**Special brief**

**Coronavirus – border traffic, trade**

**Main lines to take**

* **Poland is in a better situation today than a lot of countries in the world. We are acting in advance.**
* The WHO has declared a pandemic for the first time in 11 years. This shows how dangerous the situation is. We cannot allow for the kind of pace of disease growth that our neighbours are experiencing.
* **Effective fight against coronavirus requires swift and bold decisions. We are making such decisions.**
* **The health and life of Poles is the most important thing. We have decided to introduce the epidemiological threat status, as a result of which:**

- From **Sunday, 15 March** we are temporarily reintroducing border control for a period of **10 days**,

- Poles returning to the country must undergo a 14-day home quarantine,

- we are not closing food shops; banks and service outlets remain open,

- we are introducing restrictions on the operation of shopping centres,

\* grocery stores, drugstores, pharmacies and launderettes remain open in

these centres,

- we are introducing a ban on public gatherings of more than 50 people,

- restaurants, bars and cafes will only be available for takeouts and delivery.

* We need to take responsible action that will minimise the effects of the pandemic. Ahead of us is a socially testing time, a time of intergenerational solidarity.
* **Prevention is our main goal. We have made difficult decisions, but we hope that they will allow us to avoid further spread of the coronavirus.**
* It is a rational compromise between the security of citizens and the comfort of life. We are learning from the sad experiences of other countries and do not want to repeat their mistakes.
* We expect an increase in the number of cases in the coming days. Without these decisions, it could get out of hand. We cannot allow for this to happen.
* This is the last moment for decisive action. There is no time for half measures. There are **68** people in Poland infected with coronavirus. The fate of all of us and our loved ones depends on how we act now.
* There is no risk that Poland will run out of food:

- in 2019, we were not only one of the largest food producers in the EU, but

also its exporter.

* We appeal for the use of reliable sources of information. We are entering a new phase in the fight against the coronavirus.

- We are taking the fight to the disinformation epidemic. Reliable information is published on government websites.

* **Government and self-government (local) administration, all public services are working 24/7.**

**BORDERS**

* **From Sunday, 15 March, we are closing the borders of our country to foreigners for 10 days. All Polish citizens who are abroad can return to the country.**
* **With the security of Poles in mind, we have decided to restore temporary border control:**

- after crossing the border, Polish citizens will be medically examined and directed to a 14-day home quarantine,

\* we will not leave any citizen in need. These people will be looked after by the sanitary services.

\* We will maintain charters by which Poles will be able to return to their homeland. We have committed the Polish Airlines LOT to full readiness and cooperation with the services.

* Mandatory quarantine does not apply to:

- people from border areas who live in Poland but work every day in a neighbouring country and who cross the border regularly,

- foreigners who live in a neighbouring country but work in Poland and cross the border regularly,

- professional drivers of freight and passenger transport carrying out their duties.

* In the current situation, we cannot afford to leave borders open to foreigners.

- It is the only responsible decision.

- We are aware that the virus came to us from abroad.

* The ban does not apply to:

- spouses of Polish citizens,

- children of Polish citizens,

- people with a Pole's Card,

- people who have the right of permanent or temporary residence in Poland or

a work permit,

- diplomats,

- foreigners who operate a means of transport for the carriage of goods.

* Borders remain open to the flow of goods.

- Poles can be calm about supplies in stores.

* We are suspending international passenger air flights and international rail travel:

- We are closing the door on danger and thus protecting Polish citizens.

* **Domestic air, rail and car travel remains unchanged.**
* It will be possible to leave Poland by road transport at border crossings. The restrictions apply to entering the country.
* We have excluded from closing borders such people as those who work abroad and commute to work every day. This applies to both Poles working abroad and foreigners working in Poland and commuting every day.
* We are undertaking similar activities as the countries of our region: Slovakia, the Czech Republic, but also the USA and Israel.
* **The army is not closing roads, towns or cities.**

- We are limiting the inflow of foreigners to Poland, but we are not closing towns or cities.

- There is no need to surround any place with a sanitary cordon at this time – the situation does not require it.

**SHOPS**

* **From 14 March until further notice, we are limiting the operation of shopping centres, where all grocery stores, pharmacies, drugstores and launderettes will remain open.**

- After 14 days, the Ministry of Health will analyse the possibility of repealing the regulation if the situation improves.

* We have decided to temporarily **suspend the operation of other stores in shopping centres**. We do not want to generate additional traffic in these places.
* The centres will close stores with:
* textile and clothing products,
* footwear and leather products,
* furniture and lighting equipment,
* radio and television equipment and household appliances,
* stationery and book items;

and DIY stores located on their premises, as well as all entertainment and catering outlets.

* **Outside the shopping centres, the restriction does not apply to:**

- all shops (including, for example, DIY stores), banks and service outlets – regardless of what they sell and where they are – they remain open.

* **Each of us will have the opportunity to shop.**

- Thanks to the hard work of shop owners and suppliers, Poles feel safe.

**GASTRONOMY**

* We have decided to limit the gastronomic activity and entertainment points:

- restaurants, bars and cafes will be able to provide their services only in the form of "takeouts" or "for delivery".

* Food outlets will be closed until the sanitary situation is secured, when the ordinance of the minister of health will be repealed.

**PUBLIC GATHERINGS**

* **Our decisions result from the analysis of the dynamic situation in Europe and in the world.**
* We followed the GIS (Chief Sanitary Inspectorate) guidelines. They are similar to the solutions that are being introduced in other EU countries.
* **We must act equally dynamically. We cannot miss or ignore any moment that could cause an avalanche of infections.**
* We have adopted additional security measures to limit collective gatherings to **50 people** from 14 March until further notice.

- After 14 days, the Ministry of Health will examine the possibility of repealing the regulation if the situation improves.

* We are moving to the next, even higher level of societal protection.
* The restriction is universal.

- It concerns all places where people could gather and unnecessarily expose themselves and others, for example at public or religious ceremonies, demonstrations or marches.

Why are we doing this?

* Prevention is our main goal.

- According to experts, some Western countries were late in introducing measures by 1 to even 3 weeks.

* We must remember that there is no person, institution or country in the world that can completely stop the development of coronavirus.

- It is crucial to ensure a smooth outbreak. We want to avoid overloading the healthcare.

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**Official articles on these topics along with questions and answers are available on gov.pl/koronawirus:**

* Border controls: https://www.gov.pl/web/koronawirus/zamykamy-granice-przed-Koronavirus
* Restrictions on gastronomy, entertainment and shopping centre operations: https://www.gov.pl/web/koronawirus/limited restrictions-dzialalnosci-gastronomiczna-entertainment-and-functioning-shopping-galleries