



COVID-19: Commission presents guidelines for border measures to protect health and keep goods and essential services available

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Today, the Commission presented guidelines to Member States on health-related border management measures in the context of the COVID-19 emergency. The aim is to protect citizens' health, ensure the right treatment of people who do have to travel, and make sure essential goods and services remain available. Commissioners Kyriakides and Johansson have presented the guidelines to EU ministers of Health and of Home Affairs at their first joint video meeting starting at 11am this morning.

President **von der Leyen** said: *"Our measures to contain the Coronavirus outbreak will be effective only if we coordinate on the European level. We have to take exceptional measures to protect the health of our citizens. But let's make sure goods and essential services continue to flow in our internal market. This is the only way to prevent shortages of medical equipment or food. It's not only an economic issue: our single market is a key instrument of European solidarity. I am in discussion with all Member States so that we confront this challenge together, as a Union."*

The [guidelines](#) set out principles for an integrated approach to an effective border management to protect health while preserving the integrity of the internal market.

Protecting people's health

People identified as at risk of spreading COVID-19 should have access to **appropriate health care**, either in the country of arrival or in the country of departure, and this should be coordinated between the two.

It is possible to submit everyone entering the national territory to health checks without formal introduction of **internal border controls**. The difference between normal health checks and border controls is the possibility to deny entry to individual persons. People who are sick should not be denied entry but given access to healthcare.

Member States may reintroduce internal border controls for reasons of public policy, which, in extremely critical situations, may include public health. Such border controls should be organised to prevent the emergence of large gatherings (e.g. queues), which risk increasing the spread of the virus. Member States should coordinate to carry out health screening on one side of the border only.

All border controls should be applied in a proportionate manner and with due regard to people's health. Member States must always admit their own citizens and residents, and should facilitate transit of other EU citizens and residents that are returning home. However, they can take measures such as requiring a period of self-isolation, if they impose the same requirements on their own nationals.

Member States should facilitate the crossing of frontier workers, in particular but not only those working in the health care and food sector, and other essential services (e.g. child care, elderly care, critical staff for utilities).

Ensuring the flow of essential goods and services

Free circulation of goods is crucial to maintain availability of goods. This is particularly crucial for **essential goods** such as food supplies including livestock, vital medical and protective equipment and supplies. More generally, control measures should not cause serious disruption of supply chains, essential services of general interest and of national economies and the EU economy as a whole. Member States should designate priority lanes for freight transport (e.g. via 'green lanes').

In the same vein, **safe movement for transport workers**, including truck and train drivers, pilots and aircrew is a key factor to ensure adequate movement of goods and essential staff.

No additional certifications should be imposed on goods legally circulating within the EU single market. According to the European Food Safety Authority, there is no evidence that food is a source or a transmission source of COVID-19.

For More Information

[Guidelines for border management measures to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services](#)

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