



# **BOLLETTINO**

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 200319c

Thursday 19.03.2020

## **Extraordinary and urgent measures for countering the COVID-19 epidemiological emergency and containing the negative effects on judicial activity**

1. With effect from the day following the date of entry into force of this measure and until 3 April 2020, the hearings of the trials in progress at all judicial offices shall be postponed *ex officio* until after 3 April 2020, subject to the exceptions indicated in paragraph 4.

2. From the day following the date of entry into force of this order until 3 April 2020, the time limits for the completion of any act of the proceedings indicated in paragraph 1 shall be suspended, subject to the exceptions indicated in paragraph 4. Should the proceedings begin during the period of suspension, the beginning shall be postponed until the end of the aforementioned period.

3. From the day following the date of entry into force of this measure until 3 April 2020, all limitation periods shall also be suspended for all purposes, subject to the exceptions referred to in paragraph 4.

4. The provisions of the preceding subparagraphs shall not apply:

(a) in civil proceedings in the context of which a reasoned situation of non-applicability is inferred and where the delay in the proceedings is likely to result in serious prejudice to the parties. Upon request by the party concerned or, where provided for, by the Promoter of Justice, the President of the judicial office or his delegate shall decide within ten days by decree, which may not be challenged. In the event of acceptance, the time limits referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 shall have effect again from the tenth day following the day on which the request was filed, or from the service of the order that is filed after the aforementioned time limit;

b. in criminal proceedings for which the proceedings at first instance are not yet in progress;

c. in criminal proceedings against persons who are detained or otherwise subject to measures restricting their personal liberty;

d. in criminal proceedings in which the urgent need to obtain evidence which cannot be postponed is inferred. Upon the request by the Promoter of Justice or by the interested party, the chairman of the board of arbitrators

or his delegate shall decide within ten days by a decree that cannot be challenged. In the event of acceptance, the time limits referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 shall start to run again from the tenth day following the day on which the request was filed, or from the service of the order that is filed after the aforementioned time limit.

5. The President of the Court of First Instance, having heard, in so far as their respective powers are concerned, the President of the Court of Appeal or the President of the Court of Cassation, without prejudice to the ordinary powers of direction and organisation of the judicial offices and Registry staff, may also take the following measures:

- a. the limitation of the access of users to the judicial offices, guaranteeing in any case access to persons who must carry out urgent activities there;
  - b. limitation of the opening hours of judicial offices;
  - c. the regulation of access to judicial offices subject to reservation, including by telephone or telematic means of communication, ensuring that users are summoned at fixed times;
  - d. the holding of hearings behind closed doors, which may be held as part of the proceedings referred to in paragraph 4;
  - e. the rostering of administrative and clerical staff, also in derogation of the ordinary provisions.
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