Republic of Latvia

Order of the Minister for Foreign Affairs No. LV-84

Adopted 7 April 2020

**Regarding the Restrictions on the Provision of Consular Assistance and Consular Services**

1. According to Section 19 of the law On the Operation of State Authorities During the Emergency Situation in Relation to the Spread of COVID-19 and considering Annex “Catalogue of Consular Function to be Exercised in Diplomatic and Consular Representations” to the Order of the Minister for Foreign Affairs No. LV-207 of 17 May 2019, I shall lay down the following restrictions on the provision of consular assistance and consular services during the emergency situation:

1.1. to continue the provision of consular assistance in full amount by substituting types of communication in person with distance communication to the extent possible, including to substitute visits to foreign authorities with remote receipt of information regarding developments therein, and also to maintain distance communication with the recipients of consular assistance;

1.2. to use all possibilities for reliable verification of a person in the issuing of emergency travel documents and granting of material assistance, and to ensure distance communication with such persons. Where this is not possible, when providing assistance in person, an employee and the recipient of the consular assistance must use personal protective equipment, the communication must be carried out only in the premises for the reception of visitors where the working place of the employee is separated with a glass;

1.3. to discontinue the provision of consular services in person providing for the following types of remote consular service provision and exceptions thereto:

1.3.1. registration of a notified fact of birth or death – acceptance of applications shall be organised through post, including, by sending originals of the documents via post;

1.3.2. issuing of civil status registration documents – acceptance of applications shall be organised remotely by the person authorising through www.latvija.lv or using the e-signature; the documents shall be issued by sending them via post to the address indicated by the person;

1.3.3. issuing of multilingual forms – acceptance of applications shall be organised remotely by the person authorising through www.latvija.lv or using the e-signature; the documents shall be issued by sending them via post to the address indicated by the person;

1.3.4. acceptance and examination of visa applications (in representations where visas are issued) – acceptance of applications shall be organised through external service providers in limited scope according to instructions of EU institutions and laws and regulations applicable during the emergency situation; where cooperation with an external service provider cannot take place, visa applications shall be accepted in person by the employee and recipient of the consular service using all the necessary personal protective equipment and undertaking the communication only in premises for the reception of visitors where the working place of the employee is separated with a glass; interviews shall be organised remotely;

1.3.5. acceptance and examination of applications for local border traffic permits (in representations where such permits are issued) – acceptance of applications shall be discontinued;

1.3.6. acceptance of applications for the issuing of personal identification documents and issuing of personal identification documents – acceptance of applications shall be discontinued, the received personal identification documents shall be sent via post to the address indicated by the person in accordance with the requirements of Paragraph 18 of Cabinet Regulation No. 134 of 21 February 2012, Regulations Regarding Personal Identification Documents;

1.3.7. acceptance and transfer of applications for the determination or change of the legal status of persons – acceptance of applications shall be organised remotely by the person authorising through www.latvija.lv or using the e-signature;

1.3.8. acceptance and transfer of applications for the acquisition of the status of a repatriate – acceptance of applications shall be discontinued;

1.3.9. issuing of statements (consular statements, statements from the Population Register, statements from the Punishment Register, etc.) – acceptance of applications shall be organised remotely by the person authorising through www.latvija.lv or using the e-signature if personal data must to be included in the statement; in other cases acceptance of the application shall be organised through post or e-mail correspondence, and documents shall be issued by sending them visa post to the address indicated by the person;

1.3.10. legalisation of documents – provision of the consular service shall be discontinued, except when the document needs to be submitted for legalisation to the Consular Department as a matter of urgency, in order to ensure the implementation of the fundamental rights of persons and also fulfilment of the requirements specified in laws and regulations regarding the emergency situation or the provision of services;

1.3.11. acceptance and transfer of applications for the requisitioning of documents – acceptance of applications shall be organised remotely by the person authorising through www.latvija.lv or using the e-signature;

1.3.12. performance of notary activities – provision of this consular service shall be discontinued;

1.3.13. acceptance and transfer of requests for residence permits – provision of this consular service shall be discontinued;

1.3.14. replies to requests for information regarding consular services – requests shall be accepted and replies shall be provided remotely through the use of a solution which is the most accessible in the specific situation.

2. A consular officer may exceptionally decide to provide a consular service in person if this is needed for the provision of consular assistance.

3. The Order shall come into force on the day of its signing.

4. In accordance with the provisions of Section 38 of the law On the Operation of State Authorities During the Emergency Situation in Relation to the Spread of COVID-19, the Order shall be sent for publication to the official gazette *Latvijas Vēstnesis*.

Minister for Foreign Affairs E. Rinkēvičs