">https://accueil-integration-refugies.fr/</a> The dedicated website for attracting talents to France 'Welcome to France' provides several information regarding entry and stay of foreign talents in France and government measures to assist companies and workers impacted by Covid 19: <a href="https://www.welcometofrance.com/en/covid-19-%3A-entry-and-stay-of-foreign-talents-in-france">https://www.welcometofrance.com/en/covid-19-%3A-entry-and-stay-of-foreign-talents-in-france</a>
<b>Italy</b>	The Ministry of Health with UNHCR and ARCI has opened a portal in 14 languages to inform refugees, asylum seekers and migrants living in Italy about the epidemiological emergency Covid-19. The material is available in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Smartish, Bengali, Chinese, Farsi, Russian, Somali, Urdu, Albanian, Tiger, as well as in Italian. See <a href="https://coronavirus.jumamap.com/en/home/">https://coronavirus.jumamap.com/en/home/</a>
<b>Sweden</b>	All information concerning the Swedish Migration Agency and the COVID-19 can be found on a dedicated webpage accessible from the webpage of the Swedish Migration Agency. Please see: <a href="https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Coronavirus.html">https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Coronavirus.html</a>

**The Slovak  
Republic**

The [web page](#) of the IOM Migration Information Centre provides regularly updated information on special measures adopted in connection to the spread of COVID-19.