

Covid-19 Response in Prisons

Description

General Directorate „Execution of Sentences“ took the following common preventive and anti-epidemic measures in order to limit the spread of the COVID-19 in the places of deprivation of liberty:

Communicating hygiene awareness to prisoners

- personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, personal protective equipment (PPE), and protective glasses) and disinfectants are provided for staff with direct contact with inmates and medical specialists;
- visits from friends and family to prisoners are temporarily suspended;
- new arrivals are subject to medical examination and monitoring;
- access to updated information materials as flyers, brochures and leaflets is provided for prisoners/detainees.

Maintaining hygienic environments in facilities

- written regulations are developed and sent to all prisons and detention centers in Bulgaria;
- maintenance of good sanitary hygienic condition and frequent ventilation of the air in all premises;
- regular disinfection of the surfaces in the indoor premises is provided;
- cleaning and disinfection procedures of residence and work premises of staff have been introduced on daily base.

Vigorous screening of visitors or restrictions. Regular screening and training of staff

- the prisoners/detainees have the right of visits of lawyers/defendants in compliance with the latest regulations in regard with the prevention of the spread of COVID-19;
- contact visits are not allowed;
- people (for delivery or other services) who visit the prisons are checked on the entrance with a no-touch thermometer. If they have fever, cough or other symptoms of virus, they are recommended to go home and contact a general medical practitioner;
- leaves and work outside are temporarily cancelled;
- all group activities for inmates are temporarily suspended;
- having in mind the specificity of the issue no dedicated training for staff is provided. Awareness campaigns are organised and information materials are distributed for medical practitioners and front-line staff;
- activities which are not necessary for everyday functions of prisons are suspended.

Establishment of quarantine/observation spaces at correctional facilities

There are established quarantine/observation areas at prison hospitals and prison where applicable.

Reporting and treatment on identification of positive cases

- healthcare staff in prisons can contact the Regional Health Inspectorates. By order of the Deputy Minister of Justice the governors of prisons and regional services „Execution of Sentences“ have to nominate staff officials to organize:
- 14-daily active monitoring of the health status of newly arrived inmates and/or detainees;
- 14-daily monitoring of employees returned from other countries after the second half of January 2020;
- Daily follow-up for every patient with symptoms, corresponding to the definition for a case of COVID-19;



- Inmates/detainees with clinical epidemiology and potential risk of infection have to be transferred through specialized transport to a hospital with infectious department in the country. After using the vehicle, it must be disinfected.

Screening of newly arriving prisoners

- Where an inmate shows symptoms compatible with COVID-19 the medical staff in the prison is organizing a testing at referent laboratory. Until the results come out, the person has to be isolated.

All additional data that we receive, will be shared with you.

Point of Contact

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Additional Covid-19 resources are available at: <http://bit.ly/2U0oKLG>

If you would like to send us information about Covid-19, please fill in this form: <http://bit.ly/2WnqiRH>