

The National Assembly has issued a decision declaring a state of emergency in Bulgaria from 13 March 2020 until 13 April 2020 in order to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 disease, with measures that include closing certain venues (restaurants, theaters, gym centres, etc.), as well as a ban on all mass activities. Employers have been advised to introduce distance working and restrictions have been imposed to the work of public offices to avoid the crowding of people.

Court houses, notaries public and private bailiffs have restricted their activities and the access of outside people to their work places – and it is possible to start new proceedings only as an exception (e.g. securing future claims, emergency notary proceedings).

The measures which have been undertaken raise a number of questions, including:

- How will the obligations under civil and commercial contracts be fulfilled?
- How will the relations with employees be regulated for the period during which they cannot work?
- What will happen with the time limits for filing documents and exercising rights before executive and judicial authorities?

Currently there are draft bills tabled in parliament that aim to settle these issues, and taking into consideration the legislative procedure, any legislative measures arrived at will become known towards the end of the week at the soonest.

One of the draft bills envisages the suspension of time limits in civil, administrative, criminal and enforcement proceedings. The bill proposes to suspend, during the declared state of emergency, those time limits which have started and have not yet expired, as before any administrative body, pre-trial body, court or public bailiff, as well as before courts in civil, commercial, administrative and criminal cases. It is envisaged that the statutory time limits

for newly requested actions should be considered extended for the term of the state of emergency. It is also proposed to suspend enforcement in enforcement proceedings under the Civil Procedure Code and the Tax and Social Security Code.

Dobrev & Lyutskanov Law Firm will monitor the regulatory changes and the mandatory acts of the executive and we remain at your disposal to assist you with any questions and uncertainties that arise in connection with the state of emergency, subject to the rules to limit the spread of the disease.