

THE CZECH CORONAVIRUS LOCK-DOWN : THE IMMEDIATE IMPACT ON BUSINESSES

The Czech Republic's government has been one of the more radical movers in invoking extraordinary measures to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. Initially, a number of those measures mainly restricted private life, including instruction in schools, social gatherings, cultural and sports events, and personal travel. However, the second wave of measures in force from 16 March do have a direct impact on business activities as well.

We briefly summarize below the main areas impacted.

BUSINESS TRAVEL ACROSS BORDERS

As of 16 March, 2020, foreign travellers are not permitted to enter the Czech Republic unless they have legal residence here. Similarly, Czech citizens are not permitted to leave the territory of the Czech Republic, foreign legal residents being able to leave but without the possibility of return.

In practice, this means a full lock-down on cross-border business travel, the Václav Havel airport in Prague being pretty much closed for foreign flights. There are exemptions for individuals employed and commuting across border, however, these are unlikely to be relevant for most business travellers.

CROSS BORDER FREIGHT AND SHIPMENTS

International freight transport and shipment are not affected by the lock-down. However, from 17 March there is now a ban on the export of medicines.

BUSINESS TRAVEL WITHIN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Although a comprehensive lock-down (quarantine) has been in place since 16 March throughout the territory of the Czech Republic and will last at least until 24 March, travel for work and business within the Czech Republic has been exempt.

However, until 24 March at least, accommodation services and restaurants must be closed – travelling within the country might thus be problematic and should be avoided if possible. The Prague public transport authority requires passengers to wear protective face masks. As of 19 March, the government has imposed the duty to wear protective face mask outdoors.

NON-RETAIL BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Operations of non-retail businesses (i.e. manufacturing, office, agriculture, etc.), are not directly affected by the measures.

RETAIL BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Most retail businesses, other than the natural exemptions like food retail, pharmacies, gas stations, and several other retail lines, are subject to forced closures. Shopping centres and malls are open but non-exempt units must be closed.

FURTHER INFORMATION FROM CLIFFORD CHANCE

You can find all our Coronavirus-related briefings [here](#).

Please find below some other useful briefings:

[Read more on Coronavirus and Force Majeure.](#)

[Read more about Coronavirus - making deals in a volatile market.](#)

[Read more about Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) and insurance issues.](#)

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