



# GMS Flash Alert

## Immigration Edition

2020-155 | April 6, 2020

# Belgium - COVID-19 and Impact on Frontier Workers

The Belgian government has ordered the closure of its borders and has put a ban on all non-essential travel.<sup>1</sup> The Belgian police have closed borders and are stopping cars crossing the borders to verify that the trip can be classified as essential. (See GMS [Flash Alert 2020-066](#) (17 March 2020).)

As reported in GMS [Flash Alert 2020-084](#) (20 March 2020), the European Union has asked the member states to implement fast lanes for emergency transport service and to guarantee the supply chain of essential products such as medicines, medical equipment, essential and perishable food products and livestock. The European Union has also published practical guidance to help ensure the free movement of frontier workers, as reported in GMS [Flash Alert 2020-132](#) (30 March 2020).

This GMS *Flash Alert* describes the measures taken by the Belgian government to allow frontier workers to cross the borders as well as measures taken for employees working in critical sectors to cross the border without being delayed by border checks.

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## WHY THIS MATTERS

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the challenge of protecting the health of the population while mitigating disruptions to the free movement of persons and the delivery of goods and essential services across Europe.

The Belgian government has put in place a system for frontier workers traveling to and from Belgium to allow fast and uninterrupted travel for persons crossing the border.

In light of the ban on all non-essential travel, it is important for frontier workers working in crucial sectors to take the necessary steps in order to cross the border without being delayed. It is also important for all other frontier workers to obtain the necessary documentation.

## Belgian-Dutch Border

The Belgian police are actively monitoring the border with the Netherlands, including the smaller roads and have closed some border crossings to enforce the ban on all non-essential travel into and out of Belgium.

Crossing the border to work is considered an essential reason to travel, and frontier workers who need to cross the border must have an employer statement and a valid ID with them. Crossing the border to deliver goods is also considered essential travel provided that the person can prove it. However, crossing the border to buy groceries is not considered an essential reason to travel and is consequently no longer allowed.

If a person is working in a vital sector and/or an “essential” profession as described above, a special vignette (certificate) can be obtained online.<sup>2</sup> This vignette has to be printed in colour, stamped by the employer and fixed on the windscreen of the car on the side of the driver.

The Belgian government has published a list<sup>3</sup> of vital sectors and crucial professions as an annex to the ministerial decision of 18 March 2020 (for prior coverage see GMS [Flash Alert 2020-124](#), 27 March 2020). This list ranges from journalists to the practitioners of the medical profession.

## Belgian-Luxembourg Border

Employers of frontier workers who need to cross the Belgian-Luxembourg border need to complete, sign and stamp a certificate provided by the Luxembourg authorities.<sup>4</sup>

No fast lane is currently in place.

## Belgian-French Border

Frontier workers living in France and working in Belgium need three documents in order to cross the border:

- The French employer's attestation<sup>5</sup> to allow the employee to leave the house in order to commute
- The French personal attestation<sup>6</sup> completed and signed by the employee (first box needs to be checked)
- The Belgian attestation<sup>7</sup> to allow the employee to cross the border.

The first and the last attestations need to be completed, signed and stamped by the employer.

No fast lane is currently in place.

## Belgian-German Border

Frontier workers living in Germany and working in Belgium can cross the border into Belgium with an attestation signed and stamped by their employer.

No fast lane is currently in place.

## FOOTNOTES:

- 1 For more information (in French, German, and Dutch) on the situation with Belgium's borders, see the [website](#) of the Service public federal Intérieur.
- 2 See the Belgian [COVID-19 crisis page](#) and links to the vignette at the bottom of the page.
- 3 See (in Dutch and French) this [webpage](#) of the *Belgisch Staatsblad/Moniteur Belge* N. 60 (the country's official gazette), page 16040.
- 4 See (in French), [Certificate proving the need to cross the border for frontier workers residing in Belgium](#) (*Certificat prouvant la nécessité de traverser la frontière pour les travailleurs frontaliers résidant en Belgique*).
- 5 See (in French), [Justification of professional displacement](#) (*Justificat de déplacement professionnel*).
- 6 See (in French), [Certificate of derogatory movement](#) (*Attestation de déplacement dérogatoire*).
- 7 See (in French), [Certificate proving the need to cross the border for border workers residing in France](#) (*Certificat prouvant la nécessité de traverser la frontière pour les travailleurs frontaliers résidant en France*).

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