DECISIONS

COMMISSION DECISION (EU) 2020/1240

of 21 August 2020

authorising Bulgaria to apply an extension of a period specified in Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2020/698 of the European Parliament and of the Council

(notified under document C(2020) 5674)

(Only the English text is authentic)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2020/698 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 2020 laying down specific and temporary measures in view of the COVID-19 outbreak concerning the renewal or extension of certain certificates, licences and authorisations and the postponement of certain periodic checks and periodic training in certain areas of transport legislation ([1]), and in particular Article 3(3) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) Article 3(1) of Regulation (EU) 2020/698 extends the validity of driving licences which would otherwise have expired or would otherwise expire between 1 February 2020 and 31 August 2020.

(2) By letter dated 14 July 2020, Bulgaria submitted a reasoned request for an authorisation to apply an extension of four months to the period between 1 February 2020 and 31 August 2020 specified in Article 3(1) of Regulation (EU) 2020/698. Bulgaria provided additional information in support of its request on 16 and 20 July 2020.

(3) According to the information provided by Bulgaria, the renewal of driving licences in Bulgaria is likely to remain impracticable until 31 December 2020 due to the measures that it has taken to prevent or contain the spread of COVID-19.

(4) In the context of a general adaptation to new technical standards, all Bulgarian personal documents, i.e. identity cards and driving licences, were issued in 2010 for a period of 10 years (with the exception of driving licences for professional use). Therefore, all those documents expire in 2020, meaning that millions of personal documents, including driving licences, have to be renewed in 2020.

(5) During the state of emergency in Bulgaria the renewal of driving licences was temporarily discontinued. It has now resumed, but the number of documents the authorities can process within in any given period of time is lower than usual, due to the precautions that are required by the epidemiological situation, in particular social distancing rules.

(6) Under these circumstances, the competent authorities responsible for issuing and renewing driving licences are facing significant practical difficulties in performing their duties.

(7) Bulgaria should therefore be authorised to apply an extension of the period between 1 February 2020 and 31 August 2020 specified in Article 3(1) of Regulation (EU) 2020/698.

(8) Bulgaria has agreed that this Decision be adopted and notified in English,

([1]) OJ L 165, 27.5.2020, p. 10.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Bulgaria is authorised to apply an extension of four months of the period between 1 February 2020 and 31 August 2020 specified in Article 3(1) of Regulation (EU) 2020/698.

Article 2

This Decision is addressed to the Republic of Bulgaria.

Done at Brussels, 21 August 2020.

For the Commission
Adina-Ioana VĂLEAN
Member of the Commission