

Presidency of the Council of Ministers

Eighth Constitutional Government

Press Release

Meeting of the Council of Ministers of April 29, 2020

The Council of Ministers met at the Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão Auditorium, at the Ministry of Finance in Dili and approved the draft Decree-Law, presented by the Coordinating Minister of Economic Affairs, Fidelis Manuel Leite Magalhães and the Governor of the Central Bank of Timor-Leste (BCTL), Abraão de Vasconcelos, on the first amendment to Decree-Law No. 23/2017, of July 12, concerning the Credit Guarantee System (SGC). This amendment extends access to the GSC to micro-enterprises, increasing the type of economic activities eligible for the programme. The credit guarantee scheme is a support mechanism for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), through which the State shares the risk of lending with commercial banks, granting a guarantee covering up to a maximum amount of 70% of loans granted and meeting the established legal requirements. The Main Objective of the GSC is to contribute to a solid and viable business sector that promotes entrepreneurship, job creation and the growth of the national economy.

Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak presented the draft Government Decree, approved by the Council of Ministers, on the Measures for Implementing the Renewal of the Declaration of the State of Emergency enacted by decree of the President of the Republic No. 32/2020, of April 27, to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In view of the renewal of the declaration of the state of emergency, the Government through this Decree ensures its implementation by adopting the necessary measures that prevent the disease, contain the pandemic, save lives and ensure the subsistence of the supply chains of essential goods and services for our population, even if they may limit some fundamental rights and freedoms.

With regard to Government Decree No. 3/2020 of March 28, the prohibition on foreigners entering national territory is maintained, with the exceptions previously provided for and with the exception of all foreigners who conduct their professional activity in the oil sector.

The rules for the sanitary control of entries and exits of national territory remain the same. With regard to the rules of social distancing, the Diploma states that the agents of the security forces must recommend that all individuals comply with the defined rules, order the dispersion of agglomerations of people, inform that resistance to the order of compliance may constitute a crime of disobedience, identify individuals who violate the rules and communicate these occurrences to the Public Prosecutor's Office.

This Government Decree allows public transport activity, provided that vehicles are sanitized daily before starting the activity and provided that drivers, crews and passengers wear protective masks and avoid any form of physical contact.

With regard to the rules on access to commercial establishments and services, the rules on the compulsory use of masks for customers and employees, hand washing before entry into the premises and respect for the physical distance of at least one and a half metres are maintained. Security forces and inspectors of the food and economic safety authority may order individuals who do not comply with the rules to leave the establishment, identify individuals and report the case to the Public Prosecutor's Office. These rules also apply to markets, with the provision by the authorities and municipal administrations of the necessary conditions and for monitoring compliance with the established rules. Street vendors are required to wear a protective mask permanently and must keep a distance of at least one metre from other street vendors.

The measures established earlier relating to the functioning of the public administration and access to its facilities are maintained, the list of public services considered essential is increased and the list of activities in which the right to strike is suspended is defined.

The Government Decree now approved states that the member of the Government responsible for health, may determine, when this appears necessary for the protection of public health, the temporary request for use of private spaces and establishments. In duly justified cases, the Council of Ministers may request real estate or goods from individuals.

The Council of Ministers approved the draft Government Decree, presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Dionísio da Costa Babo Soares, which approves the regulation on the subsidy to Timorese citizens who are or temporarily reside abroad and other non-residents who are held abroad, given the epidemiological situation of the new Coronavirus. The amount of the monthly subsidy depends on the cost of living of the host country. Beneficiaries of this measure are non-scholarship timorese students who depend exclusively on the financial support of the family residing in Timor-Leste and Timorese citizens who, due to the closure of the borders, were prevented from returning to Timor-Leste.

The Council of Ministers approved the draft Decree-Law on the second amendment to the Statute of the Military of Falintil-Defense Forces of Timor-Leste (F-FDTL), approved by Decree-Law No. 7/2014 of March 12. This amendment aims to reconcile the Statute of the F-FDTL with a set of structuring documents in the area of Defense and with the current legal context, namely, the National Defense Law, the Strategic Concept of National Defense, the Military Strategic Concept, the National Force System, the Missions of the Armed Forces and the F-FDTL Force. **ENDS**