

Customs and Excise Administration – Morocco
15 June 2020
Measures adopted to combat the COVID-19 pandemic

1. Measures to facilitate the cross-border movement of relief consignments and essential supplies

1.1. Morocco has designated and passed on to the WCO the names and contact details of the national contact points responsible for answering queries about the procedures for the import, export and transit of relief consignments and humanitarian supplies and equipment by air, land and sea.

2. Measures to support the economy and ensure supply chain continuity

Dematerialization of procedures and facilitation of Customs clearance

2.1. Downward revision of the selectivity rate for controls (rates have been reduced by 6% on imports and 7% on exports).

2.2. EUR1 and EUR-MED certificates to be acceptable in electronic form for imports under the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement (between the European Communities and Morocco) – Circular No. 6034/233 of 3 April 2020.

2.3. Dematerialization of the procedure for managing applications for exemption from Customs duty as required under the tariff quota and in the conventional framework – Circular No. 6035/200 of 9 April 2020.

2.4. Exchange of (scanned) documents with partners by e-mail.

2.5. Electronic payment of all Customs debts to be made standard practice, except in special cases, and the procedure for going over to electronic payment to be more flexible (by permitting access on signed request without authentication).

2.6. Easing of the procedure for requesting amendments to data about operators.

2.7. Proxy authorizations sent by e-mail to be accepted without requiring authentication of signatures.

Support for companies' cash flow

2.8. Speeding up of payments and refunds to companies.

Guaranteed supply of basic necessities

2.9. Levying of import duty has been suspended on the following products:

- Soft wheat and derivatives thereof (HS 1001.99.00.19; 1001.99.00.90) – Circular No. 6029/211 of 27 March 2020
- The suspension of the levying of import duty on the above-mentioned soft wheat has been extended until 31 December 2020 – Circular No. 6051/211 of 26 May 2020.
- Chickpeas (HS 0713.20.90.10), kidney beans (HS 0713.33.90.10), lentils (HS 0713.40.90.10), broad beans (HS 0713.50.90.10) and durum wheat (HS 1001.19.00.10; 1001.19.00.90) – Circular No. 6030/211 of 27 March 2020

2.10. Extension of the validity of administrative documents relating to medicines and health products, issued to import establishments and which have lapsed (Circular No. 6040/311 of 22 April 2020).

3. Measures to ensure protection for Customs Administration personnel

Remote-working solutions:

3.1. As ordered in the circular from the Minister for the Economy, Finance and Administration Reform on measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the numbers of Customs personnel present at Customs Administration premises must be kept to the strict minimum.

- Leave of absence has been granted to pregnant women, officers suffering from chronic illnesses and officers responsible for young children (supervision of schoolwork).
- The resources needed to enable a certain number of Customs officers to do their work remotely were set up quickly.
- The degree of digitization of Moroccan Customs is such that a switch to remote working has been possible for both office staff and border staff (30% of frontline personnel are working remotely as compared to 70% of office staff).

Preventative measures:

3.2. Gloves and protective masks must be worn by frontline Customs personnel in contact with users (inspecting goods, checking travellers, reception work, etc.) – Customs services have been issued with antiseptic products and disinfectants.

3.3. Buildings (offices and shared spaces) are cleaned rigorously and regularly, and premises are disinfected by local authority sanitation services.

3.4. Shared areas (restaurants, prayer rooms, etc.) have been closed and disinfected.

3.5. Vehicles used for Administration business and staff transportation are disinfected.

3.6. Access for user clients to Customs offices is restricted, except in special cases.

3.7. A video-conferencing system is used for the holding of remote meetings and to avoid Customs personnel and their partners' having to travel.

4. Measures to ensure protection for the public

4.1. Use of the Government's "Virtual Office" platform avoids having to deposit physical mail items at Customs offices.

4.2. All requests (claims and inquiries) are steered towards the electronic channel already available.

4.3. Sales by public auction and sales through calls for tenders for goods seized and abandoned while in Customs (to avoid any grouping of buyers) have been suspended.

4.4. Blood is being donated on a national basis for blood transfusion centres where blood stocks have fallen since restrictions were placed on travelling.

5. Other measures

5.1. A range of products has been made subject to export licences or specific authorization:

- Surgical masks (HS 63.07.90.50.00) – Circular No. 6021/311 of 3 March 2020, Official Journal 6861 of 2 March 2020.
- Disinfectants (HS 3808.94; 3401.11; 3402.20.00.00) – Circular No. 6024/311 of 13 March 2020, Official Journal 6864 of 12 March 2020).
- Protective masks (3926.90.92.90, 4818.90, 4823.90, 6307.90.40.00, 6307.90.90.98, 9020.00.00.00) – Circular No. 6024/311 of 13 March 2020, Official Journal 6864 of 12 March 2020.
- Quantitative restrictions on imports: imports of protective masks under tariff headings 3926.90.92.90, 4818.90, 4823.90, 6307.90.40.00, 6307.90.50.00, 6307.90.90.98 and 9020.00.00.00 are subject to import licence (Circular No. 6058/311 of 5 June 2020: Order of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Green and Digital Economy No. 1345-20 of 21 May 2020, supplementing Order No. 1308-94 of 19 April 1994) listing the goods to which quantitative restrictions on import and export apply, published in Official Gazette No. 6888 of 4 June 2020.

5.2. Other flanking measures:

- Cooperation with the Directorate for Medical and Pharmaceutical Products of the Ministry of Health in controlling the export and import of medical supplies associated with COVID-19 (the current situation is very conducive to the selling of counterfeit products).
- Cooperation with the Ministry of Trade and Industry in guaranteeing that the market is supplied with masks and products for the manufacture thereof.
- Establishment of a paper-free procedure with the Ministry of Health for the authentication of authorizations to export medical products.

- Plastic face protection visors (SH3926.90) – Circular No. 6041/311 of 22 April 2020, Official Journal No. 6875 of 20 April 2020.

5.3 Donations of miscellaneous goods seized or abandoned at Customs:

- Donations of foodstuffs for families and people in precarious circumstances.
- Donations to hospitals of medical supplies and equipment that can be used to augment their capacities.
- Donations of confiscated motorcycles to security organizations responsible for enforcing the state of emergency in relation to health.
- Donations of mask-making materials to public bodies.

5.4. Support for the existing measure dematerializing Certificates of Origin by establishing supervision of operations to ensure that data declared are reliable (management of the risk of false declarations of origin).

5.5. Suspension of the time limits stipulated in the statutory and regulatory texts in force for the duration of the state of public health emergency which has been declared, until the official announcement that it has come to an end (for instance, the regulatory time limits laid down in the inward processing, temporary admission, etc. schemes) – Article 6 of Decree-Law No. 2.20.292 on the rules for the state of public health emergency and the procedures for declaring it, as published in Official Journal No 6867(a) of 24 March 2020.

5.6. State of public health emergency: Extension of the free time limit for commercial vehicles used for the international carriage of goods by road – Circular No. 6048/312 of 20 May 2020.

As part of the measures adopted by Moroccan Customs to mitigate the effects of the public health crisis on the transport and logistics sector, it has been decided to deduct the number of days matching the duration of the lockdown period from the recorded rest time when the status of commercial vehicles used in the international carriage of goods by road is regularized, both on re-export (D17) and on re-import (D20).

In addition, transaction agreements entered into by offenders during the period of lockdown and not yet settled will be regularized in accordance with the above-mentioned rule.

5.7. Classification of the import duty on medical supplies and associated products linked to COVID-19 in the Tariff (Circular No. 6049/232 of 21 May 2020).

For the support and information of economic operators during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been thought advisable, with reference to the publications of the WCO Secretariat and the WHO, to publish in the Customs Tariff the classification of a list of medical supplies and associated products likely to be imported or exported in increasing quantities during the period concerned.

The supplies and products in question have been categorized as follows:

- I. COVID-19 test kits/instruments and apparatus for diagnostic tests
- II. Protective clothing and similar articles
- III. Disinfectants and articles for sterilisation purposes
- IV. Oxygen equipment and pulse oximeters

V. Other medical apparatus and devices

VI. Other medical consumables

VII. Vehicles

VIII. Other

5.8 For TIR operations from or to Morocco, the following are accepted for a period of six (6) months:

- Certificates of Approval for TIR vehicles which have expired during the COVID-19 public health crisis, unless it is clearly established that the vehicles concerned no longer meet the requirements laid down by the TIR Convention;
- TIR carnets presented in printed form taken from the “print@home” version set up by the IRU. This version must be treated in the same way as the yellow TIR carnet currently in force and must, of course, bear the stamps of the Customs offices shown in the itinerary stated on the carnet (Circular No. 6050/312 of 26 May 2020).

5.9 Products subject to compliance checking: protective masks made of bonded fibre fabric for non-medical use – HS 6307.90.50.00 (Order No. 1060-20 of 8 April 2020, implementing Law No. 24-09 and Circular No. 6054/311 of 28 May 2020).