**Unofficial translation**

Republic of Bulgaria

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

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27 March 2020

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria presents its compliments to the Diplomatic Missions and the Representations of International Organisations, accredited to the Republic of Bulgaria, and on account of the epidemic spread of COVID-19, has the honour to inform of the relief regime adopted under the Measures and Actions during the State of Emergency Act, from March 13, 2020, for EU citizens, members of their families and third-country nationals holding a continuous, permanent and long-term residence permit in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as of the regime on extending the stay on the territory of this country for short stay with visa or visa-free third-country nationals, as follows:

1. According to item 10 and item 11 of the transitional and final provisions of the Measures and Actions during the State of Emergency Act, (https://dv.parliament.bg/DVWeb/showMaterialDV.jsp? idMat = 147150), with effect from 13.03.2020, the following amendments are introduced as to the renewal regime and the validity of the continuous, permanent and long-term residence permits of EU citizens, their family members and third-country nationals:

*‘§ 10. (1)* ***The period of validity*** *of the documents for residence of foreigners, issued in accordance with Art. 59, para. 2, items 1a, 2, 2a, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Bulgarian Personal Documents Act (https://www.lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2134424576), as well as of the documents under Art. 59, para. 3 of the same law, issued to the members of the families of citizens of the European Union, to the members of the families of nationals of States parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, to citizens of the Swiss Confederation, who are not citizens of the European Union, the European Economic Area and the Swiss Confederation, who, by virtue of international agreements concluded with the European Union have the right to move freely, and of the documents issued pursuant to Art. 59, para. 4 of the same law to citizens of the European Union, to nationals of States Parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, to citizens of the Swiss Confederation, who, by virtue of international treaties concluded with the European Union, have the right of free movement,* ***which expires from 13 March 2020 to 31 October 2020, shall be extended by 6 months.*** *For the duration of the extension, the documents are considered valid residence documents only on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria and certify only the right of residence. At the request of the individual, a new residence document may be issued even before the expiry of the extended 6-month period.*

*(3) The period of validity of driving licenses, which expires from 13 March 2020 to 31 October 2020, shall be extended by 6 months. For the duration of the extension the driving license is a valid individual certificate of competence for driving a motor vehicle only on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. At the request of the individual, a new driving license may be issued before the expiry of the extended 6-month period.*

*§ 11. In the Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (https://lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2134455296) (promulgated, SG No. 153/1998; amended, No. 70/1999) Issues 42 and 112 of 2001, Issues 45 and 54 of 2002, Issues 37 and 103 of 2003, Issues 37 and 70 of 2004, Issues 11, 63 and 88 of 2005 , Issues 30 and 82 of 2006, Issues 11, 29, 52, 63 and 109 of 2007, Issues 13, 26, 28 and 69 of 2008, Issues 12, 32, 36, 74, 82, 93 and 103 of 2009, issue 73 of 2010, issue 9 and 43 of 2011, issue 21 and 44 of 2012, issue 16, 23, 52, 68, 70 and 108 of 2013, issue 53 of 2014, issue 14, 79 and 80 of 2015, issue 15, 33, 97, 101 and 103 of 2016, issue 97 of 2017 ., Issues 14, 24, 56 and 77 of 2018, Issues 1, 24, 34, 58 and 101 of 2019 and Issue 17 of 2020) the following additions are made:*

*1. In Art. 24, para. 13 is created:*

*"(13) A foreigner with a long-term residence permit in the Republic of Bulgaria, whose term of residence expires within the period of declared emergency, may submit an application for continuation of residence within 14 days after the cancellation of the state of emergency and the term of the declared emergency shall not considered to be an interruption when the foreigner has applied for a long-term or permanent residence. A long-term resident of a foreign country, whose continuous residence permit expires within the declared state of emergency period, may enter the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria without a visa within 14 days after the cancellation of the state of emergency.’’*

*2. In Art. 40, para. 1, item 6 after the words "in cases of" shall be added "declared state of emergency or of" and after the words "13 and 16;" shall be added "for the term of declared state of emergency the absence of the foreigner who has received long-term or permanent residence permit from the territory of the Member States of the European, shall not be considered an absence for a period of 12 consecutive months; "*

2. There are currently no amendments as to the **regime for extending the stay on the territory of the country for short stay with visa or visa-free third-country nationals**. This regime is regulated by Art. 27 of the Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and Art. 11 of the regulation on its implementation, as follows:

***Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act***

“… ..**Art. 27**. (Amended, SG No. 29/2007, SG No. 23/2013, SG No. 97/2016)

*(1) The period of validity of a short-stay visa and of the period of residence authorised by it may be extended once by the administrative control services for foreigners for reasons of humanitarian nature, in exceptional circumstances or in the presence of a state interest by affixing a personalised visa sticker and stamp of the issuing authority in the passport or the replacement travel document in accordance with the procedure laid down in the regulations for the implementation of the law.*

*(2) The term of residence of persons who have entered the country under the conditions of visa-free regime may be extended once by the administrative control services of foreigners for humanitarian reasons related to extraordinary circumstances, or in the presence of state interest in the order determined by the rules of law. "*

***Regulation on the Implementation of the Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act*** *(FRBA) (<https://www.lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2135738597>)*

*“… ..****Art. 11****. (Am. - SG, iss. 110 in 2013, issue 60 of 2014, in force since 22.07.2014, issue 57 of 2015, in force since 28.07.2015, Suppl., issue 79 of 2016, effective 30.09.2016, amended, issue 51 of 2017, effective 27.06.2017)*

*(1) In exceptional circumstances, in the presence of humanitarian reasons or of state interest, the administrative control services for foreigners may extend once the validity of a short-stay visa and of the period of residence authorised by it in accordance with Art. 27, para. 1 of the FRBA, by affixing a personalised visa sticker and stamp of the issuing authority in the passport or in the replacement travel document.*

*(2) In exceptional circumstances, in the presence of humanitarian reasons or of public interest, the administrative control services for foreigners may extend the term of residence of foreigners who have entered the country under the conditions of a short-stay visa-free regime.*

*(3) For prolongation of the validity of a short-stay visa and of the period of residence authorised under it under para. 1 or of the term of residence under para. 2, the foreigner shall submit a personal application in accordance with Template No 2 to the Migration Directorate of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) or to the Migration Sectors and Groups with the Regional Directorate MoI before the expiry of the authorised period of residence, to which they shall attach:*

*1. his / her passport or his / her passport replacing travel document and a copy of the pages with the photo, personal data, stamp of the border control authorities at the last entry in the Republic of Bulgaria, and where relevant - of the visa held;*

*2. documents justifying the existence of extraordinary circumstances or humanitarian reasons within the meaning of para. 1 or 2;*

*3. evidence of stable, regular, predictable and sufficient means of subsistence, housing and medical insurance for the period of the requested visa extension and of the stay in the country. "*

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Diplomatic Missions and the Representations of International Organisations, accredited to the Republic of Bulgaria, the assurances of its highest consideration.

TO

THE DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

AND THE REPRESENTATIIONS OF

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS,

ACCREDITED TO THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

SOFIA