



# Crisis management at the General Directorate of Tunisian Customs during the Mondial Pandemic of Corona virus

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# Introduction

❑ **Crisis management** related to securing the logistics chain and special procedures during the period of confronting natural disasters and emergency conditions is one of **the most important challenges facing customs administrations around the world.**

❑ **The General Directorate of the Tunisian Customs** is among the national structures that have prepared a **plan to manage** the crisis related to confronting the spread of the Corona virus and its impact on the workflow of various customs departments.

We can review the most prominent stages and various levels.

# I/Security measures taken to fight against the Corona virus within the Customs Directorate

It was decided to **suspend the granting of leave licenses** to all customs officers since the date of **March 11, 2020**, and it was also decided that all agents who returned from aboard after this date will be **automatically subject to a 15-day quarantine**.

➤The **Directors and the chiefs** were also called to **take special measures and precautions**, to invite their subordinates to **use preventives measures, limit their movements** even during their annual vacations and to **immediately inform** about all cases of illness or suspicion in their work and family environment.

➤On **March 17, 2020**, the **Electronic Notification Service** was activated to follow up on the health situation in relation with Corona virus through **the Intranet network** .

➤It also allows them to issue real-time notifications directly to the Operating Service to take necessary measures.

➤ **Provide personal protective equipment** such as masks and sterilization materials.

➤ **Apply social distancing** and preventive measures.

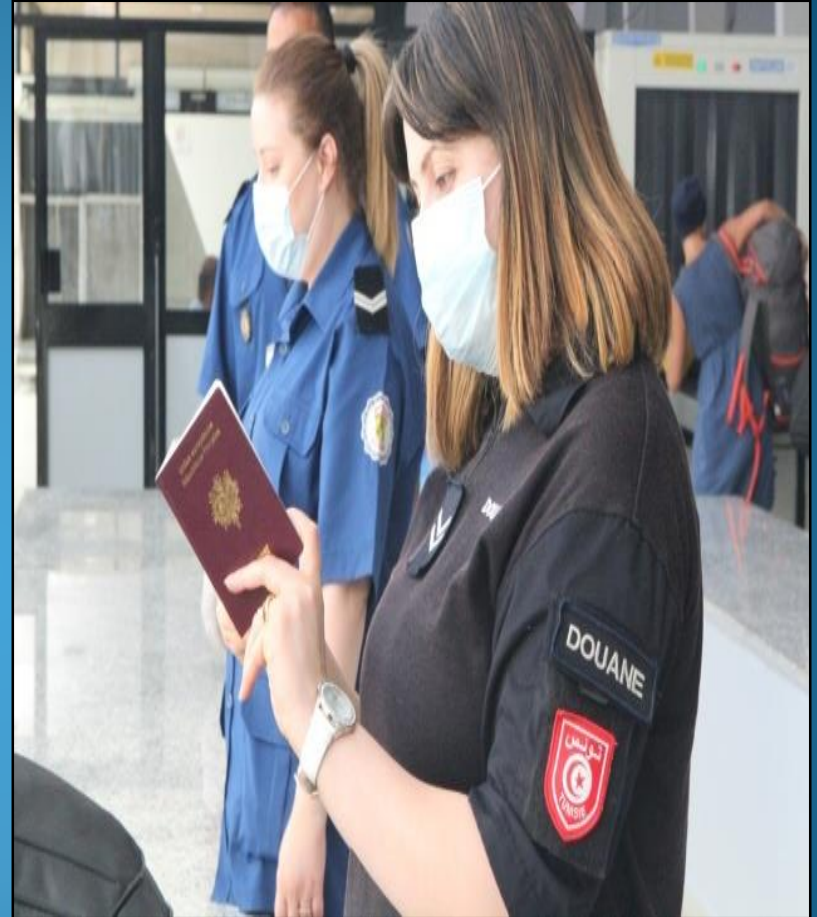
➤ **Divide the work** by adopting the **group system** to limit the spread of infection in the event of an injury. (**Having fewer employees while ensuring work continuity**).

➤ **Enabling some employees to work remotely** to ensure the continuity of administrative work.

## II/Measures for the evacuation of foreigners and the return of Tunisians residing abroad

- **Supporting public structures** (Office of Tunisians Abroad, Office of the Merchant Navy and Ports, Office of Civil Aviation) in **evacuating** Tunisians stranded abroad and evacuating foreigners stranded in Tunisia.
- **Taking into consideration** the special situations of Tunisians residing abroad and foreigners residing in Tunisia caused by the Corona pandemic, especially the disruption of transportation.
- **Suspending the deadlines** for Tunisians residing abroad in the field of benefiting from the privileges granted in the framework of the final return and the completion of projects.

- **Extension of tour licenses** for vehicles under the **Temporary Admission** system.
- **Facilitating the examination** of the demands of Exit without a car for Tunisians residing abroad and foreigners residing in Tunisia.
- **Suspending the validity** of the deadlines for determining the final return of Tunisians residing abroad.



# III/ Supply Chain Security Procedures

In the context of respecting the implementation of **International and Bilateral agreements** and the **recommendations of the World Customs Organization** , several exceptional measures have been adopted to release medical and humanitarian shipments during pandemics and disasters, including:

- ❑ **Giving the highest priority** to the release of relief shipments and shipments of a humanitarian nature when importing, exporting and transiting.
- ❑ The possibility of demobilizing these shipments with **Simplified or Temporary Declaration**, even if outside working hours.
- ❑ **Adequate minimum required monitoring procedures.**

□ In implementation of the instructions of the Prime Minister, and in coordination with the Ministries of Commerce and Industry and Small and Medium Enterprises with the context of ensuring that the local market is supplied with basic foodstuffs, medical and paramedical equipment during this exceptional period; **the authorization has been granted for the consumption of products manufactured under the Inward processing in semolina and food dough And medical masks.**

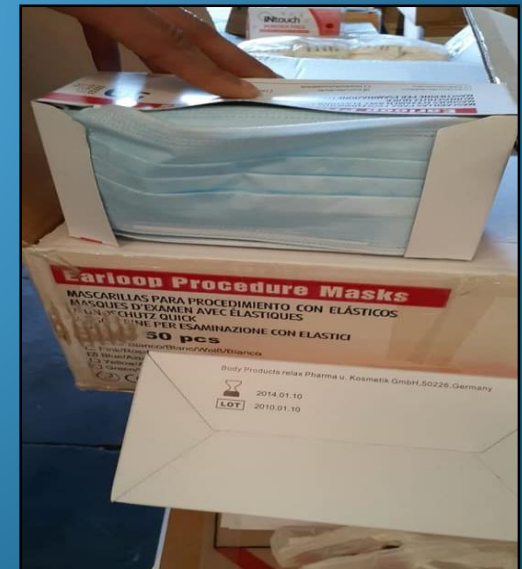
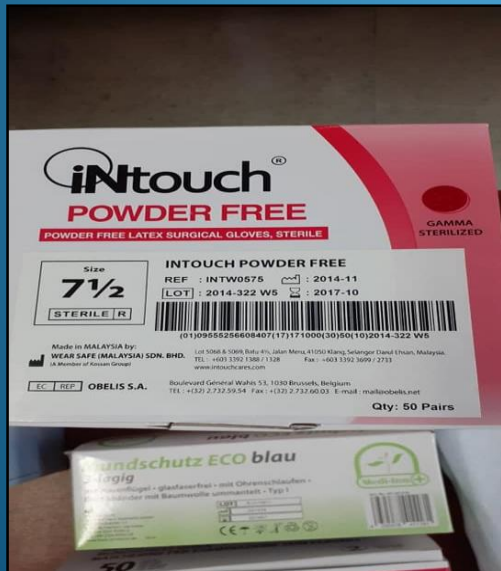
## ❑ Monitoring the release of goods under the import, export and transit system :

- ❖ The procedures for clearing customs Declaration continued as usual during the period of quarantine.

- ❖ The unprecedented increase in demand for medicines, vaccines, diagnostic and detection tools, and equipment related to the prevention of Corona virus, and with reference to the field monitoring reports and warnings issued by the World Customs Organization and the World Health Organization, it was indicated that the demand for these equipment provided an opportunity for smuggling and criminal gangs to promote products that do not conform to specifications and violate health and safety rules.

❖ Suspicious operations were targeted and monitored, which resulted on **March 26, 2020** thwarting an attempt to import without notification : **234,680** expired medical protective equipment by the radiological detection cellule of the customs border office in the port of Rades, seize two containers loaded with an important quantity of medical gloves and masks And medical clothing that was not declared.

❖ By referring it to a **thorough inspection** by the border services of the customs office at the port of Rades, it was found that all these medical equipment **are out of date**.



# IV/Facilitating and simplifying the customs procedures

- ❑ **Automating** the procedure for disposing of the cargo manifest upon export.
- ❑ **Amending** the cargo manifest when importing outside the legal deadlines.
- ❑ **Approval of prior customs Declaration** (preparing and depositing the detailed declaration of goods before the arrival of the means of transport)
- ❑ **Expand the use of informational applications** such as “My Baggage”, “My License” and “My Status” in order to simplify and ease the procedures for the temporary summer return of Tunisians abroad. (Enable Tunisians residing abroad to obtain customs services related to their means of transport and to the imported baggage, and that is done remotely using the information applications prepared for the purpose).

**❑ Adoption of exceptional procedures for the acceptance of certificates of movement of goods EUR<sub>1</sub> upon import.**

**(Accept a copy of the certificates of origin + accept the electronic certificates of origin and check the remote verification link. : QR Code.**

**❑ Extending the validity of certificates of origin for Euro-Mediterranean countries, which usually have a validity period of 4 months, so that their study becomes case by case.**

**❑ This procedure was under a circular dated 10-12-2020 joint between the Ministry of Finance and Trade and pertains to EURMED and EUR<sub>1</sub>.**

**❑ These procedures were adopted after receiving the note from the European Union in this regard.)**

❑ Taking measures to support the foundations of national cooperation and support people and institutions, especially by licensing the settlement of the status of goods imported under the “inward processing”, in respect of which the written obligations have not been fulfilled, by placing them for consumption with exemption from paying the required duties , fees and surpluses of delay.

❑ Establishing fiscal and financial measures to mitigate the negative repercussions of Corona by raising the percentage of local marketing from the number of transactions achieved from export by 100% (food industries establishments..)

Totally exporting companies 30% ---- < They have the right to 100% since these institutions face several difficulties as well as giving them the possibility of re-exporting their raw materials.

As well as a decree giving priority to industrial companies to put for consumption without paying the surpluses of delay and without sins.)

# **V/ Reducing the tax burden:**

**Reviewing the taxes and duties required on individual protection products and their inputs to prevent the spread of infection with the Corona virus, and making the following customs rulings:**

- Reduction of up to 7% of the value-added tax due on the supply of individual protection products.**
- Exemption of the aforementioned products from value-added tax.**

# VI/ Securing access to vaccines, medical and paramedical materials

1- **Carrying out the process of demobilizing** the supplied vaccines while expediting the procedures and respecting the health conditions.

2- **Contribute to supporting the national effort** to support other structures, as an important group of medical equipment and various equipment seized was referred to the Ministry of Health, hospital institutions, administrations and public interests involved in this field. It also took part in the preparation of a number of quarantine centers in various regions of the country.

The most important of these referrals were usable medical protective equipment.



# Conclusion

Despite the tendency of Customs towards facilitating all procedures and measures facing this general pandemic, the Tunisian Customs guarantees carrying out its supervisory role entrusted to it, which took place during the month of April 2020, and after a notification from the World Customs Organization regarding the circulation of expired materials and equipment related to the Corona epidemic or Bearing counterfeit trademarks, issuing NOTES to all customs departments in the first and second line of control, which allowed the seizure of quantities of expired medical materials bearing counterfeit trademarks, whether at the time of import or during their transportation.

**Thank you for your  
attention**