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3 SEAS ROOSTER

Baltic | Black | Adriatic
Newsletter From the Three Seas Region

#1 LOCKDOWNS ACROSS THE THREE SEAS COUNTRIES

On Thursday the **Czech** government filed a request to the parliament to **extend the state of emergency by one month until January 22, 2021**, because of the continuing Covid-19 outbreak. The current state of emergency ends on December 23. The state of emergency has been introduced in the Czech Republic during the second wave of the pandemic on October 5 and was already extended three times.

Bulgaria extended its **epidemic emergency until January 31, 2021**.

Police in **Lithuania** is installing **250 checkpoints on roads across the country before the holidays**. The aim is to ban people from traveling during Christmas time.

In **Poland** the government announced a **national quarantine starting on December 28 until January 17, 2021**. Additionally, there will be a curfew on New Year's Eve from 7 p.m. on Dec 31 to 6 a.m. on Jan 1.

The **Slovak** government decided to introduce a **national lockdown from December 19 to January 10**, however, with numerous exceptions. The new restrictions will not affect working doctors or necessary purchases. There isn't any ban on traveling during the holidays.

#2 THE BULGARIAN PART OF THE TURKISH STREAM PIPELINE HAS BEEN COMPLETED

The **Bulgarian** part of the Turkish Stream pipeline that runs from the Turkish to the Serbian border is completed. The executive director of the Bulgarian gas operator Vladimir Malinov said on Wednesday that it "will be **commissioned in the upcoming days**".

The new **474 km-long pipeline section is intended to ensure the flow of Russian natural gas from Turkey**. TurkStream is connected further to Serbia, Hungary, Austria and Slovakia. One of the gas compression stations is ready and the other one will be completed next year, and then the pipeline will reach full capacity.

On Tuesday during the visit of Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov to Belgrade, Serbian president Aleksandar Vucic said that the Russian gas supplied by the TurkStream would flow from Bulgaria to Serbia on December 29 or 30.

At the beginning of October, the US assistant secretary for energy resources Francis Fannon said in Sofia that for the U.S. the Bulgarian section of the Turkstream is an element of Russia's instrumental use of energy, and he made it clear that American sanctions imposed on Russian gas pipelines could also have consequences for Bulgaria. Bulgarian PM Boyko Borissov has repeatedly stressed that the gas pipeline is a purely Bulgarian investment and a part of the national transmission infrastructure.

#3 EU COUNTRIES WILL START VACCINATIONS ON DECEMBER 27

President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen announced on Thursday that **vaccination against Covid-19 will start in the EU countries on December 27, 28 and 29**. She has previously called for a coordinated start of

vaccinations on the same day in all 27 EU countries.

Von der Leyen said that the EU has purchased more doses of the vaccine than needed to ensure that all European citizens are vaccinated. To put an end to the coronavirus pandemic **70% of the population must be vaccinated.**

The European Commission has concluded preliminary talks with the pharmaceutical company Novavax to purchase its potential Covid-19 vaccine. The agreement would allow all EU countries to purchase 100 million doses. A deal with the company would complement the broad portfolio of vaccines; contracts already were signed with AstraZeneca, Sanofi-GSK, Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, BioNTech-Pfizer, CureVac and Moderna.

#DOYOUKNOW

Unlike Orthodox Russians, Ukrainians and Serbs, Bulgarians celebrate Christmas on December 25

In Bulgaria Christmas time starts on December 20 on Saint Ignatius day and lasts until December 26.

On Christmas Eve Bulgarians enjoy a variety of vegetarian dishes - beans, lentils, cabbage rolls with rice, dried red peppers stuffed with rice, beans, potatoes.

Tradition requires hanging dried fruits, hot peppers and corn seeds (which symbolize prosperity) on Christmas trees.

#4 THE DEADLIEST ROADS IN EUROPE ARE IN ROMANIA, BULGARIA AND POLAND

According to the latest report of the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) in 2019 **Romania, Bulgaria and Poland** are **the worst countries to drive in in Europe**. The average number of road deaths per 1 million inhabitants in 2019 in these countries was 96, 90 and 85 respectively.

The average death rate for all 27 countries is 51 per 1 million inhabitants.

In the years 2016-2019, an average of 12 people per 1 bln kilometers traveling on Polish roads died - this is the highest death rate in Europe. The safest country in the report is Norway.

#5 THE US VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE PLANS TO VISIT POLAND IN JANUARY

Media reported that in January Mike Pence plans to **visit Poland, Israel and Bahrain**. Donald Trump's deputy may leave Washington DC right after the Congress confirms Joe Biden's victory on January 6. As the president of the Senate Pence will announce the winner of the 2020 elections. It will be his first overseas trip since the outbreak of the pandemic. Its schedule, according to US officials, may change.

Krzysztof Szczerski (aide of Polish president Andrzej Duda) presented a different version of the story. He stated that **there are no such plans** and stressed that it is impossible to organize such a visit due to the pandemic and Poland's national quarantine that comes into effect on December 28.

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The **3 Seas Rooster** covers news of Central Europe and the Three Seas Initiative.

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