

Poznań, 09th April 2020

COVID-19 – Ukraine closes borders

In March 2020, due to the spread of COVID-19, Ukraine took radical measures and introduced a number of restrictions on border traffic for foreigners and its citizens.

The situation in Ukraine is extremely dynamic and therefore requires a comprehensive discussion. It should be noted, that according to the official position of the Ukrainian government, the authorities still stipulate that, depending on the development of the situation, the period of border closure and further restrictions may be modified on an ongoing basis.

I. The regime of crossing the border between Ukraine and the Republic of Poland

1.1. Rules of border crossing after 17 March 2020

On 17th March 2020, in accordance with the Regulation of the Government of Ukraine of 16th March 2020, the regular communication for international passenger railway, airway, motor transport (buses) services was suspended.

Therefore, citizens of Ukraine and foreigners entitled to permanent or temporary residence on the territory of Ukraine will not be able to come to Ukraine using regular means of communication, i.e. plane, train, bus.

Given the restrictions introduced, the Ukrainian government has also started the evacuation of Ukrainian citizens. The evacuation took place through the designation of additional non-scheduled rail and air services.

Taking above-mentioned into consideration, after 17th March 2020, the border crossing points between the Republic of Poland and Ukraine are operating with a restriction and border crossing by citizens is possible only:

- by private motor transport (cars);
- through pedestrian checkpoints;
- in an emergency mode with a help of the Embassy of Ukraine.

1.2. Rules of border crossing after 27th March 2020

On 25th March 2020, the Prime Minister of Ukraine announced that, in view of the Covid-19 spread, the Ukrainian government intends to introduce further restrictions. Ukraine has started to develop a plan to close the borders for regular passenger transport, i.e. the Covid-19:

- stopping the evacuation of Ukrainian citizens on non-scheduled flights,
- closing pedestrian border crossings.



Since 28th March 2020, all checkpoints for regular movement of Ukrainian citizens are closed. Thus, only private car transport is possible to cross the border between the Republic of Poland and Ukraine. Citizens of Ukraine who do not have the possibility to cross the border by private car are forced to stay at their current location. It should be noted, that in such a case Citizens of Ukraine are taken care of by Ukrainian diplomats.

1.3. Rules of border crossing after 07th April 2020

On 07th April 2020, in accordance with the decision of the Government of Ukraine, further border traffic restrictions were implemented. The Republic of Poland's border with Ukraine can only be crossed through two border crossing points, i.e. the border with Ukraine: Dorohusk - Jagodzin and Korczowa - Krakowiec. Moreover, it is still possible to cross the border only with private car transport.

The restrictions on regular communication for international passenger transport by rail, air and road also remain valid. The border checkpoints for international passenger traffic remain permanently closed.

II. The legal residence of the citizens of Ukraine on the territory of the Republic of Poland.

It should be noted that currently there is no legal act that would specify in detail the conditions for crossing the border or regulate the legal stay of the citizens of Ukraine abroad in connection with abovementioned restrictions.

What is more, neither the statements of the Prime Minister of Ukraine nor official announcements issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs refer to the obligation to return the citizens of Ukraine - legally residing on the territory of the Republic of Poland or other countries - to the territory of Ukraine.

Consequently, it should be noted that the position of the Ukrainian government presented so far concerns only the regime of crossing the borders and not the obligatory return of Ukrainian citizens.

Therefore, citizens of Ukraine have the right to free movement and to choose their place of residence.