

The Director General of the Interior has taken the following decision:

"DECISION 13732E/2025 of 6 November of the Director General of the Interior by which measures are established to restrict access via the eastern route of the first stage of the Way of St James as it enters Navarre until 31 March 2026.

There exist two alternative routes for the first stage of the French Way of St James as it enters Navarre: the western route, which starts in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port and passes through Luzaide/Valcarlos and over the Ibañeta Pass to Orreaga/Roncesvalles; and the eastern route, which starts in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port and passes Huntto and Orisson before climbing up to the Lepoeder Pass and over to Orreaga/Roncesvalles. The eastern route involves a climb of over 1,200 metres, considering the elevation of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, 154 m a.s.l., and that of the Lepoeder Pass, 1432 m a.s.l., together with the small upward and downward slopes between the two points.

In order to tackle this climb, pilgrims wishing to complete this stage need to be physically ready in order to do so, something which a high percentage have been found not to be. The effort required is even greater when there is snow or weather conditions are adverse, all without prejudice to the equipment which needs to be taken in such situations, which, similarly, it has been found that pilgrims fail to take with them on many occasions.

It so happens that the Eastern route enters Navarre at a high elevation, 1,288 m a.s.l., and that there is no way to abandon it until the Col of Lepoeder, 5 km after entering the province. Work has been performed on a continuous basis to improve the signposting and periodically check that it still serves its purpose. At present, it is comprehensive and problems following the signs only arise in blizzard conditions.

Nevertheless, given the difficulty of the eastern route, the rescue services, both professional and voluntary, are still required to intervene in this area, as a result, on many occasions, of the exhaustion or the lack of information and physical readiness of the pilgrims. The situation is particularly serious in winter, when rescue conditions are particularly hard and sometimes involve life-threatening situations for the rescue teams, given the topography and weather conditions found in the area, and the serious difficulties encountered to access, locate and evacuate those in trouble.

In order to ensure the safety of pilgrims, by means of Decision 152/2015 of 1 July of the Director General of the Interior, measures were established to restrict access via the Eastern route of the first stage of the Way of St James as it enters Navarre from 1 November to 31 March each year, entrusting the now defunct Navarre Emergency Agency with the issuance of express authorisations exempting individuals from the restriction of access established.

However, by means of Decision 487/2016 of 21 October of the Director General of the Interior, measures were established to restrict access via the Eastern route of the first stage of the Way of St James as it enters Navarre from 1 November 2016 until 31 March 2017, annulling abovementioned Decision 152/2015 of 1 July and eliminating the possibility of issuing express authorisations due to the complexity and difficulties encountered applying the measure.

In the same sense, since 2017 and by resolution of the Interior Directorate General, they have been established annually, from November to March, restriction measures by the East variant of the Camino de Santiago in its first stage.

The experience of recent years has highlighted the convenience of maintaining the restriction of access via the Eastern route of the first stage of the Way of St James as it enters Navarre according to the same terms in the interests of the greater safety of private individuals and the rescue services, both professional and voluntary.

Thus, with the agreement of the competent emergency management services and taking into consideration the consultations carried out on the occasion of the adoption of Decision 487/2016 of 21 October, in view of the fact that the measures restricting access should be maintained according to the same terms:

Having reviewed the competences held by the Government of Navarre regarding Public Safety according to Navarrese Act 8/2006 of 20 June on Public Safety in Navarre and the measures of public intervention regarding civil protection and emergency management which correspond to the Government of Navarre according to Navarrese Act 8/2005 of 1 June on Civil Protection and Emergency Responses in Navarre, and in exercise of the powers conferred on the Director General of the Interior according to Navarrese Decree 254/2023 of 15 November, establishing the organisational structure of the Department of the Presidency, Equality, Civil Service, Interior,

I HEREBY DECIDE:

1. To establish measures to restrict access to the eastern route of the first stage of the Way of St James through Navarre for reasons of public safety, decreeing it mandatory that all passage until 31 March 2026 follow the western route of the Way of St James (Luzaide/Valcarlos).

2. To close the eastern route as it enters Navarre at the point specified by the geographical coordinates 43°3'2,02''N latitude and 1°16'6,04''W longitude, near the Col of Bentartea, between the aforementioned dates.

3. To charge the Directorate General of the Environment with the task of installing the signs prohibiting access and the elements required to prevent it.

4. To charge the Navarrese Police Force with the task of monitoring any breaches of this Decision.

5. To charge the Directorate General of Communication and Institutional Projection, and the Directorate General of Tourism, with the task of publicising this Decision on those websites which refer to the Way of St James and to Agencies and other advertising and information media related to the Way of St James.

6. To publish this decision in the Official Gazette of Navarre in order that it be publicly known.

7. To notify the Civil Protection Service, the Navarre Fire Service and Emergencies - Nafarroako Suhiltzaileak, the Navarrese Police Force, the Directorate General of the Environment, the Directorate General of Communication and Institutional Projection, the Directorate General of Tourism, the Association of Friends of the Way of St James in Navarre, the Association of Friends of the Way of St James in Pyrénées-Atlantiques, the Local Council of Luzaide/Valcarlos, the Local Council of Roncesvalles, the office of the Spanish Government's Delegate in Navarre and the General Council of Pyrénées-Atlantiques as to this decision, informing them that an appeal to the intermediate appellate court may be filed against it before the Autonomous Community Minister of the Interior, Civil Service and Justice according to the provisions of articles 121 and 122 of Act 39/2015 of 1 October on Common Administrative Procedure of Public Administrations. In the case of Public Administrations, these may directly file an appeal before the contentious-administrative court, without prejudice to the prior notification established in Article 44 of Act 29/1998 of 13 July on Contentious-Administrative Jurisdiction.

Pamplona, 6th November 2025

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE INTERIOR,

Salvador Diez Zapata