



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

2020-077 | March 19, 2020

European Union - Border Security Guidelines to Protect Health, Foster Economic Continuity

The European Commission (EC) presented guidelines¹ to the EU member states on management of borders in the context of the COVID-19 emergency. The EC President Ursula von der Leyen stressed it is important that the EU member states coordinate their efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and help ensure the continued movement of people and free circulations of goods in the EU market.

The guidelines' objective is to protect the health of people, but it is not to stop free movement within the EU in order to achieve that objective. The EU member states should facilitate the safe crossing of frontier workers and not disrupt supply chains, especially the free circulation of essential goods, such as food, livestock, and vital medical and protective equipment and supplies.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The EC recommended postponing or canceling all non-essential travels in the EU, for example leisure trips, non-urgent business meetings, and similar. While acting to protect public health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, EU member states still need to preserve the integrity of the internal market.

Many member states have already (re)introduced internal border controls which prolong travel time for people crossing the EU's internal borders. The guidelines reflect the measures already imposed by some countries and if you or your employees are crossing the border, the guidelines can prepare you for what you can expect at a border control.

Guidelines – Select Highlights

Health-Related Recommended Measures for People Crossing EU Borders

1. **All persons, EU and non-EU nationals, who enter the Schengen Area are subject to systematic checks at border crossing points.**
2. **Entry screening measures:** assessing the presence of symptoms of arriving travelers; completion of the Public Passenger Locator Form on board an aircraft, a ferry, a train, or a bus arriving from another country; completion of the Maritime Declaration of Health for all arriving ships.
3. **Health screenings:** in order to avoid waiting times and overlaps, health screenings should be conducted on one side of the border when it is an internal EU border. A member state guarding an external EU border should implement appropriate health screening both on the entry and exit of travelers. Health screenings include assessing the presence of symptoms for COVID-19 and possible exposure to the virus, and the appropriate handling of people who pose a public health risk, for example, isolation, additional tests, and health care.
4. **Frontier workers:** the EU member states should facilitate crossings of frontier workers to help ensure continued professional activity and business operations.
5. **Refusal of entry:** the EU member states can refuse entry to nonresident third-country nationals if they present symptoms or have been exposed to a risk of infection and are considered to be a threat to public health. Alternatively, measures such as isolation or quarantine may be applied. A refusal of entry must be proportionate and non-discriminatory.
6. **Not refusal of entry:** An EU member state cannot refuse entry to EU nationals and third country nationals who reside on its territory. However, that member state can take appropriate measures, for example, self-isolation.
7. **Information:** Informational material should be distributed to all travelers.

Measures for Goods and Services

1. **Circulation of goods:** the EU member states should preserve the free circulation of all goods and guarantee the supply chain of products. Priority lanes (green lanes) for freight transport should be introduced and weekend bans should be waived.
2. **No additional certification should be imposed on goods legally circulating within the EU single market.**
3. **Professional travel:** the EU member states should facilitate safe movement for transport workers, including truck and train drivers, pilots, and air-crew.

KPMG NOTE

You should follow all recommended and imposed national guidelines in order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is important that you take the necessary measures to protect yourself and those people in your general vicinity when you cross borders.

You can anticipate longer travel times and delays when you cross EU borders. The overview of the EU Commission's guidelines can provide information about what you can expect and how to prepare yourself so that the border crossings proceed as smoothly and quickly as possible.

FOOTNOTE:

1 For the full guidelines, see: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20200316_covid-19-guidelines-for-border-management.pdf.

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Contact us

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