



our reference

PO.0/PRO.3143/09.04.2020/COVID-19/3

The Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, presents its compliments to diplomatic missions, consular posts as well as to international organizations established in Belgium and has the honour to communicate further details regarding travel from, to and inside the Belgian territory.

The Protocol Directorate wishes in the first place to thank the addressees of the current verbal note, in the name of the Belgian authorities, for their active participation in implementing the measures aimed at limiting the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

These measures have been adapted by ministerial decree of 03 April 2020 (published on the same day in the Belgian Official Gazette): [link to French version](#) | [link to Dutch version](#).

The new practical measures have been published by the [Federal Crisis Centre](#) (in French, Dutch and German) and have been given shape under a series of [concrete questions](#). Moreover, the Protocol Directorate continues to update on a regular basis [its dedicated webpage](#) for the diplomatic missions, consular posts and international organizations (in French, Dutch and English).

Article 7 of the ministerial decree sets out that henceforth "*Non-essential travel to and from Belgium is forbidden.*". Nevertheless, in respect of the Vienna Conventions and headquarters agreements, flexibility continues to be applied as regards members of staff of the diplomatic missions or consular posts and officials of international organizations.

1. Leaving the Belgian territory

Principle: Belgium is not opposed to the departure, for whatever reason, of members of staff of the diplomatic missions or consular posts and officials of international organizations as well as their family members. The essential or non-essential character of travel will have implications on their return (see point 2).

Each diplomatic mission, consular post or international organization may, should they deem it necessary, adopt specific measures for its members of staff. In particular, it is up to the diplomatic missions, consular posts and international organizations to make sure that the remaining staff be maintained at a level sufficient as to ensure their functions.

All professional travel is considered to be essential travel. Also authorized is travel listed in Appendix (a). It is important that the person leaving the territory:

- is a long-term resident who holds a legal residence permit or has the Belgian nationality.
- has to be always in possession of his identity document (residence permit, identity card, passport). The special residence permits issued by the Protocol Directorate are accepted;
- is in possession of an acceptable proof that travelling is essential: for example, a sufficiently detailed march order, a certificate or verbal note from the employer, a copy of the plane ticket...

Military staff who are members of an international organization and do not have a Belgian residence permit nor an identity card must be in possession of a clearly recognizable identification card or badge as well as an acceptable proof such as a march order.

Note: National regulations and applicable additional measures must be observed in the country of destination.

2. Returning to and entering the Belgian territory

Principle: Belgians, long-term residents of Belgium and persons with a legal residence in Belgium, including staff members of the diplomatic missions or consular posts and officials of international organizations as well as their family members may return to Belgium.

- When travelling was essential – see Appendix (b) – the returning person(s) will not be subject to quarantine.
- In the case that travelling did not meet this criterion, return is subject to compliance with the following 2 conditions:
 - A) the returning person as well as the person or driver who picked him/her up must be isolated in their home for 14 days;
 - B) these persons are not entitled to go to work during 14 days (not even if they work in a critical sector) : only teleworking or conference calls are allowed.
- Public transportation remains accessible. No matter the means of transportation to the place of residence, the social distancing rules, i.e. 1,5m are applicable; in a car, no more than 2 persons can be seated, including the driver.

To the extent possible, family members but also holders of a function who find themselves abroad for non-essential travel are invited to postpone their return to Belgium. Everyone must examine the best option taking into account both their individual situation as well as the public interest.

The provisions of the verbal note [P.0.0/PRO.3143/24.03.20/COVID-19](#) of March 24.03.2020 regarding special residence permits and taking up new posts remain applicable.

3. Travelling on the national territory

Reminder: travelling within Belgium is strictly limited and must comply with the provisions of the verbal note P0.0/PRO.3143/1 of 18.03.2020. Teleworking remains desirable and video or teleconferences should be encouraged. Professional travel is authorized. Travel in

the exercise of the function or going to one's workplace is only allowed if the physical presence of the person is essential, if teleworking or teleconferencing are not feasible.

In order to facilitate checks on public places, persons are encouraged to provide, in addition to their identity documents, an acceptable proof that travelling is essential: for example a sufficiently detailed marching order or a certificate of the employer.

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The present note replaces and supersedes verbal note P0.0/PRO.3143/30.03.2020/COVID-19/2 of 30 March 2020.

The Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation seizes this opportunity to renew to diplomatic missions, to consular posts and to international organizations established in Belgium the assurances of its highest consideration.

Done in Brussels on 09/04/2020.

To the diplomatic missions and consular posts and
to international organizations established in Belgium



Appendix

(a)

The following travel is currently regarded as **essential travel abroad** (from Belgium):

- Journeys abroad in the context of professional activities, including commuting between one's place of residence and place of work;
- Journeys to continue medical care;
- Journeys to provide assistance or care to an elderly person, a minor, or a disabled or vulnerable person;
- Journeys to a partner who does not live under the same roof;
- Journeys in the context of the execution of a deed (if necessary and cannot be done digitally);
- Journeys in the context of funerals / cremations;
- Journeys in the context of civil / religious marriages;
- Journeys to take care of animals;
- Journeys in the context of co-parenting;
- Journeys to pick up any person of Belgian nationality with or without their main residence in Belgium, long-term residents in Belgium and persons with legal residence in Belgium, from abroad and bring them back to Belgium;
- Journeys to take family members abroad so they can carry out their activities for essential reasons;
- Journeys of Belgian nationals to their main residence abroad; journeys to a second residence abroad are excluded in this regard.

(b)

Authorized **essential travel to Belgium** includes :

- Taking up a new post at a diplomatic mission, a consular post or an international organization if the assuming of one's functions cannot be postponed;
- Journeys for professional purposes;
- Assisting or taking care of elderly, disabled or vulnerable persons, or a minor,
- Shared custody of children,
- Visiting a partner not residing under the same roof,
- Taking care of animals,
- Executing a deed,
- Attending a funeral or cremation with a maximum of 15 persons being present and
- Attending a civil or religious marriage.