



AD HOC QUERY ON 2020.39 Update on 2020.19 Ad-hoc Query on customer services after COVID-19 emergency

Requested by EMN NCP Latvia on 5 June 2020

Responses from Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden plus Norway (24 in Total)

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1. Background information

On March, 2020 EMN LV NCP launched ad-hoc query on Security measures in on-site customer service offices during the COVID-19 emergency. Several aspects concerning the work at on-site customer service offices were affected by the crisis, including opening hours, the prioritisation of remote procedures, the implementation of protective measures and the number of procedures offered, both overall and on-site. Changes concerning the management of appointments were also introduced to manage the crisis and reduce the risk of infection.

Thirteen Member States introduced exceptional measures with legal effect aimed at supporting individuals whose situation became irregular during the crisis or whose administrative procedures were affected by the crisis. Such measures included the extension of the validity of permits and deadlines.

The crisis has increased the importance of remote procedures, including online services and communications over the phone or email.

Therefore EMN LV NCP would like to update information on measures in on-site customer service offices of migration authorities after emergency.

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2. Questions

1. Do your immigration services have returned to operate on-site services?

Available choices: Yes, No

2. If your answer is YES, can you please indicate, are there any services which can be accessed only by prior appointment?

3. If your answer is YES, can you please indicate, are there any services which can be accessed in line order?

We would very much appreciate your responses by **19 June 2020**.

3. Responses

1

		Wider Dissemination ²	
	EMN NCP Belgium	Yes	1. Yes 2. The (Belgian) Immigration Office itself doesn't issue residence permits or visa, but sends instructions to municipalities (and diplomatic posts) to do so. Municipalities have gradually returned

¹ If possible at time of making the request, the Requesting EMN NCP should add their response(s) to the query. Otherwise, this should be done at the time of making the compilation.

² A default "Yes" is given for your response to be circulated further (e.g. to other EMN NCPs and their national network members). A "No" should be added here if you do not wish your response to be disseminated beyond other EMN NCPs. In case of "No" and wider dissemination beyond other EMN NCPs, then for the Compilation for Wider Dissemination the response should be removed and the following statement should be added in the relevant response box: "This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further."

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			<p>to operate on-site services from the 8th of June, fully (except if not possible to maintain the social distancing measures) from 1st of July. Most of the municipalities work by appointment in order to safeguard the social distancing and hygienic measures.</p> <p>3. Not many of the municipalities work in line order, if they work that way they have to secure the social distancing and hygienic measures.</p>
	EMN NCP Bulgaria	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. There are no such services.</p> <p>3. N/A</p>
	EMN NCP Croatia	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. TCNs who are in Croatia are urged to submit a request for regularization of their status electronically or by post (submitting a request for approval or extension of a temporary residence permit). All employers are to submit applications for residence and work permits in line with relevant provisions of the Aliens Act, only by email. Also, in order to reduce social contacts, all TCN are urged/requested to make prior appointment via telephone or email before coming to police stations/police administrations.</p> <p>3. No.</p>
	EMN NCP Cyprus	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p>

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			<p>2. Appointments are made for the following categories of migrants/resident permits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students (applications submitted by the educational institutes/universities) - Immigration permits / long term residents - Employees working at foreign companies. <p>Furthermore, for all applications, after they are processed and approved, the payment of the fees and the collection of biometric data (photo, fingerprints) is done only by appointment.</p> <p>3. All other services, excluding the ones mentioned in Q2. The submission of applications is not made in person/at a desk, but the application are put in dedicated boxes.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Czech Republic</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. No Partly.</p> <p>2. Until further notice, even after the end of the state of emergency, remote access (by post or data container) will be communication method preferred at Ministry of the Interior offices. The reason for this approach is exclusively to ensure the safety of both clients and staff in accordance with the requirements of the extraordinary measures in place pursuant to the Public Health Protection Act.</p> <p>Access to Ministry of the Interior offices is, with exceptions (situations of urgent need), permitted only to foreign nationals who have made a prior appointment for a specific operation or who have been summoned to report in person to the office.</p> <p>Appointments may be made either on-line or by telephone for all operations except those listed below. Operations for which it will not be possible to make an appointment even after the end of the state of emergency and which foreign nationals will have to perform exclusively by remote access (send by post or data container), subsequently to which he/she will be summoned to report in person to the office:</p> <p>Submission of an application for extension of validity of a permanent residence permit.</p>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting the loss or theft of a permit. • Notification of change of place of residence in the territory, change of marital status, new travel document and other changes. • Submission of applications for change in a permit or for issuance of a replacement permit in place of a lost, stolen or damaged permit. <p>3. Operations for which it is not necessary to make an appointment in advance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuance of a bridging label for the purpose of leaving the territory, for international transport workers, critical infrastructure workers or for the needs of other state authorities. The purpose must be substantiated. • Issuance of an departure order, where a foreign national's residence authorisation ends or expires up to 60 days after the end of the state of emergency, i.e. until July 16th, 2020. • Submission of an application for a long-stay visa, a long-term or a permanent residence permit for a child born within the territory (Section 88 of the Foreign Nationals' Act). • If the foreign national has been previously summoned to present his/her original travel document or the original of a registry document. • If foreign national intends to take-over of the document delivered by public notice.
	<p>EMN NCP Estonia</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Yes</p>

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			<p>2. Our Police and Border Guard Board service offices are open, but as the first-choice persons are recommend applying for documents using the online self-service portal (https://www.politsei.ee/et/iseteenindus).</p> <p>The pre-booking in service offices are compulsory for procedures involving residence permits and Estonian citizenship. Estonian citizens can renew their ID cards and passports using the self-service portal.</p> <p>To apply for a passport, there is need to provide fingerprints. Therefore, person should contact service office to use a photo booth, after which he may proceed to fill out the application using the self-service portal may continue.</p> <p>3. Usually person should contact the service office, if there is an urgent need to submit an application.</p>
	EMN NCP Finland	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. All services can only be accessed by prior appointment.</p> <p>3. No.</p>
	EMN NCP France	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. Since mid May, appointments are again possible progressively for: Residence permit first applications and residence permit renewal applications (however the validity of residence permits which expired between 16 March and 15 June 2020 have been extended for 6 months). Interviews for citizenship applications Interviews for asylum applications</p>

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			<p>3. As from 15 June, a dedicated on line service is open for the following procedures : renewal of receipts of residence permit, circulation document for children, change of home address.</p>
	EMN NCP Germany	Yes	<p>1. Yes Yes. However, the public opening hours of the local immigration offices are still reduced. Under COVID-19 safety precautions, the offices gradually move towards normal operation. Online, telephone and mail services have been available continuously. In accordance with the local circumstances, the competent diplomatic missions inform about the respective modalities for visa application.</p> <p>2. On-site services are generally only available to appointed customers. Appointments can be made online, by phone or by mail.</p> <p>3. See answer to question 2.</p>
	EMN NCP Hungary	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. From 15 June 2020, administration in person and appointment booking is again possible in the following case types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registration certificate for EEA nationals - Permanent residence permit - Residence card issued to third-country national family member of a Hungarian citizen and permanent residence card - Residence permit - Substitute/replacement residence permit - Invitation letter

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First issue /extension of temporary residence permit (ITI) for applicants - Visa extension <p>3. urgent and duly justified cases of the following mentioned issues</p>
	EMN NCP Ireland	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No 2. 3.
	EMN NCP Italy	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. The Immigration Offices of the Police Authorities (i.e. Questure) have resumed, starting from May 18, 2020, the front-office activity, receiving the public according to a specific scheduling and only for the delivery of residence permits and for the presentation of applications. 3. The status of the application for a residence permit can be verified online, whereas the application for asylum is submitted in person.
	EMN NCP Latvia	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. In order to take care of the safety and health of customers and employees, after the emergency situation going to revoke (after June 9), the services will be provided for customers by pre-appointment only and only obtaining a new identity document , thus disabling the provision of services on a first-come, first-served basis.

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			<p>Customers can also apply for a pre-appointment by calling to one of the OCMA territorial division or by e-mail. Other services are available only remotely - e-service using Latvija.lv, by post or by email. T</p> <p>3. No, there is no option for in line order.</p>
	EMN NCP Lithuania	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. As of 17 June quarantine on the territory of the Republic of Lithuania has been abolished by the decision of the Government of Lithuania. Since then, the Migration Department has started providing its services under regular procedure which were in force before the declaration of quarantine. All services to foreigners are provided only on the basis of pre-registration which can be done via www.migracija.lt. Applications for the issuance or renewal of a residence permit can be submitted only electronically via the same portal. After electronic submission of an application, a third country national has to book an appointment at the migration services and to present himself personally with all required documents. No registration is needed when collecting issued documents.</p> <p>3. Please see answer to Q2.</p>
	EMN NCP Luxembourg	Yes	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. In order to avoid any undermining of the rights of third-country nationals conferred by the residence permit they hold, the residence of third-country nationals holding one of the following documents, which would expire on 1 March 2020, remain valid for the duration of the state of crisis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short- and long-stay visas;

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • temporary authorisations to stay; • residence cards; • residence permits. <p>Similarly, the stay of third-country nationals not subject to visa requirement and whose stay has exceeded 90 days after 1 March 2020 is legal for the duration of the state of crisis. Since 13 May 2020 the reception desks from the department of Foreigners at the Directorate of Immigration are accessible by appointment to be taken via a website. This is only possible for those foreigners who have been invited to do so. These appointments have to be taken for the enrollment / issuing of biometric residence permits. The information desks stay closed, information is only given via telephone and mail.</p> <p>3. NO. There are not services that can be access online.</p>
	EMN NCP Malta	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. All residence permit applications are submitted by appointment except for permits requiring change in address and lost residence cards.</p> <p>3. Until now only applications for work/residence permits can be submitted on line. Should they be approved biometric features would eventually be captured</p>
	EMN NCP Netherlands	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. The corona crisis affects the way the IND works: Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19), visiting an IND desk is different now. The IND has adjusted all desks in such a way that visit will be safe for both clients and employees. The IND have taken into</p>

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			<p>account all current safety measures: placed plexiglass screens on all counters, made walking routes in the waiting areas, placed hand disinfectant and adjusted the layout of the waiting areas, making it possible to keep a distance of 1.5 meters.</p> <p>That means that at present, it is not possible to receive everyone at the IND desks. Therefore, the IND will contact prioritized groups of clients in order to schedule an appointment.</p> <p>The IND will in principle only schedule appointments for collecting the first residence permit (card) and for providing biometrics.</p> <p>Clients can 't schedule these appointments online themselves. The IND will call them to make an appointment to control the flow of clients.</p> <p>In case of emergencies, clients can call the information line and the IND will then find a proper solution for really urgent matters.</p> <p>3.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Poland</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. First of all, it should be noted at the beginning that there is a significant diversity in customer service in individual voivodship offices, regardless of the possibilities arising from their capacity or epidemic situation in a given region.</p> <p>However, the vast majority of services are available only by prior appointment and this applies to, among others to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - summons to appear in person - completion of procedural deficiency - fingerprinting - registration of an EU citizen's stay - records of invitations to the invitations registry - Polish citizenship (granting, recognition, certification) - issuing residence cards and other documents

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none">- submitting applications (nationals of European Union members)- interviews <p>Visits are arranged by phone or via the Internet for a specific day and time. All direct contacts occur with notification of sanitary and safety requirements of both clients and employees of offices, such as wearing protective masks / helmets, gloves, or disinfecting hands and surfaces.</p> <p>Currently, as a rule, the possibility of personal submission of an application for stay by third-country nationals is still not activated in voivodship offices, and visits are held only to fill in the shortcomings of formal applications based on the adopted visit schedule. Applications for residence-related matters are received by post, using envelopes and, to a lesser extent, submitted to the post offices.</p> <p>As regards the Office for Foreigners (the body responsible for international protection procedures and a second instance authority in relation to the voivodship authorities) as a rule customers are being served only after prior appointment and visit time, which means no possibility of spontaneous entry to the office. Service is also limited to certain categories of cases and activities (e.g. collection of residence cards, filling formal deficiencies after calling the authority). In the Office for Foreigners direct customer service is provided regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- social assistance and medical care for foreigners applying for international protection- office service in the field of cases conducted solely by the Office for Foreigners- issuing documents for foreigners applying for international protection, taking fingerprints, issuing residence cards and Geneva travel documents after prior appointment at the office by email- return travel documents and issue copies of decisions- visit to the doctor's office <p>In matters regarding legalization of stay, the Office for Foreigners accepts through its admission office only foreigners (including their representatives or proxies) to whom a request has been addressed, e.g. to complete formal deficiencies or evidence, and those who would like to complete the material regardless of such a request in proceedings conducted by the Office. Other cases of customer admissions, e.g. in connection with the necessity to interview the foreigner, are arranged on the initiative of the Department of Legalization of Stay of the Office for Foreigners or arranged only in strictly motivated cases (e.g. the need to collect personal decisions) - only in cases conducted by the Office.</p>
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			<p>3. In determining priorities the voivodship offices acts depending on the needs. In those voivodships where the situation of foreigners was differentiated depending on the date of receipt of the application, all customers whose visits had been canceled due to the covid -19 restrictions are served first. Customer service arranged via the Internet is carried out according to the schedule of visits reserved by individual clients, and deadlines set by the office customer service is determined in principle by the date of receipt of the application by the office. The personal situation of the foreigner / requests for shortening the period is also taken into account, etc. / . Usually first are processed those applications which were received by the office before the epidemic status was announced. Voivodship offices additionally set their own priorities for dealing with cases depending on needs. Usually first are foreigners whose applications are affected by formal deficiencies and persons who already have a residence card ready to pick up. For example, the Małopolska Voivodship Office first, due to the very large number, issues residence cards for third-country nationals, next allows foreigners to complete formal deficiencies (fingerprints), come for an interview in urgent cases and review the files. In the Podlaskie Voivodship Office foreigners performing work as a drivers in the international transportation can collect a residence card and submit fingerprints in the first place.</p>
	EMN NCP Portugal	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. Since March 30th, all services were made available only online and/or by prior appointment. The situation has not changed since then.</p> <p>3. All appointments must be made by prior appointment. The appointment schedule, in cases of renovation, is accepted as proof of legalisation intent.</p>
	EMN NCP Slovakia	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p>

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			<p>2. Currently, all services are provided at the Foreign Police Departments as it was prior to the implementation of Covid-19 measures, i.e. all services are accessible both through the booking system and in line order.</p> <p>3. See above.</p>
	EMN NCP Slovenia	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. All on-site customer service offices of migration authorities are accessed only by prior appointment.</p> <p>3. N/a.</p>
	EMN NCP Spain	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. There is a number of procedures only available on site. For those procedures, prior appointment is compulsory.</p> <p>3. There are some procedures which can be done using both, either on-site (prior appointment compulsory) or on-line procedure. On the other hand, there is a specific migration scheme (Law 14/2013) which requires online applications, so that onsite procedures are not available.</p>
	EMN NCP Sweden	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p>

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			<p>2. In Sweden the offices of the Swedish Migration Agency has never been closed but the working hours has been reduced and the number of persons in the room has been limited. Clients have been encouraged to as far as possible contact the Migration Agency digitally or via telephone. The normal services according to appointments apply.</p> <p>3. The normal services according to in line order applies with the restriction of maximum number of persons (50 persons).</p>
	EMN NCP Norway	Yes	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. All services that are available, are only available by prior appointment and printed email must be shown at entrance. The Directorate of Immigration does not provide over-the-counter services - so this question is not applicable for the UDI in that respect. However, we have been operating at almost normal speed and interviews of asylum seekers has been done primarily through remote interviewing (Zoom, Skype etc.) throughout lockdown. Service Centre for Foreign Workers in Oslo (SUA) is still running at reduced capacity since 18.05.20. Limited services for non EU - EEA nationals needing residence permits for work - alternative processes for electronic submission of documents, issuing of residence card and EEA registration. Personal meetings without appointments will not be granted and only for ID control or residence card (fingerprinting required). Any applications sent digitally with uploaded documents will be checked when restrictions have been lifted. Immigration Police Services continue to be open providing limited services to immigrants and asylum seekers since 18.05.20. New temporary guidelines for cssework. All in-person appointments have been cancelled. All applications for skilled labour have to be digital: documents need to be uploaded electronically. Applicants such as anyone seeking any form of nternational protection, must contact the police by email. Once the restrictions have been lifted, original documents will be checked in person.</p>

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			<p>3. The Norwegian immigration authorities have long had many services/ applications that can be accessed online on an ordinary basis. The list is lengthy. What is different now is that citizenship cases are not being prioritized and because there was a major change in citizenship law, there is a large backlog of online applications from Jan/ Feb. These are now being partially processed online: the initial perusal of documents will be online instead of in person with originals and documents/ fingerprinting will be verified at a later date.</p>
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