

# Russia strengthens measures to contain the spread of COVID-19

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Russia continues to implement measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 at federal and regional level, which includes:

- extending the regime of self-isolation;
- closing all schools;
- prohibiting leisure activities bringing together more than 50 people;
- limiting air transportation;
- restricting the entry of foreigners to Russia; and
- suspending court proceedings.

## Self-isolation regime

The self-isolation regime of remaining home for a period of 14 days now applies to all individuals arriving to Moscow from China, South Korea, Iran, the US, the UK, the EU, Ukraine, Belarus and all European countries outside the EU. Those living with such individuals are also under this regime.

The high alert mode **introduced** in Moscow is now officially recognised as *force majeure*.

In addition, people coming from countries with an unfavourable epidemiological situation may report their arrival to Russia either through the hotline of the Moscow Healthcare Department (+7 495 870 45 09) or via electronic means by filling in a specific form on the mos.ru website at <https://covid.mos.ru/en>.

On 17 March 2020, Russian governors were instructed by the Head of the Federal Service of Consumer Rights Protection and Human Welfare "Rospotrebnadzor" to do the following:

- organise the screening of anyone who has returned from Europe within the last two weeks and individuals who have arrived from foreign countries within the past month and went to doctors with symptoms of a cold; and
- determine the need for test systems for the diagnosis of coronavirus and a procedure for examining those who do not have signs of a cold or have had no contact with infected individuals.

Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyanin asked all employers in Moscow where possible to switch employees to a remote working regime and not to substitute it with unpaid vacations.

## School closures

All Moscow state schools, sports schools and institutions of further education will be closed from 21 March 2020 until 12 April 2020. Russia-wide, pupils are exempt from attending classes from 23 March 2020 until 12 April 2020.

## Prohibition of leisure activities bringing together more than 50 people at a time

All outdoor public gatherings in the field of culture, physical education and sports, exhibition, entertainments and educational activities are forbidden in Moscow until 10 April 2020.

Indoor events gathering together more than 50 people at a time are temporarily suspended.

Federal cultural institutions under the Ministry of Culture are closed to visitors. This includes theatres and cinemas, museums and exhibitions, etc. under the supervision of this Ministry.

At restaurants, customers over the age of 60 years are advised to go home.

Outside of Moscow, Russian governors have been advised to limit public events.

### Limitation of air transportation

Since 13 March 2020, the Federal Agency on Air Transportation has set limitations on the number of flights to and from the Russian Federation with Italy, Germany, Spain, France and other EU countries as well as the UK, the US and the United Arab Emirates. Only the following cities are being served:

- Moscow - Rome
- Moscow - Berlin
- Moscow - Athens
- Moscow - Brussels
- Moscow - Madrid
- Moscow - Sofia
- Moscow - Dublin
- Moscow - Amsterdam
- Moscow - Bucharest
- Moscow - Helsinki
- Moscow - Zagreb
- Moscow - Geneva
- Moscow - Stockholm
- Moscow - Paris
- Moscow - London
- Moscow - New York
- Moscow - Abu-Dhabi

In addition, from 18 March 2020 until 1 May 2020 entry into Russia by foreigners and stateless persons is restricted.

This ban does not apply to:

- accredited or appointed employees of diplomatic missions and consular offices of foreign states in the Russian Federation, international organisations and their representations, other official representations of foreign states located in the territory of the Russian Federation, including family members;
- drivers of international motor traffic, air crews, sea and river vessel crews, train and locomotive crews of international railway traffic;
- members of official delegations and persons holding diplomatic, official, ordinary private visas issued in connection with the death of a close relative;
- persons holding permanent residence permits, in Russian: *vid na zhitelstvo* (meaning that persons holding work visas and temporary residence permits are covered by the ban); and
- persons flying in transit through air border crossing points.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs is also required to suspend all visa and invitation processes with the exception of diplomatic, official and ordinary business visas to the persons specified above, as well as ordinary private visas to foreign citizens and stateless persons travelling to Russia in connection with the death of a close relative.

Foreign nationals who are in Russia with valid working, business or diplomatic visas may remain in the country.

### Employment of foreign nationals

As of 18 March 2020, the Ministry of Internal Affairs ceased accepting, processing and issuing work permits to all foreign nationals. Clarification from the Ministry on whether it is possible to collect work permits that were issued but not collected is pending.

### Suspension of court proceedings

From 19 March 2020 until 11 April 2020, the courts will only accept documents filed via a dedicated electronic system or by Russian post.

Moscow and St. Petersburg Commercial Courts have announced that holding court hearings will be restricted during this period of time.

According to the Supreme Court, only urgent cases will be considered, such as the election, extension, cancellation or change of a preventive measure; the protection of the interests of a minor or a person recognised as legally incompetent; or if the representative of a person refuses medical intervention necessary to save the life of that person. Also, writs and expedited proceedings will be heard.

It is recommended that courts hold proceedings via videoconference.

Pending further information from the courts, it is not clear yet whether hearings scheduled before 10 April 2020 will be postponed.

### Immediate recommendations

In light of air transportation restrictions, employers should check that foreign employees currently in Russia have valid documents allowing their stay until 1 May 2020 at least, and that immigration registration at their place of stay is – if required – performed on time.

We also recommend that employers expressly encourage home working where possible while complying with the formal legal requirements that apply in this situation.

This eAlert was prepared by Christophe Huet, Ekaterina Elekchyan, Irina Shurmina and Daria Dzhafarova, our team of specialists specifically dedicated to following legal developments and new restrictions related to COVID-19. They prepare daily on-stream summaries on any related legal acts that are sent to our local clients and their head offices.

If you have any questions on the above or wish to be informed about our on-stream summaries on the legal measures adopted due to the COVID-19 epidemic in Russia, contact our local CMS experts [Christophe Huet](#), [Ekaterina Elekchyan](#), [Irina Shurmina](#) or your regular CMS advisor.

#### KEY CONTACTS

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[Christophe Huet](#)

Partner | Employment, Moscow



[Ekaterina Elekchyan](#)

Senior Associate | Employment, Moscow



[Irina Shurmina](#)

Senior Associate | Commercial, Moscow

