



## Covid-19: Portugal in State of Emergency

For the first time in the Portuguese democracy, the exceptional measure of state of emergency has been decreed.

The Portuguese President has declared today a state of emergency due to public disaster, following countries such as Spain, France, Italy and the United States, that adopted the same measure to fight the current Covid-19 pandemic.

This exceptional measure may imply strong restrictions to some constitutional rights, reason why it is limited to the indispensable in harmony with the principle of proportionality.

The most severe restrictions may occur to the freedom of movement and settlement in any part of the national territory. With the expected exceptions of certain professional activities such as health care or food supply, the Portuguese Government will specify in which terms citizens will no longer be allowed to use their right to free movement according to the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Compulsive confinement at home or in a health establishment can be imposed, as well as the setting of sanitary fences (which is already taking place in the municipality of Ovar).

International movement is limited, border controls (including sanitary ones) on people and goods can be imposed, and compulsory confinement also applies. Travelling ban from and to Italy and Spain is already in place.

Property rights and private initiative may also be suspended or otherwise limited, as well as the provision of any services. The use of any health care units, commercial and industrial establishments may be demanded.

Employees may be required to perform functions under different working conditions, particularly in the health, civil protection, security and defense, distribution and supply of basic goods and services and critical infrastructure sectors.

According to today's presidential decree, which may be read [here](#), under no circumstances will the rights to life, integrity and personal identity, civil capacity and citizenship, as well as freedom of expression and information be compromised, well as the principles of criminal law.

The state of emergency shall remain in force until April the second and may be renewed if normality has not yet been restored.

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