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MINISTER OF TOURISM

**GUIDELINES FOR THE OPERATION OF ACCOMMODATION, CATERING
AND ENTERTAINMENT ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE PRESENCE OF A
DANGER OF COVID-19 INFECTION IN BULGARIA**

(COORDINATED WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH)

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Introduction

The measures proposed in this document represent Guidelines for the operation of Accommodation Facilities (AF) and Food and Entertainment Establishments (F&EE), incorporated / attached to them or stand-alone which have open areas (terraces, gardens and other open spaces), under the conditions of COVID-19, in accordance with the guidelines and recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Considering that tourist facilities vary in terms of location, purpose and functions, design, operation and management, adaptations should be made on a case-by-case basis but in such a way as to correspond to the Guidelines.

These Guidelines may be updated according to the development and spread of COVID-19 in Bulgaria.

These Guidelines are published on the official website of the Ministry of Tourism.

Key objectives of the procedures applied:

1. Increase the safety and protect the health of the staff servicing guests at AFs and F&EEs;
2. Minimise the risk of infection for guests and other visitors. including suppliers;
3. Limit the number of contacts on the territory of tourist facilities over a period of time as part of mitigating the risk of infection;
4. Complex and coordinated actions tailored to the stage of development of the epidemic situation.

These Guidelines cover four areas:

1. Ensuring the safety of staff;
2. Ensuring safety and security for guests at the facilities;
3. Preventive procedures in case of a suspicion of a coronavirus infection of a staff member coming from another staff member;
4. Procedures to be followed in case of a suspected coronavirus infection of a guest /guests.

1) Management Team

Before a tourist facility can open and during its operation, the following will be necessary:

- **Action plan:** the facility will need to develop its own plan for the operation of the site, in accordance with the recommendations and guidelines of the national and regional public health authorities concerning actions to contain the spread of the coronavirus. The action plan should be **updated** to reflect the epidemic situation in Bulgaria and contain a clear allocation of the human and economic resources available in order to prevent the spread of the virus and comply with

anti-epidemic measures; this includes setting up a crisis response task force. The Action Plan should **include** specific procedures, taking account of these guidelines and any guidelines issued by the Minister of Health and the Director of the Regional Health Inspectorate, with regard to actions and the management of cases of infected people and their possible contacts.

The **implementation** of the action plan and the effectiveness of the measures taken must be evaluated often to check their compliance, identify and remedy any gaps and adapt the plan to practical experience.

- **Hygiene Check:** carry out an initial thorough examination and subsequently conduct regular hygiene audits of the site in order to verify compliance with the requirements that have been put into place. To that end, it is advisable to keep a Logbook of Hygiene and Disinfection Actions Carried Out, Follow-Up Measures and Remedial Actions, and to record detailed information on the actions undertaken (such as date and time, disinfectant used, by whom, where, etc.) An analysis of the information logged can be used to improve the actions implemented.
- **Ensure a sufficient quantity of face masks,** both for guests and staff, to be stocked at the premises. The site must make sure that the number of face masks available exceed by at least 10% its maximum accommodation capacity in terms of guests and the number of staff to be covered in case of emergency.
- Availability of a sufficient number of thermometers to be provided to guests, staff and third parties, if necessary.

- **Communication**
- **Information policy with respect to guests and staff:**
 - each and every staff member must be familiar with their duties according to the plan for the operation of the site.
 - Information posters, brochures and official leaflets with key messages addressed to guests and staff must be available at the site, focusing on basic hygiene practices and on COVID-19, in different languages. Instructions on proper hand washing, removing and putting on disposable gloves, removing and putting on a face mask should be posted in public restrooms and washrooms, and hand sanitizer dispenser areas should be equipped with instruction posters on the proper disinfection of hands.

- An updated staff contact list and important telephone numbers to call in case of emergency, etc. must be available at the facility.
- The Management of the site must have delivered an inductive training, instructing the staff how to observe sanitary and hygienic measures, and hold regular briefings on the main anti-epidemic measures undertaken in Bulgaria.
- A specially trained staff member must be designated to supervise the hygiene maintained at the premises and compliance with spatial distancing rules,

I. Ensuring the safety of staff

1. Provide working conditions requiring the observance of spatial distancing among staff members and compliance with occupational safety rules, in accordance with the effective legislation.
2. Reduce the number of staff using common areas simultaneously, for example, a room for breaks from work, locker rooms, etc. The use of such rooms can be organised using a pre-set schedule and it is recommended that the number of people using them should be such as to allow them to observe a spatial distance of at least 1.5 metres. The facility should be equipped with personal protective equipment, including face masks or face shields, gloves and hand sanitizers, as well as waterproof long-sleeved gowns to be used if necessary.
3. Recommendations for staff (according to Annex 1).
4. Ensure, as far as possible, ventilation for the premises, incl. mechanical general ventilation and regular cleaning and disinfection of filters. It is not recommended to use air conditioners. The use of fans is recommended, as well as natural ventilation.
5. Limit meetings in closed spaces to the necessary minimum; meetings should be held in rooms with the windows open, keeping the distance between people as recommended by the health authorities (at least 1.5 metres); communications should preferably be done by phone and email or another remote connection channel.
6. Limit the use of common spaces by staff, including:
 - Time breaks at different hours,
 - Reduce the number of staff who use common parts at the same time (for example, by timing their lunch breaks at different hours).
7. Special care for staff from groups that face a greater epidemic risk; if possible, people aged over 60 and those with conditions should not be engaged in tasks requiring direct contact with guests.

8. Suppliers to AF and F&EE should be required to use personal protective equipment in accordance with the relevant administrative orders issued and the respective measures, in compliance with the effective legislation.

9. Adopt a procedure to be followed in case of a suspicion of an infection situation, and effectively instruct staff, in accordance with the guidelines and orders issued by the Ministry of Health and Regional Health Inspectorate.

3) ***ENSURING THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF GUESTS AT THE FACILITY***

a). RECEPTION AREA AND RECEPTION DESK AT THE FACILITY

RECEPTION AREA

- Arrival of guests: regulation and control of the flow of guests on the premises and compliance with the spatial distancing requirement.
- Information on the maximum number of guests who can stay in a given part of the facility, as well as the requirement to maintain a spatial distance of at least 1.5 metres between members of different families should be prominently displayed at the entrance of the facility and at the reception desk.
- Dispensers with liquid hand sanitizers should be placed at points accessible to guests and staff inside the facility, and in particular at the entrances, in the reception area, at elevator entrances, at the entrance to the open areas of the premises to be used for catering and entertainment, and in the anteroom of public restrooms, the entryway to an area with an outdoor pool, etc.

RECEPTION DESK

1. Information and communication

- Receptionists should be adequately informed about COVID-19 so that they can perform their duties safely and professionally in order to prevent its possible spread at the premises.
- Inform all guests and potential clients about the procedures and policy of the site concerning security and safety, preventive measures applied in relation to COVID-19 in the respective facility.
- Availability of up-to-date official travel information to and from countries or regions where COVID-19 is still spreading.

- The staff at the reception should be familiar with the room occupancy policy at the property concerning accompanying persons in case of a suspected COVID-19 infection. The personal data protection rules with respect to the guests' data need to be observed.
- Prepare a list of the relevant telephone numbers of the regional health authorities, the medical institution with which the accommodation facility has a service contract, ambulance centres, pharmacies, etc. and keep it in a fixed (easily accessible) place. The reception staff must have it handy at all times.

2. Necessary equipment to be available at the reception desk (precaution kit)

2.1. The reception desk must be equipped with a precaution kit that includes the following items:

- Disinfectant and/or surface cleaning wipes;
- Hand sanitizer;
- Face masks / eye protection (individually or combined, face shield, protective goggles). A sufficient quantity of extra face masks for the whole facility (guests and staff).
- Gloves (disposable).
- Protective apron (disposable)
- Full-length long-sleeved gown (recommended).
- A waste bin with a lid.

2.2. In order to protect the reception, it is recommended that the management of the facility provide maximum protection for the staff, by providing, in addition to personal protective equipment and disinfectants, where possible, physical protection of the reception desk area and the area of interaction with guests by placing, for example, transparent partitions or the like, set at least 1 meter above the floor.

3. Measures ensuring spatial distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene

Although guests are probably familiar with these measures, it is necessary to remind them by offering information at the reception desk in an appropriate way.

- Spatial distancing: a distance of at least 1.5 meters must be maintained.
- At any time, no more than 2 guests can check in at the reception desk, unless they are members of the same family. The use of dividers is allowed and useful in controlling the people waiting in the lobby.
- Keeping to a minimum the time the guest spends at the reception desk.
- Hand hygiene: Regular and thorough cleaning hands using a hand rub with a viricidal or partially viricidal action or washing with soap and water. Touching the eyes, nose and mouth before washing is to be avoided. Hands should be disinfected also after exchanging objects (cash, IDs, credit cards) with the guests. Observance of respiratory hygiene.

- Encourage the use of e-cards instead of paying in cash.

B. LOBBY AREA

- Seating area: separate outdoor seating, outside the lobby should be available, with seats at least 1.5 meters apart. Grouping of guests in the lobby is not allowed.
- Spatial distancing: a guest should keep their distance while waiting in a queue to check in or out.
- Guest Elevators: restriction on use to as few persons as possible.
- Manage crowding of the lobby, especially during peak arrival and departure times, temporary placement of signs and organization of the process in order to avoid crowding of people.

C. GUEST ROOMS/ STAFF ROOMS / HOUSEKEEPING

• Cleaning and disinfection

Application of more stringent and special cleaning and disinfection measures in common areas (public restrooms, halls, corridors, elevators, etc.) and the provision of appropriate disinfectants (biocides) and detergents as a general preventive measure during the COVID-19 epidemic. Special attention should be paid to the disinfection of contact surfaces which are often touched, such as door handles, elevator buttons, handrails, switches, doorknobs, arms of chairs and flat surfaces, including worktops in working areas and dining rooms, etc. Where possible, doors and windows should be left open for longer during the day. Maintaining the necessary distance between staff and guests (at least 2 meters).

- Frequent disinfection, at least once every hour, of public restrooms, elevators, reception desk (after each guest), door handles, handrails, handles, telephones, computer keyboards and other frequently touched surfaces.
- Precise dosing of professional detergents.
- It is recommended to clean the room and disinfect all contact surfaces (including backs of chairs), equipment (e.g. remote controls) and the bathroom and thoroughly air room or, after cleaning the room, apply ozonisation / misting/ disinfection using other specialised technologies such as bactericidal lamps, etc., as a routine, after each guest.
- Chambermaids and other staff involved in cleaning should be equipped and use a disposable mask, gloves and, if necessary, a disposable long-sleeved gown.

Bed linen and towels must be washed by specialized persons, registered as required by national law, who must comply with the special additional recommendations on washing at a temperature of at least 60 °C, adding a detergent and a disinfectant. Collection, temporary storage, handover of used bed linen and towels, and the receipt and storage of clean ones, respectively, shall be carried out in strict compliance with the legal requirements and the recommendations of health authorities.

- Where possible, systematically air all rooms in the facility or ozonate (or treat using other available technologies, such as bactericidal lamps, etc.) all common areas within a certain frequency.
- It is recommended to provide a personal set of sanitary materials in the rooms (as a compliment to guests) including 1 pair of disposable gloves and 1 mask per person.
- **Monitoring for sick guests:** staff should inform the management or the reception desk in the case of a probability of persons with manifestations of acute respiratory diseases.
- **Availability of materials and supplies, including personal protective equipment:** gloves, disposable face masks, if necessary, long-sleeved disposable gowns, etc., at all times.

d) CATERING AND ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES / FOOD AND BEVERAGE AREAS

It is necessary to comply with Guidelines to business operators issued by the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency and coordinated by the Minister of Health which are published on their websites:

https://www.mh.government.bg/media/filer_public/2020/05/05/1588669697002documentiziskvani_a_km_biznes_operatorite.pdf

http://www.babh.government.bg/bg/Page/ukazanie_kum_biznesoperatorite/index/ukazanie_kym_biznesoperatorite/COVID19%20Указан

1. Information and communications

- The focus should be on health protection through the provision of room service to guests and, in the case of work on the open areas of eateries, by providing contactless technologies, adaptations so as to accelerate the "no-touch" technique, such as partial a la carte. Pre-order systems, sliding entrance doors for restaurants and certain automation to ensure spatial distancing.
- Additional precaution measures for guests: encouragement to washing hands before eating, providing the entrance to the F&EE and using disinfectant gels or wipes when entering and leaving the F&EE.
- Strict observance of hygienic measures by the staff.
- Changing the work of food and entertainment establishments.
- The F&EE must provide a one-way and a pedestrian flow with distances of 1.5 to 2 metres to facilitate spatial distancing.

2. Hygienic conditions and cleanliness

- Improvement in hygienic conditions in F&EEs and the implementation of cleaning and disinfection measures in all working areas of the restaurant (buffets: open areas of restaurants;

kitchens, etc.) as a general preventive measure throughout the whole COVID-19 epidemic, and especially any items that are often touched, such as tables, chairs, china, cutlery, spices, etc.

3. Drinks machines

- Coffee, water, drinks, etc. machines, especially the parts that come into contact with the hands of guests, must be disinfected and cleaned after each service.

Variants of contactless techniques:

- Switching to A La Carte options for food and beverage.
- Buffets partially converted to a la carte versions of the show cooking station, the concept of "gourmet dish" served on the table.
- A system of one-way movement of guests.
- Pre-order system for all mealtimes.
- Minimize the use of vending machines for drinks or without self-service.

4. Table setting and seating arrangements in the F&EE, organization of meals

- Meals shall be only offered in the open areas of the hotel's restaurants or of the food and entertainment establishments.
- It is permissible to offer buffet food, but provided that the food is arranged behind a transparent barrier and is handed out by a staff member equipped with a mask and gloves. No self-service or direct contact of the guests with food is allowed.
- Adapt and organize the layout in the open areas of the establishments and the times of service for hours during which it is open so as to comply with the new space requirements, according to the individual layout and capacity of each F&EE, in accordance with the rules of the WHO and the Minister of Health.
- Set the tables for outdoor seating in a manner that ensures a distance of not less than 1.5 meters apart and allowing not more than 4 persons per table or per family, in accordance with the guidelines of the Minister of Health.

a) SERVICES AND EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE AT THE FACILITY

- Disinfection of equipment offered to guests in the facility (e.g. bicycle, etc.) after each use.
- Due to the COVID-19 threat, the facility has the right to suspend or limit services that would increase the risk to guests and staff (such as delivery of luggage to rooms, etc.).
- It is recommended not to use blow-dryers in the establishments.

f) CONFERENCE HALLS AND EVENTS

It is permissible to conduct only outdoor events, observing the requirements of spatial distancing among participants.

The use of indoor spaces would be allowed pending a possible amendment to the order of the Minister of Health in view of the epidemic situation.

g) ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORTS AREAS

1. Washing/Disinfection

- The operation and use of swimming pools as stand-alone structures is permitted, without any other facilities for spa procedures and entertainment.
- The staff serving the pool shall observe the safety rules and spatial distancing between the visitors.
- Provide a stationary disinfectant dispenser in the pool area.
- Provide a disinfection dispenser for the entertainment team and for the guests.
- Every guest should disinfect their hands when joining the activities. Entertainment activities are to be organized outdoors, in compliance with spatial distancing requirements.
- Animation shall be organized only outdoors and must be carried out in observance of spatial distancing requirements.
- Further information must be provided on the entertainment notice board.

h) MEDICAL SPA / SPA / WELLNESS CENTER

In medical spa, spa, wellness centres that are part of the accommodation establishments or stand-alone centres, only pools shall be working, including those with mineral water, in strict compliance with the legal requirements for the terms of use and treatment of water in swimming pools according to the order of the Minister of Health.

Full functioning of medical spa, spa centres, wellness centres may change pending a possible amendment to the order of the Minister of Health in view of the epidemic situation.

i) ACTIVITIES RELATED TO TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE AND SERVICING

Equipment and facilities for washing utensils

Ensure the proper functioning of the dishwashing equipment, in particular the temperatures settings used and the correct dosage of detergent and disinfection preparations, according to manufacturer's instructions.

- **Air conditioning system**

The proper functioning of the ventilation and air exchange equipment in the premises must be checked and ensured.

- **Dispensers**

Regular checks must be carried out to ensure the proper functioning of the dispensers for washing detergents and disinfectants, disposable paper towel dispensers and similar devices. Defective devices must be repaired or replaced quickly.

Hand sanitizer dosing devices should be installed in the various areas of the hotel, including public restrooms used by guests and staff, and other areas (e.g. lounge, restaurants and bars). It is advisable to provide contactless dispensers.

Cleaning and disinfection: It is recommended to clean and disinfect all technical facilities and contact points of equipment before returning the building to normal operation.

- **Guest Rooms**

Where a guest room has been vacant for 30 days or more, it is necessary to carry out a maintenance check and ensure it is fit for proper use.

j) OTHER AREAS AND ROOMS IN THE FACILITY

- No use of indoor activities halls shall be allowed for areas for recreational activities, children's playgrounds, gaming halls, indoor pools, discos and others that involve crowding of people, unless there is an amendment to the order of the Minister of Health.

4) PROCEDURES IN THE FACILITY: SUSPECTED CORONAVIRUS INFECTION OF A STAFF MEMBER

- Obligation to instruct the staff of the facility on the protocol adopted in connection with COVID-19 (educating them about the most important instructions and obligations in that respect).
- Facility staff should be instructed that in the event of symptoms such as fever, coughing, difficulty breathing, sore throat, sneezing, fatigue, muscle aches, etc., they should not come to work, they should remain home and call their GP, and in the absence of one, call the Regional Health Inspectorate, and in case of they feel worse, they should call 112 and inform them that they may be infected with Coronavirus.

- It is recommended to follow the information issued by the respective Regional Health Inspectorate and the Minister of Health, available on their official website, and the applicable legislation.
- In case of symptoms suggestive of a coronavirus infection of a staff member when performing his tasks in the workplace, he/she should be immediately removed from work, isolated and, depending on his/her condition, sent back home using individual transport, or call the Medical Emergency Centre to request an ambulance team. The staff member must wait for the transport to arrive in a separate room where it is possible to temporarily self-isolate from other people.
- It is recommended to identify the area which the staff member has visited and to clean and disinfect it.

The prescriptions and recommendations of the authorities of state health control must be strictly adhered to.

5) PROCEDURES IN CASE OF A SUSPECTED CORONAVIRUS INFECTION OF A GUEST AT THE FACILITY

- In case of clear signs of illness such as persistent cough, faintness, difficulty breathing, fever, sore throat, sneezing, fatigue, muscle aches, etc., the guest is to be isolated and the management, the in-house doctor at the establishment or medical institution with which the facility has a service contract, the Regional Health Inspectorate or the Medical Emergency Centre must be notified.
 - a. Provide the tourist with a mask, separate them from the rest of the tourists and make the necessary provisions so that they can be examined by a doctor in a room you have previously designated for that purpose;
 - b. Designate a single person to take care of the guest who is affected, until the arrival of the medics, and not different staff members.
 - c. Launch standard precaution procedures for the designated person, including hand hygiene and use of personal protective equipment, eye protection equipment, protective apron (disposable) or a full-size gown with long sleeves (recommended) and gloves;
- Strictly follow the instructions and recommendations of the in-house doctor of the facility or the medics of the medical institution with which the facility has a service contract or the Medical Emergency Centre.
- Once the guest has been placed in isolation / picked up by transport, cleaning and disinfection activities must be carried out in all places where he/she has stayed.

NB. If there is a suspicion of a coronavirus infection of a guest at the facility, he/she must be isolated in a room prepared in advance, the facility is not placed under quarantine, and the recommendations of the health authorities must be complied with. In case it is established that there is a tourist with COVID-19, who has mild symptoms, at the accommodation establishment, the practice adopted in the European Union countries is to be applied. This section of the Guidelines will be updated on an on-going basis before the start of the active summer season, in line with the stages of opening for travel the borders with the countries concerned. The concrete steps that should be followed by the hotelier in this respect must be fine-tuned on the spot by the medical authorities on a case-by-case basis.

6) SUPPLIERS OF GOODS AND SERVICES AT THE FACILITY

- During the delivery of goods to AFs / F&EEs, special precautionary measures must be taken. Drivers transporting and delivering goods and services must wear PPE (mask and gloves) while they carry out the delivery. Before entering a specific area of the premises, the temperature of all outsiders should be taken.

7) DISINFECTION ACTIVITIES IN TOURIST FACILITIES: ACCOMMODATION, CATERING AND ENTERTAINMENT ESTABLISHMENTS AND OTHER SITES WHERE TOURIST SERVICES ARE PROVIDED IN THE PRESENCE OF AN EPIDEMIC SPREAD OF COVID-19

Disinfection activities should be carried out in accordance with the guidelines of health authorities published on the websites of the Ministry of Health and the National Centre for Infectious and Parasitic Diseases:

https://www.mh.government.bg/media/filer_Public/2020/03/25/ncipd_recomm_disinfection_covid_19_dobavjane_grajdani.pdf

[https://www.ncipd.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=563:covid-19-desinfection-08032020&lang=bg"lang=bg](https://www.ncipd.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=563:covid-19-desinfection-08032020&lang=bg)

https://www.mh.government.bg/media/filer_public/2020/02/13/vremenni_nasoki_za_pochistvane_na_okolna_sreda_v_obekti_tR5jTiQ.pdf

https://www.mh.government.bg/media/filer_Public/2020/03/25/preporki_za_potrebitelite_pri_poku_pka_na_produkti_za_lichna_khigiena_v_tch_i_dezinfektsiia.pdf

Annex 1

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAFF:

- Before you start work, immediately after arriving at work, you must wash your hands with soap and water.
- Wear nose and mouth protection, possibly a face shield and protective gloves (depending on the work specifics) when you perform your duties.
- Keep at a safe distance from any interlocutor and colleagues (a minimum distance of 1.5 meters is recommended).
- Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water according to the instructions and disinfect your hands with a disinfectant with a viricidal or partially viricidal action. Disinfection is recommended in case it is not possible to wash your hands.
- Try not to touch your face, especially the lips, nose and eyes.
- Keep workplaces clean and hygienic, especially after the end of the working day. Do not forget to disinfect contact surfaces such as telephone handsets, keyboards and mouses, switches or desks.
- Regularly (several times a day) clean the common areas with which guests come into contact, such as front door handles, handrails, countertops, backs of chairs, elevators, etc.

Annex 2

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTION OF PREMISES OR SPECIFIC AREAS OF THE FACILITY IN CASE OF EXPOSURE TO COVID-19

The following should be applied to premises or specific areas in case of exposure to covid-19:

- Regularly clean any surfaces such as toilet seats, sinks and bathtubs should be disinfected also by applying a biocidal product with viricidal or partially viricidal action in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- All contact surfaces are subject to disinfection, e.g. telephones, remote control equipment, door handles, elevator buttons, etc.
- Where possible, use only single-use cleaning materials. Dispose of any cleaning materials made from towels and absorbent materials, e.g. mops and wipes. Where appropriate, disinfect them with a solution of sodium hypochlorite with a disinfectant (biocidal product), in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, before using them for other premises.
- Textiles, underwear and clothes should be placed in special marked laundry bags and handled with care to raising dust and subsequent potential contamination of surrounding surfaces or

infection of people. Washing instructions should be given: washing with hot water (thermo-disinfection) and a detergent at a water temperature of 90°C for not less than 20 minutes;

- Washing with lukewarm water at a temperature of 40-60°C with appropriate disinfectants (biocides), e.g. containing sodium hypochlorite, at the appropriate concentration (chemical-thermal disinfection).
- All items used must be carefully treated appropriately to reduce the risk of potential transmission. Disposable items (hand towels, gloves, masks, etc.) must be placed in a container with a lid and disposed of in accordance with the facility's action plan and the national waste management regulations.
- The facility must have sufficient quantities of hand sanitizers and surfaces disinfectants.
- All rooms and common areas must be ventilated daily.

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