



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Czech Republic - COVID-19: Lifting Entry Restrictions under Certain Governmental Programmes

The Czech Parliament approved the second extension of the state of emergency through 17 May 2020¹. However, with a decreasing number of coronavirus infections being recorded, certain restrictions pertaining to travel/entry are being partially lifted by the government under new Government Decree n°443. (For prior coverage, see GMS [Flash Alert 2020-186](#), 21 April 2020.) The decree primarily regulates the entrance of European Union (EU) citizens and their family members to the Czech Republic.

On Monday, 4 May 2020, the authorities presented new Government Decree n°511 which regulates the entry in respect of specific groups of non-EU/non-European Economic Area (EEA) citizens².

WHY THIS MATTERS

The travel restrictions have had a considerable impact on mobile employees moving between the Czech Republic and other countries. The government's new entry rules for third country nationals allows them to come to the Czech Republic as long as they are enrolled in certain programmes.

The decision by the government to slightly lift the cross-border entry/exit restrictions is largely focused on "highly qualified" employees (managers, experts) who were enrolled in certain government programmes and we can expect a further loosening of regulations for other groups of employees enrolled in these programmes.

These measures will ease the entry of several groups of employees into the Czech Republic and will therefore be of considerable importance to many companies that depend on a mobile workforce.

Certain visa applications processes will also be restored.

Individuals Who May Enter the Czech Republic

Czech borders remain closed and the government still regulates who can enter/leave the Czech Republic. Apart from the groups presented in our previous [report](#), the government has announced new categories of foreigners who can enter the Czech Republic, including workers and their family members enrolled under specific government programmes (managers, experts, medical staff, etc.).

Applications Acceptance and Visa Processing

On 12 March 2020, Czech embassies stopped accepting all types of visa applications. Ongoing applications for long-term visas were suspended and applications for short-term visas were revoked. However, Government Decree n°511 lifts the limitations starting 11 May 2020, for those employees enrolled in the government programme known as “Key and Scientific Personnel.” They should be receiving contacts from the authorities in the upcoming weeks and be offered appointments for applications submissions. The same applies to applicants enrolled in the programme called “Highly Qualified Employee” if they will perform work in the medical or social areas.

In addition, the approval process for suspended applications pertaining to enrollment in one of three government programmes should start again.

Government Programmes

There are three government programmes supporting economic migration to the Czech Republic:

- **Key and Scientific Personnel Programme** is designed for highly qualified employees such as managers, specialists, statutory body members, and interns. The programme’s advantage is a shorter approval period for employee card applications, reduced from 60 to 30 days. It also allows joint relocation of workers and their families.
- **Highly Qualified Employee Programme** covers almost 30 countries and allows for the inclusion of applicants’ family members. It focuses on highly qualified personnel, such as managers and specialists with university degrees and professional personnel with specific qualifications. In the Czech Republic, the jobs are classified based on a Czech professional qualification called “CZ-ISCO,” consisting of nine different groups of professions from top managers to blue collar workers. The Highly Qualified Employee Programme is applicable for the three top groups, i.e., groups 1 to 3.
- **Qualified Employee Programme** covers nine states such as Belarus, Montenegro, India, Kazakhstan, and Moldavia. Candidates in the CZ-ISCO classification groups 4 to 8 can be included in this programme (i.e., mainly manual workers in services, sales, and manufacturing).

FOOTNOTES:

1 See (in English) “Measures adopted by the Czech Government against the coronavirus” (11.5.2020): <https://www.vlada.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/measures-adopted-by-the-czech-government-against-coronavirus-180545/> .

2 See (in Czech) “o přijetí krizového opatření” at: <https://apps.odok.cz/attachment/-/down/RCIABPARE9V7> .

3 See (in Czech) “o programech schválených vládou za účelem dosažení ekonomického přínosu pro Českou republiku” at: <https://apps.odok.cz/attachment/-/down/RCIABFMANJC1> .

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