

**General Administration of Customs and Excise**  
**17 April 2020**

Belgian Customs Administration Corona Measures – best practices  
*Version 17 April 2020*

**Protective equipment**

Export

Despite the fact that procurement has increased and additional production has been encouraged, the current level of Union production and existing stocks of protective equipment will not be sufficient to meet the demand within the Union. Therefore, the EU has issued Regulation 2020/402 of 14 March to control the export of protective equipment.

For the Belgian Customs Administration, that means:

- Selection system does not release the items of the annex of the regulation for export. Goods can only be cleared for export after verifying officers confirm that the shipment does not contain protective equipment OR if a license is available.
- The necessary capacity is provided for the control of the measures
- There is ongoing concertation with major Belgian industrial stakeholders on the operational side of the regulation
- The competent authority provides certification for traders that are not targeted by the regulation (e.g. protective gear for automotive industry that has no medical use).

Import

The Belgian Customs Administration issued temporary measures to allow relief of VAT and Customs duties for donations of equipment for the protection of personnel.

The relief is based on articles 57 – 58 of regulation 1186/2009.

**Disinfectants, sanitizers, etc.**

Pharmacists shall be allowed, as an exception and for a limited time, to store and use ethanol. We do require the beneficiaries of the exceptional rules to hold a register.

As a second measure, to increase the production of base substances for disinfectant sprays and liquids, the Belgian Customs Administration temporarily broadens the products that can be used for denaturation for this purpose. This enables pharmacists and hospitals to use alcohols to produce disinfectants based on stocks of available alcohols that would otherwise receive another destination (industrial use, destruction, etc.)

**Measures for customs officers**

The minister of Internal Affairs and Safety has listed the Customs Administration as an essential service for the vital functions of the Kingdom of Belgium.

This means the Customs Administration will continue its core function of protecting the interests of the Union and facilitate trade.

### **1. Measures aiming to Facilitate the Cross-border Movement of Relief and Essential Supplies**

**1.1.** Belgian Customs maintains presence and service at all points of entry

**1.2.** For hospitals, Belgian Customs has a procedure to rapidly identify the goods upon arrival and confirm whether they are allowed on the EU market by the competent authorities. The hotline can be reached 24/7.

**1.3.** There is a single point of contact to report possible bottlenecks on logistics. There are weekly high level calls with representatives of the Belgian economic sector.

### **2. Measures aiming at Supporting the Economy and Sustaining Supply Chain Continuity**

**2.1.** For the Customs Transit procedure, more flexibility has been allowed, respecting the constraints of the European Union Customs Code.

**2.2.** Supply chains are disrupted because of the lockdown measures in multiple countries. This leads to the build-up of stocks.

Temporarily, holders of Customs authorizations (inward processing, bonded warehouse, etc.) can request an extension. The locations must be located in Belgium and can only be used for goods that have not received a final customs destination yet.

### **3. Measures aiming at Protecting Customs administrations' Staff**

**3.1.** The Administration took severe measures for protection, based on the social distancing principle. Field officers have reduced staff numbers to allow less interaction. Teams work in the same composition as much as possible

**3.2.** Legislation, central services, litigation and prosecution, and all other non-first line officers work from home.

**3.3.** As a general rule, every document or certificate can temporarily be scanned and delivered to customs. Digital autographs are also accepted. The only exception is documents that need a physical copy in thirds countries (e.g. proof of origin). See also point 4.1.

### **4. Measures aiming at Protecting Society**

**4.1.** As a general rule, Belgian customs delivers every document, authorization or certificate digitally. The only exception is documents that need a physical copy in thirds countries (e.g. proof of origin). See also point 3.3.

**4.2.** Belgian customs, in cooperation with the Federal and local police, guard the national borders to prevent unnecessary travel, as is forbidden by national decree. The officers that enforce normally work on internal controls, so this task does not reduce the capacity of Belgian customs at the EU-borders (airports, ports)

**4.3.** Belgian customs has a stopping function for the controls on the quality of personal protective equipment. There is cooperation with the competent authorities.

**5. Other Measures.**