

## Overview of national measures taken by governments in the context of the second wave of the COVID-19 outbreak

*This is an overview of measures prepared by BusinessEurope strictly on the basis of input from member federations (except for the graphs at the beginning of the overview which are based on BusinessEurope calculations based on data from the European Centre for Disease-prevention and Control). This is a living document that will be regularly updated on the dedicated Extranet. It is an informal collection of inputs from members and should be used for internal purposes and for information only. As the situation unfolds rapidly, we cannot guarantee that all information received and displayed in the document is entirely up to date at any given point in time.*

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*Updated info (27): AT, BE, BG, CH, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FR, FI, HU, IE, IT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SK, SE, TR, UK; No info (6): HR, LT, LV, SLO*

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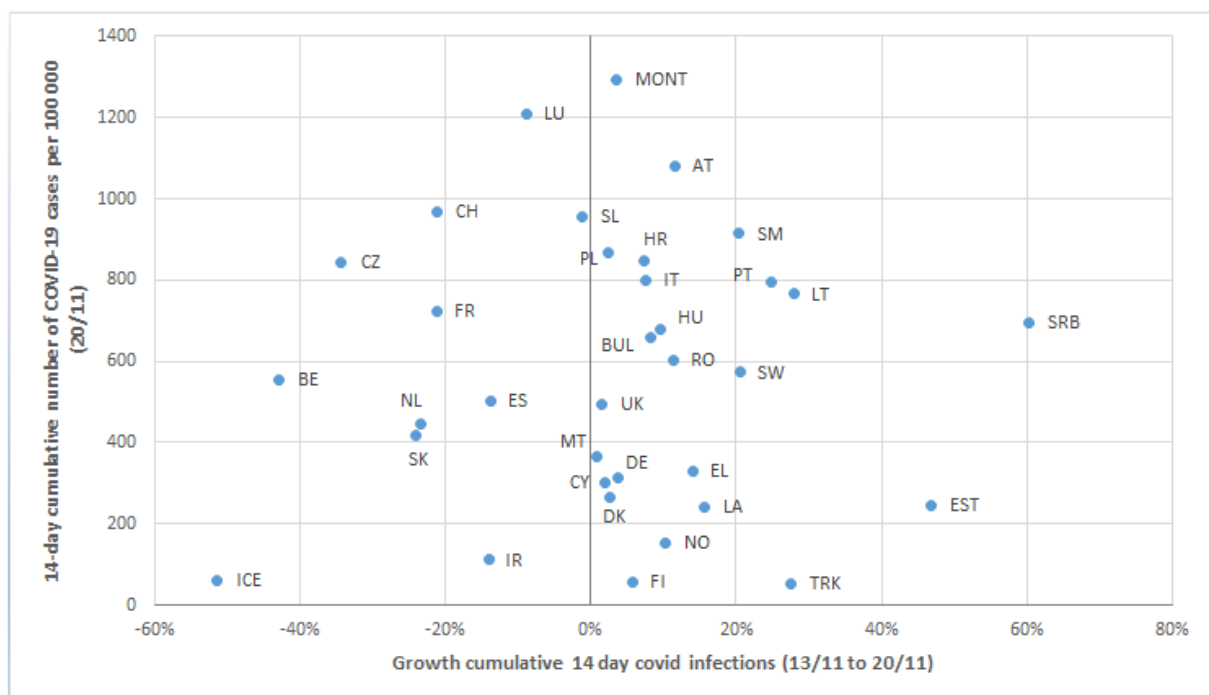
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## General overview

There are clear signs now that the increased restrictions across Europe are having an impact in reducing Covid transmission. Graph 1 shows both the level of infection (y axis) and the growth rate of infection (x axis) in European countries, with infection rates now falling in almost half of countries (left side of graph 1). Even where growth is still positive, the vast majority of countries have been able to significantly reduce growth rates.

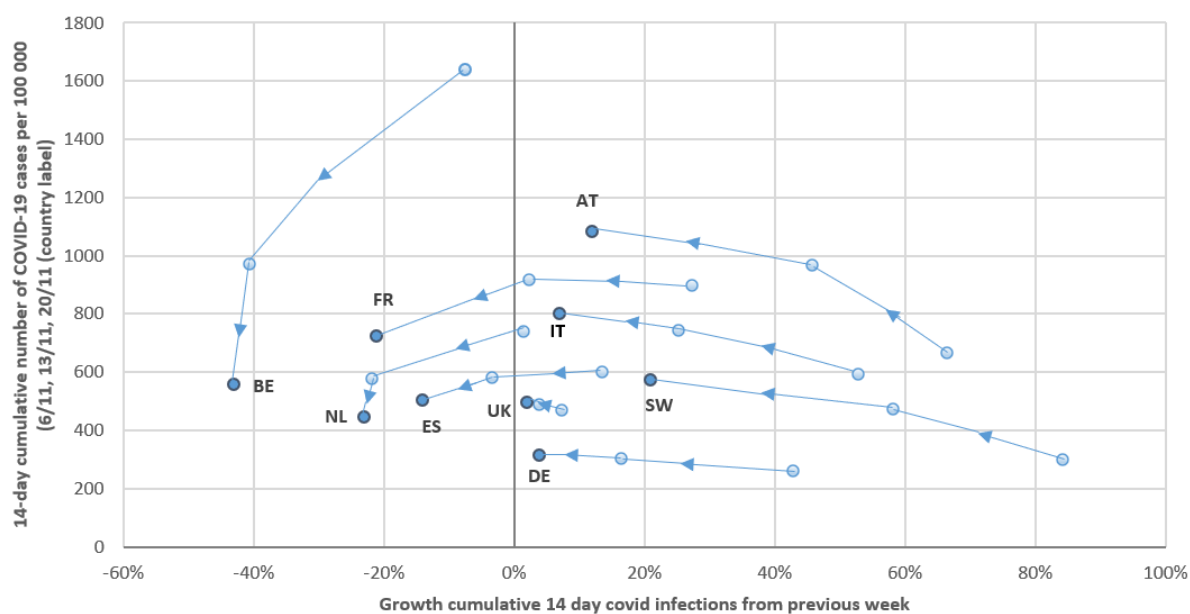
The trajectory for some of these countries is shown more clearly in graph 2. Most show lower growth, even if actual numbers still increase a little (with Sweden and Austria presently showing the strongest growth). Progress has been particularly strong in Belgium in recent weeks, with the growth rate flipping from +40% to -40% in a couple of weeks.

**Graph 1. Levels and growth of Covid infections, 20 November 2020 (European countries)**



Source: BusinessEurope calculations from ECDC data

**Graph 2. Evolution of COVID infections, 6–20 November 2020 (selected European countries)**



Source: BusinessEurope calculations from ECDC data

**Table 1. Overview: Restrictions put in place in response to the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of COVID-19**

	AT	BE	BG	CH	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	HU	IE	IT	LU	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SK	SE	TR	UK
<i>Confinement</i>	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Curfew</i>	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	-
<i>Telework mandatory</i>	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	✓		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	✓
<i>Industries allowed to function</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
<i>Services allowed to function</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
<i>Restrictions: hotels, restaurants etc.</i>	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓
<i>Restrictions: public events</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<i>Restrictions: commerce</i>	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-		✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓
<i>Restrictions: nurseries, schools, unis, etc.</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	
<i>Restrictions to travel</i>	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-		✓
<i>Obligation to wear masks</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-		✓
<i>Social distancing required</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<i>Testing system</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<i>Tracing system</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Quarantine obligations</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓			✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-		✓

**Table 2. Overview: Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government in response to 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of COVID-19**

	AT	BE	BG	CH	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	HU	IE	IT	LU	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SK	SE	TR	UK
Temporary VAT reduction	✓		✓		✓	✓							✓	✓					✓					✓	✓	✓	
Deferral of VAT payments	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓	✓		✓		✓					✓	✓	✓	
Deferral of tax payments	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Non-sectoral state aid			✓		✓		✓				✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Sectoral state aid	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Direct company state aid	✓			✓		✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	
Additional loans	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
Rescheduling loan payments with state intervention		✓			✓				✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	
State guarantee on loans		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Export guarantees		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓								✓		✓								✓		
Subsidy f. wages (employees)	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Subsidy f. wages (self-empl.)	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Short time working schemes	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓*	✓	✓*	✓*	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Extending social benefits to self-empl.		✓		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓		✓		✓			✓								
Help for apprentices				✓		✓	✓							✓					✓				✓		✓		✓
Help for students				✓		✓	✓		✓					✓					✓								

\* This information stems from member federations' input received for the BusinessEurope overview on 'Extension of short-time work/pay compensation schemes' of 18 November 2020



Extra allowances			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Subsidy for other costs				✓					✓			✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		
Greater flexibility in laying off workers																		✓									
Extra unemployment benefits		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Regulatory changes				✓	✓	✓								✓										✓			
Financial sectors measures			✓		✓		✓				✓								✓						✓		

## Country-by-country overview of national measures taken by governments

### Austria

Date: 18 November 2020

#### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of COVID-19

After a “soft” lockdown in the past few weeks, the federal government in Austria has again imposed far-reaching tightening of measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic in Austria (“hard lockdown”), including exit restrictions, restrictions on educational services (while maintaining a care service) and a shutdown in certain sectors of the economy (notably trade and services). The new COVID-19 Emergency Situation Ordinance (COVID-19-NotV) enters into force on 17 November 2020 and expires at the end of 6 December 2020. Restrictions on exit permits and events will cease to apply at the end of 26 November 2020.

The IV has been particularly engaged in ensuring that industrial production is maintained and has emphasised the importance of maintaining supply chains. Moreover, IV advocated for a flexible teleworking regime during the lockdown and, together with the social partners, reached an agreement to modify the short time working regime (Kurzarbeit Phase 3).

- **Regime on confinement**
  - Confinement duration after an infection or having been in close contact with an infected person (cumulative face-to-face contact for 15 minutes or more, in a distance  $\leq 2$  meters): 10 days.
- **Regime on curfew**
  - People are only allowed to leave their own private living area for certain reasons (24h/7). It is still permitted to drive to work, buy “basic goods” and go to medical care. It is also permitted to stay outdoors for “physical and mental recreation”, such as walks or individual sports. The care of persons in need of support is also covered by the exceptions, as are visits to cemeteries, religious institutions or the care of animals.
- **Regimen on telework**
  - Wherever possible, a switch to home office should be made. A face mask must be worn at the workplace if the minimum distance of one meter is not reached. Other suitable protective measures are also possible (fixed teams, partition walls).
- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - Production remains fully sustained, there will also be no changes in cross-border trade and commuting.
- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - Mass transport vehicles continue to operate normally (for a few exceptions, e.g. for tourism, leisure activities).
- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - The entire gastronomy remains closed for customer business. Collection of food and drinks is permitted between 6.00 and 19.00 hrs. Delivery services remain permitted around the clock. All “body-related services” remain closed, including hairdressing and cosmetic studios and massage practices.
  - All hotels and accommodation facilities will remain closed for tourist purposes. There are exceptions for business travellers, for example.
- **Restrictions for public events**



- Leaving the private living area for the purpose of participating in events is only permitted for certain events, in particular
  - professional meetings that cannot be postponed, if these are necessary for the maintenance of professional activities and cannot be held in digital form
  - meetings of statutory bodies of legal persons which cannot be postponed, where it is not possible to hold them in digital form
  - Meetings that cannot be postponed in accordance with the Labour Constitution Act, if it is not possible to hold them in digital form
- **Regime for commerce**
  - Commerce will be closed with exceptions. The whole food trade as well as the health sector, the agricultural and animal feed trade, petrol stations, banks, the post office, mobile phone shops, tobacconists, waste disposal companies, cleaning shops and bicycle and car repair shops are also open. Opening hours will be limited to 6.00 to 19.00 hours.
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - Schools are switching completely to distance learning (the entire compulsory schooling). But supervision will continue to be provided. Kindergartens will continue to provide childcare for all those who need it. In schools, too, there will be a childcare option, if required.
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - In principle, early clarification (by means of an antigen test or PCR test) should be sought for all persons suspected of having COVID-19 because of clinical symptoms. In addition, close contact persons should be tested, even if they do not show any symptoms (a negative test result does not shorten the quarantine period).
  - In Austria, towards the end of the now imposed lockdown until December 6, and also before Christmas, mass tests of the population are planned (similar to those in Slovakia).

## **2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government**

- **Temporary reduction in VAT-rate**
  - From 1 July until 31 December 2021, the reduced VAT rate of 5% is applicable for restaurant services, hotel services, camping, publications, and culture.
    - Restaurant services: the reduced tax rate applies to the supply of food and beverages (alcoholic and non-alcoholic). In addition to catering, this also applies to the supply of food and beverages in confectioneries, bakeries and butcher's stores.
    - Hotels and camping: the VAT for overnight stays lowered in hotels, in other lodging establishments, on camping sites.
    - Publications: the supplies, imports, and acquisitions of printed media and e-publications
    - Culture: the supplies, imports, and acquisitions of art objects
  - The following services are also subject to 5% VAT: revenue from activities as an artist, tickets (incl. ancillary services) for a theatre, concert, museums, botanical or zoological garden, film screening, cinema, circus
  - The reduced VAT rate of 5% for restaurant services, tourism, and culture is extended until the end of 2021

## **Subsidies**

- **Sectoral state aid**
  - From Monday, 16 November 2020, onwards, companies can apply for new corona aids:
    - The „**Lockdown turnover substitute**“ (**Umsatzersatz**) amounts to 80 percent of the turnover in the reference period per company. It is capped at a maximum amount of 800,000 euros per company in accordance with the EU Commission's guidelines. The minimum amount of the lockdown turnover is 2,300 euros. However, both the maximum allowable amount of 800,000 euros and the minimum of 2,300 euros may still have to be reduced by certain COVID-19 grants received. The turnover substitute – regardless

of whether for gastronomy and hotels or staggered in retail – will therefore only lead to taxation if a company makes a profit in 2020 as a whole.

- The **fixed cost subsidy 2** can also be applied for – but in a light version with up to 800,000 euros. This will be paid out retroactively from 15 September. The possibility of a broader fixed cost subsidy 2 for large businesses of up to 3 million euros is still being negotiated with the EU. Companies applying for the lockdown sales substitute cannot – at the same time – obtain fixed cost subsidy 2.
- For the lockdown month or period, some entrepreneurs should assess which option they should apply for. In addition, there is also the hardship fund (intended to support small entrepreneurs and is endowed with two billion euros).

#### **Loans/guarantees/payment suspension such as**

- Companies can apply for a deferral or an instalment payment of taxes if they have experienced an economic emergency or liquidity problems due to the coronavirus. In addition, they can apply for deferral interest to be reduced to zero.

#### **Labour market and social policy measures such as**

##### • **Subsidy for wages (employees)**

- The "new start bonus" is granted to unemployed persons who took up a lower-paid job from 15.6.2020 and have not been employed by the same employer in the last three months. Aid amount: The difference between the current net earned income and the amount ranging between 80% and 90% of the reference before unemployment is subsidised, with a maximum of 950 euros. The new employment relationship must cover at least 20 hours per week and must be based on a vacancy previously reported to the Public Employment Service (AMS).

##### • **Short time working Phase 3 (Kurzarbeit Phase 3)**

- Short term work phase 3 (01.10.2020 to 31.03.2021) is introduced in companies, which are forced to reduce the working hours due to the Corona Crisis. Companies are eligible for short time work if the working hours of their employees is reduced by
  - at least 20% and a maximum of 70% (in exceptional cases 90%) of the normal working hours according to the law or collective agreement
  - or, in the case of part-time work, according to the employment contract before short-time work

Within the short-time work period, a downtime of up to 100% is possible, but on average during the short-time work period 70% (in exceptional cases 90%) of the normal working time may not be exceeded.

- During the period of short-time work, the employee will receive at least
  - 90% of the net remuneration received prior to short-time work if the gross remuneration received prior to short-time work is up to € 1,700,
  - 85% with a gross remuneration between € 1.700, - and € 2.685, - and
  - 80% with a higher gross salary.

## Belgium

Date: 20 November 2020

Detailed information will be added as soon as possible. For a general overview, please refer to table 1 and 2 in this document.

## Bulgaria

Date: 26 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

Restrictions as of 26 November 2020

With an order of the Health Minister of 26 November, the state of emergency extends until 31 January 2021.

The order introduces a tougher set of measures to reduce the number of coronavirus cases in the country. The measures will go into effect at 11.30 pm on 27 November and remain in force until 21 December 2020:

- In-person classes in kindergartens, schools and universities would be suspended for a period of two weeks, as would extracurricular activities.
- Night clubs, discos and other entertainment venues would remain closed, the sole exception being theatres, which can operate at 30 per cent capacity, with spectators socially distanced and wearing masks.
- Restaurants, bars and other daytime entertainment venues would shut down, but an exception would be made for takeaway and home delivery services at restaurants.
- Conferences and other public events would be cancelled, but privately-organised festivities and gatherings can go ahead, limited to 15 people.
- Gyms would also shut down, as would training and competitions for under-18s. Other sports events can go ahead behind closed doors.
- Stores in shopping malls would close, except for supermarkets, pharmacies, opticians, pet stores, post offices, banks, insurance companies, payment services providers and telecoms. Stand-alone shops, including large retail stores, will remain open.
- Activities that are not suspended or prohibited by the order shall be carried out in compliance with all anti-epidemic measures.

Restrictions as of 10 November 2020

- **Regime on confinement (if any)**
  - Not applicable.
- **Regime on curfew (if any)**
  - There is no national curfew and the governmental officials have proclaimed namely the Prime-Minister and the Deputy Prime-Minister, that there will be no curfew imposition. However, the decision to impose local curfews remains in the realms of responsibilities of the local authorities and Municipal (Local) Operational Headquarters depending on the development with the number of C-19 cases.
- **Regime on telework**
  - The work process of the collective management bodies and the employees should be carried out, if possible, in a remote form (home office/remote work).
- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - **All industries are allowed to function.** The employers should establish working hours for the employees with variable limits or work in shifts. Employers should approve a schedule for the regulated holidays, where applicable, as well as to apply other preventive measures and methods of work, depending on the specifics of the respective work activity, which will provide better protection of workers, including limiting insignificant contacts at work.

- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - The public transportation is operating, but all persons must cover their mouth and nose with a mask or covering on all public transportation including while in railway, bus and metro stations, and airports etc.
  - All natural and legal persons who own or manage public facilities, commercial, administrative or other sites that provide services to citizens create an organization to control the number of customers in the site, not allowing more than 1 person per 3 sq.m.
  - In all markets and open-air and indoor bazaars, an organization is created for one-way passing and providing a distance of 1.5 m between visitors. Workers and visitors are required to wear a face mask.
- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - The cafes and restaurants must observe the adopted ***Guidelines for the functioning of accommodation establishments and food and entertainment establishments in the conditions of danger of COVID-19 infection in Bulgaria.***
  - Hand disinfectants, approved by the minister of health, must be made available as the designated places. Periodic disinfection of all contact surfaces is to be carried out. Measures are required to prevent crowding and observe a physical distance of 1.5 m between the users. Signs/screens and information materials with the instructions and rules to be observed must be placed at all points of considerable tourist flow.
  - All catering and entertainment establishments (restaurants, fast food establishments, drinking establishments, cafes and bars, with the exception of those listed in the next paragraph) provide a physical distance of 1.5 m between the nearest chairs from two adjacent tables, not allowing more than 6 people at one table. There is a temporary measure from 29 October to 11 November and visits to discos, piano bar, night bar, night clubs and other similar nightclubs for indoor entertainment are suspended.
  - Local measures. From October 25 until November 30, 2020, on the territory of Sofia, discos, piano-bars, night-bars, nightclubs and other night drinking establishments will be closed for the period.
- **Restrictions for public events**
  - Indoor and outdoor gatherings of more than 30 people are prohibited:
  - The congress and conference events, seminars, exhibitions and other public events in attendance are allowed with not more than 30 participants, observing a distance of 1.5 m and mandatory wearing of face masks.
  - Cultural and entertainment events (theaters, cinemas, stage events, concerts, classes in dance, creative and musical arts) can be organized and held with occupancy of up to 30% of their total indoor capacity while maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 m and mandatory wearing of protective face masks.
  - All collective and individual sports events - training and competitions, for all age groups indoors and outdoors are held without an audience. An exception is allowed for the international tennis tournament Sofia Open 2020, as between spectators at least two empty seats, observing a physical distance of 1.5 meters and mandatory wearing of face masks
- **Regime for commerce**
  - Shopping centers and retail establishments are open. It is recommended that visitors keep the distance and follow the safety rules.
  - Users and staff are advised to use protective masks and disinfectants.
  - When using elevators, in case there is no other alternative, the elevator is used with reduced capacity. Customers should keep a distance of 1.5 m between them.
  - The operation and use of swimming pools is allowed. The use of waterparks and water attractions (of all age groups) is allowed in compliance with all anti-epidemic measures of the Minister of Health, the requirement for physical distance in carrying out their activities and the regulatory requirements for the use and treatment of water in swimming pools.
  - The entertainment and animation activities are carried out in compliance with the requirements for physical distance.
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - According with the Order of the Minister of Health № RD-01-626 of 27.10.2020 following activities are suspended from 29 October to 11 November 2020:

- Attendance classes for high school students are suspended. Attendance classes in the institutions of the preschool and school education system for students from junior high and primary education are conducted in accordance with the Guidelines for the work of the preschool and school education system prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health in the school year 2020 -2021 in the conditions of COVID-19.
  - The educational process in the higher educational establishments in presence is cancelled.
  - The group extracurricular activities and activities in presence, as well as the attendance classes in language centers, educational centers, study centers and others, organized by legal entities and individuals, are cancelled. An exception is allowed with regard to the activities of interest and activities for students from primary and lower secondary education, which are organized in a way that does not allow children from different classes.
  - The attendance activities in the centers for support of personal development are cancelled.
- **Restrictions to travel (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)**
    - There is no restriction to travel within the country.
    - There are entry restrictions that went into effect on July 31, 2020 and extend to November 30, 2020. The restrictions apply to all persons, regardless of their citizenship, and all types of border crossings including by air (both commercial and private aircraft), sea, rail, and road transport.
    - Exceptions: Those excepted from entry restrictions include:
      - Bulgarian nationals (and their family members or persons who are in actual cohabitation with a Bulgarian citizen);
      - nationals of the European Union, the United Kingdom (UK) and the Schengen Agreement States (including San Marino, Andorra, Monaco and Vatican City), and their family members or persons who are in actual cohabitation with them;
      - citizens of Albania, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Belarus, Canada, Georgia, Israel, Japan, Kosovo, Kuwait, Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, North Macedonia, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Serbia, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates;
      - persons with permanent or long-term resident status in Bulgaria (and their family members);
      - persons who hold Bulgarian visa type "D" for long-term residence;
      - persons with resident status (and their family members) of Member States of the European Union, the UK, the Schengen Agreement States (including San Marino, Andorra, Monaco and Vatican City);
      - medical professionals, medical researchers, social workers, and their supervisors when traveling related to their duties;
      - workers involved in the supply of medicinal products, medical devices and personal protective equipment, medical equipment, including its installation and maintenance;
      - transport staff engaged in the international carriage of passengers and cargo, crews of commercial aircraft and other transport staff as required, including vessel crews and persons involved in the maintenance of vessels;
      - foreign officials, diplomats, members of the administrative and technical staff of foreign missions, officials of international organizations, military personnel, and humanitarian workers in the performance of their duties and their family members;
      - persons traveling for humanitarian reasons and their family;
      - representatives of trade, economic, and investment activities directly related to: construction, maintenance, operation and ensuring the safety of strategic and critical infrastructure of the Republic of Bulgaria, implementation of projects certified under the Investment Promotion Act, analysis on projects of potential investors and other activities of importance for the economy of the country, certified by a letter from the Minister of Economy or another minister responsible for the respective activity, as well as persons engaged in shipbuilding and ship repair, and their family members;
      - seasonal agricultural and tourism workers;
      - frontier workers;

- students traveling for activities related to the completion of the academic year of 2019/2020 or coming to study in the academic year of 2020/2021, as well as participants in examination commissions in case the exam cannot be taken online;
  - organizers and participants in international sports competitions – for the time of the respective sport event; foreign athletes coming to Bulgaria for a specific period of time; foreign contestants and their coaches entering the country for training camp purposes; family members of foreign athletes and coaches who hold Bulgarian visa type “D” for long-term residence, certified by a letter from the Minister of Youth and Sport, in which the names of the persons and the place (address) of their residence in Bulgaria are indicated. The letter shall be presented to the border control authorities;
  - foreign citizens, who are to receive a decree under the Bulgarian Citizenship Law for acquiring a Bulgarian citizenship, certified by a letter from the Minister of Justice.
- All persons exempted from entry restrictions are also allowed to transit the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.
  - If a foreign citizen falls into an excepted category and has a negative PCR test performed in the last 72 hours they will not be required to quarantine. For those who fall into an excepted category and do not have a negative PCR test performed in the last 72 hours, if admitted into the country they will be required to self-isolate/quarantine at home for 14 days.
  - The director of the respective regional health inspectorate may revoke the issued order for quarantine of the persons under the previous paragraph, upon presentation of a document showing a negative result of a polymerase chain reaction test conducted within 24 hours of entry into the country to prove COVID-19. The prescription shall be revoked within 24 hours of the submission of the document showing a negative result of the polymerase chain reaction test for the detection of COVID-19.
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
    - All persons must cover their mouth and nose with a covering in all indoor public spaces (including hospitals, pharmacies, administrative institutions, shops, malls, churches, museums, and all public transportation including railway, bus and metro stations, and airports, etc.) as well as in open public spaces where there is a crowd of people and impossibility to observe a physical distance of 1.5 m.
    - Exceptions: a) customers of restaurants and bars; (b) outdoor and indoor athletes during physical activity; c) participants in congress/conference events, briefings, press conferences and seminars during a speech (lecture, presentation, etc.), observing a physical distance of 1.5 m from the other participants; d) participants (presenters and guests) in television programs, observing a physical distance of 1.5 m from the other participants; e) children up to 6 years of age.
- **Situation regarding testing**
    - PCR testing is widely available at sites across the country, including hospitals and private laboratories. The fee is generally approximately 120 BGN.
    - On 6 November 2020 in front of the big public hospitals are opened mobile testing stations for rapid antigen tests for coronavirus. At the stations will be examined the people who are unable to reach their GPs.
- **Situation regarding tracing**
    - All close contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19, at the discretion of an epidemiologist from the regional health inspectorate, are quarantined at home or elsewhere for accommodation and medical supervision for a period of 10 days from the last contact with the infected person. The health monitoring of each contact person is carried out by the general practitioner or the relevant regional health inspectorate.
    - Since July is operational a National Information System for Combating COVID-19. The system provides centralized management and storage of information for all diagnosed and quarantined persons.
    - There is a mobile application for citizens, in which they can reflect their health status (VirusSafe, available for free). It maintains notification to a general practitioner and up-to-date information about the health condition of the persons.
- **Obligations regarding quarantine**



- If the person is tested positive for COVID-19, he/she will be required to self-isolate for 14 days. Additionally, from 23 October 2020, there is a mandatory 10-day self-isolation requirement for anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. The isolation period starts from the date of the last contact with the infected person.
- **Other measures**
  - The police are strictly enforcing measures and failure to comply could result in a 300 to 1,000 BGN.
  - Group celebrations with the presence of more than 30 people indoors and outdoors (including weddings, balls, baptisms, etc.) are not allowed.
  - As of November 7, 2020, in Sofia was introduced a “green corridor” for shopping at groceries for senior citizens (age 65+) from 8 AM until 10 AM; the underage persons will not be able to shop in a mall without a supervision of an adult.
  - The medical centers (diagnostic medical centers) on a local level are also mobilized and involved in the medical examination process for COVID-19.

Official information resources (available only in Bulgarian):

- The Bulgarian Ministry of Health has information for citizens and medical professionals: <https://www.mh.government.bg/bg/informaciya-za-grazhdani/informaciya-otnosno-noviya-koronavirus-2019-ncov/>
- The Bulgarian government has created a COVID-19 United Information Portal: <https://coronavirus.bg/>
- Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Situation Center: <https://www.mfa.bg/bg/situationcenter>

## **2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government**

### **Tax related measures such as**

- **Temporary reduction in VAT- rate**
  - Until December 31, 2021, the reduced VAT rate of 9% is applicable for restaurant sales, catering services, books, baby foods and baby hygiene products, wine and beer sales in restaurants, charter bus services, gyms and other sports facilities.

### **Subsidies such as**

- **non-sectoral state aid (grants)**
  - Grants of BGN 3,000 up to BGN 10,000 for micro and small enterprises.
  - Grants of BGN 30,000 up to BGN 150,000 for medium enterprises.
- **sectoral state aid (grants)**
  - Grants for tour operators and travel agents up to 10% of the turnover realized by the candidate company for 2019, but up to the threshold of the "de minimis" regime.
  - Grant for bus transport SMEs, up to 8% of the turnover realized by the candidate company for 2019; the minimum amount of aid is BGN 3,000 and the maximum amount is BGN 450,000.

### **Loans/guarantees /Payment suspension such as**

- **additional loans (e.g. through state lenders such as German KfW)**
  - Provision of working capital loans up to BGN 300,000, based on portfolio guarantees from Bulgarian Development Bank to commercial banks in order to provide liquidity for SMEs to overcome the negative economic consequences of the spread of COVID-19.



- Microloans up to BGN 50,000, with a term of up to ten years, for investment and working capital financing. The terms of the loans are relaxed, with interest rates significantly below the market, with the possibility of a grace period of up to 24 months and with very relaxed collateral requirements or in some cases without collateral.
- **state guarantees on loans**
  - Guarantees securing loans for SMEs, provided by partner Banks to the Fund of Funds, amounting to BGN 3 million.

#### **Labour market and social policy measures such as**

- **short time working schemes**
  - In the October session of the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation in Bulgaria, the social partners and governmental representatives agreed on extending the so-called 60/40 wage support scheme until 31st of December 2020. Under the measure, the state covers 60% of wages and 60% of workers' social security contributions.
  - Initially, the Bulgarian government adopted the Emergency and Measures Act to compensate businesses affected by the pandemic and the programme covered companies, whose activities have been prohibited by restrictive measures related to COVID-19 and companies, whose turnover decreased by 20% compared to the same period in 2019.
  - The list of industries that were not included in the first wave of the programme (13 March - 30 June 2020) includes agriculture, financial and insurance activities, government, education, human health and social work, households as employers, activities of extraterritorial organisations and services,
  - During the second wave of the programme (1 July - 30 September 2020), the measure focused on the hospitality industry, in particular on seasonal workers. In comparison to the first wave, all workers in healthcare, who do not have a contract with the National Health Insurance Fund, could have applied for compensations, including dentists, nurseries, kindergartens and training centres. The programme foresaw additional funding for tourism and transport sectors amounting BGN 290 (€145) per employee monthly, as well as increased state's contributions to 80% of workers' wages. The industry-specific programme is thus now being popular as measure '80/20'.
  - The third wave of the programme (01 October - 31 December 2020), according to the governmental sources, is expected to have an effect of preservation of about 200 thousand jobs. The funds for maintaining employment will be paid after the respective notification by the European Commission.
  - This is the second extension of the measure and the social partners have asked for it to be included in the Social Security Code.
  - The measure could be additionally extended after the review of the situation with the labour market at the end of the year.
- **extra allowance for workers taking care for sick relatives or taking care of children**
  - An additional BGN 122 million is provided for all payments for personal assistants under the Personal Assistance Act.
- **extra unemployment benefits**
  - Since October 01, 2020, the minimum unemployment benefits are increased from 9 to 12 BGN and can be received for additional three months.

#### **Financial sector measures**

- A continuation of the measures. Early on in the pandemic, the Bulgarian National Bank implemented a significant package of measures to get banks' lending and to enhance liquidity in the financial system. To this end is implemented a package of measures for over 8 percent of GDP, including capitalization of the 2019 profit; increase in liquidity by reducing riskier foreign exposures of commercial banks; and cancellation of the increase of the countercyclical capital buffer planned for 2020 and 2021. One of the main instruments is a moratorium scheme for bank loan payments until 31 March 2021.

#### **Other measures**



- The term of validity of Bulgarian identity cards and passports, expiring in the period from 13 March 2020 to 31 January 2021, is extended by six months. This was decided by the parliament by force of the amendments to the Law on Measures and Actions during the state of emergency. the period of extension, ID cards and passports are valid identity documents in Bulgaria, and abroad - in terms of reciprocity.
- The term of validity of the driver's licenses, which expires in the period from 13 March 2020 to 31 December 2020, is extended by 7 months from the date of expiration of the term for the respective license.
- This measure is still in the discussion phase. Bulgaria's hotel sector is ready to provide over 3,000 beds across the country to accommodate quarantined persons, people in self-isolation, relatives of Covid-19 patients and medics seconded to other towns and cities. This measure will support both the health system and the tourism sector which will receive money from the state in return.

## Croatia

Date: 23 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

Detailed information will be added as soon as possible.

### 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

#### New incentives for employee

In order to retain employment within industries affected by the Coronavirus epidemic (COVID-19) provisions regarding **employment retention incentives** issued by the Croatian Employment Bureau for the period from **October to December 2020** have been amended.

Overview of available employment retention incentives and conditions for their application:

#### 1. Employment retention incentive for specific business sectors and microentrepreneurs

	<b>Sectoral employers</b> (i.e. employers performing business activities in specific sectors)	<b>Microentrepreneurs</b> (regardless of sector/ business activity)
<b>Amount of the incentive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>up to <b>HRK 4,000</b> per full-time employee or <b>pro rata amount</b> per part-time employee in accordance with the percentage of revenue drop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>from 40% to 44.99% - HRK 2,000;</li> <li>from 45% to 49.99% - HRK 2,500;</li> <li>from 50% to 54.99% - HRK 3,000;</li> <li>from 55% to 59.99% - HRK 3,500;</li> <li>from 60% and above - HRK 4,000.</li> </ul> </li> <li>exemption from payment of pension insurance contributions for second pillar (MIO II), proportionately to the incentive amount.</li> </ul>	
<b>Basic eligibility criteria for the incentive</b>	<p><b>A) For sectoral employers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business activities in the following sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agriculture, forestry, and fishing,</li> <li>Transport and storage,</li> <li>Services incidental to air transport,</li> <li>Providing accommodation, preparation and serving food and beverages,</li> <li>Rent and lease, travel agencies, tour operators and other reservation services as well as related activities,</li> <li>Arts, entertainment, and recreation,</li> <li>Repair of computers, personal and household goods and other personal service activities,</li> <li>Organization of cultural, business and sports events, fairs and weddings as well as related ancillary service activities, and</li> <li>Translation activities and interpreter services.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>B) For microentrepreneurs (regardless of sector/ business activity)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employing <b>9 or less employees</b>.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Active longer than one year</b>	<b>Active less than one year</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Revenue drop</b> (based on VAT forms or financial projections): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ in the period from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020 compared to the same period previous year, if <b>established prior to 1 April 2019</b>; or</li> <li>○ in the month preceding the month for which incentive is requested compared to the same month previous year, if <b>established after 1 April 2019</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Revenue drop</b> (based on VAT forms or financial projections) in the month preceding the month for which incentive is requested compared to <b>June 2020</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Target group of employees</b>	<p>Employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With limited and permanent employment,</li> <li>• Citizens of Croatia, EU or third countries,</li> <li>• Employed full-time or part-time,</li> <li>• That have one of the following status: assigned employee, single parent, Croatian war veteran, etc.,</li> <li>• Employees of the branch/ representative offices of foreign companies.</li> </ul> <p><b>EXCLUDING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees employed after 30 September 2020,</li> <li>• Co-owners with more than 25% share, founders, board members, directors, procurators, etc. (except in the case of employers with up to 10 employees, craft owners, regardless of the number of employees),</li> <li>• Pensioners,</li> <li>• Foreign employees whose work permit and residence expired.</li> </ul>	
<b>Who must repay the incentive?</b>	<p>Employers who received incentives for <b>50 or more employees</b> must repay incentives if in the period from the incentive receipt until 31 December 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pays dividends or profit share or other equivalent receipt that is considered as distribution of profits realised in any tax period,</li> <li>• Provides stock options or own stocks or shares to members of the management board, executive directors, procurators, etc.,</li> <li>• Pays bonuses and rewards for work results above the non-taxable amount (HRK 5,000) and other similar receipts to members of the management board, executive directors, procurators, etc.,</li> <li>• Acquires own stocks or own shares.</li> </ul>	
<b>Application deadline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Incentive for October:</b> from 26 October until 25 November 2020</li> <li>• <b>Incentive for November:</b> from 26 November until 25 December 2020</li> <li>• <b>Incentive for December:</b> from 26 December until 25 January 2021</li> </ul>	

## 2. Employment retention incentive for employers whose business activities are suspended or limited based on decision of the Civil Protection Board

	<b>Employers whose business activities are suspended or limited based on decision of the Civil Protection Board</b> (regardless of sector/ business activity)	
<b>Amount of the incentive</b>	<p>Suspended for a period <b>longer than 15 days</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HRK 4,000</b> per full-time employee or <b>pro rata amount</b> per part-time employee.</li> </ul>	<p>Suspended for a period <b>from 1 to 14 days</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HRK 2,000</b> per full-time employee or <b>pro rata amount</b> per part-time employee.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>exemption from payment of pension insurance contributions for second pillar (MIO II), proportionately to the incentive amount.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>exemption from payment of pension insurance contributions for second pillar (MIO II), proportionately to the incentive amount.</li> </ul>
Basic eligibility criteria for the incentive	<p><b>A) For employers whose business activities are suspended</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business activities are <b>suspended</b> based on decision of the of the Civil Protection Board.</li> <li><b>Do not need</b> to prove <b>revenue drop</b>.</li> <li>Incentive is awarded <b>only for the month</b> in which business activities are suspended based on decision of the Civil Protection Board.</li> </ul> <p><b>B) For employers whose business activities are limited</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business activities are <b>limited</b> based on decision of the Civil Protection Board (e.g. limitation of working hours to part-time work or capacity limitations with regard to number of employees who can work from the business premises, at the event, in transport, etc.).</li> <li>Incentive is awarded <b>only for the month</b> in which business activities are limited based on decision of the Civil Protection Board.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Active longer than one year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Revenue drop</b> (based on VAT forms or financial projections): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the month preceding the month for which incentive is requested compared to the same month previous year, <b>or</b></li> <li>in the period from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020 compared to the same period previous year.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Active less than one year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Revenue drop</b> (based on VAT forms or financial projections) in the month preceding the month for which incentive is requested compared to <b>June 2020</b>.</li> </ul>
Target group of employees	<p>Employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With limited and permanent employment,</li> <li>Citizens of Croatia, EU or third countries,</li> <li>Employed full-time or part-time,</li> <li>That have one of the following status: assigned employee, single parent, Croatian war veteran, etc.,</li> <li>Employees of the branch/ representative offices of foreign companies.</li> </ul> <p><b>EXCLUDING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employees employed after 30 September 2020,</li> <li>Co-owners with more than 25% share, founders, board members, directors, procurators, etc. (except in the case of employers with up to 10 employees, craft owners, regardless of the number of employees),</li> <li>Pensioners,</li> <li>Foreign employees whose work permit and residence expired.</li> </ul>	
Who must repay the incentive?	<p>Employers who received incentives for <b>50 or more employees</b> must repay incentives if in the period from the incentive receipt until 31 December 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pays dividends or profit share or other equivalent receipt that is considered as distribution of profits realised in any tax period,</li> </ul>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides stock options or own stocks or shares to members of the management board, executive directors, procurators, etc.,</li> <li>Pays bonuses and rewards for work results above the non-taxable amount (HRK 5,000) and other similar receipts to members of the management board, executive directors, procurators, etc.,</li> <li>Acquires own stocks or own shares.</li> </ul>
Application deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Incentive for October:</b> from 26 October until 25 November 2020</li> <li><b>Incentive for November:</b> from 26 November until 25 December 2020</li> <li><b>Incentive for December:</b> from 26 December until 25 January 2021</li> </ul>

### 3. Employment retention incentive - shortened working hours

Amount of the incentive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The incentive is awarded for temporary introduction of full-time work which <b>lasts shorter than the monthly working hours fund</b>, but not shorter than <b>70%</b> of monthly working hours fund, in the amount <b>up to HRK 2,800 per month net per employee</b>.</li> <li>The employer is obliged to calculate and pay compulsory social security contributions, which will be refunded in accordance with the approved incentive.</li> <li>Payment by the 30<sup>th</sup> of the month for the previous month.</li> </ul>
Basic eligibility criteria for the incentive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Basic eligibility criterion:</b> expected shortened monthly working hours fund for all employees employed by the employer on a full-time basis in the month for which the incentive is requested of <b>at least 10%</b>.</li> <li><b>Revenue drop</b> (based on VAT forms or financial projections) of <b>at least 20%</b> in the month for which the incentive is requested compared to the same month previous year (or February 2020 if active less than one year).</li> <li>The employer must provide credible documentation proving business difficulties such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cancellation of or amendment of the contracts with customers, written statement of customers on decline of orders for the month for which the incentive is requested;</li> <li>inability of contracting new jobs during the COVID-19 epidemic;</li> <li>inability of supply of finished products or contracted and paid raw and production materials, machines, tools;</li> <li>inability of purchase of new raw and production materials, machines and tools necessary for business activities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Target group of employers	<p>Employers with <b>10 or more employees</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 10 to 50 employees if the application for the incentive is submitted for <b>at least 20%</b> of employees,</li> <li>51 or more employees if the application for the incentive is submitted for <b>at least 10%</b> of employees.</li> </ul> <p><b>EXCLUDING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers who registered their business activity and applied to the HZMO insurance system after 29 February 2020,</li> <li>Employers who have not paid salaries for the previous month,</li> <li>Associations and institutions that are not Corporate Profit taxpayers,</li> <li>Employers who already receive employment retention incentives from the Croatian Employment Bureau on another basis.</li> </ul>
Target group of employees	<p>Employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With limited and permanent employment,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employed full-time,</li> <li>• Employed as of 31 May 2020 or earlier.</li> </ul> <b>EXCLUDING:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owners and co-owners with more than 25% share, founders, board members, directors, procurators, etc.,</li> <li>• Employees whose notice period is running,</li> <li>• Employees working from home office.</li> </ul>
<b>Who must repay the incentive?</b>	<p>Employers who received incentives must repay incentives if in the period from the incentive receipt until 31 December 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pays dividends or profit share or other equivalent receipt that is considered as distribution of profits realised in any tax period,</li> <li>• Provides stock options or own stocks or shares to members of the management board, executive directors, procurators, etc.,</li> <li>• Pays bonuses and rewards for work results above the non-taxable amount (HRK 5,000) and other similar receipts to members of the management board, executive directors, procurators, etc.,</li> <li>• Acquires own stocks or own shares.</li> </ul>
<b>Application deadline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By the end of the current month for the following month.</li> </ul>

## Czech Republic

Date: 10 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

- **Regime on confinement** (if any)
  - Free movement restriction in place: staying in public areas and contact with other people are to be limited to the bare minimum, remaining at one's place of residence is to be observed (exceptions include travel to/from a workplace, family visits, bare essentials, urgent official matters, healthcare trips, countryside and park walks, etc.).
- **Regime on curfew** (if any)
  - Curfew in force from 9:00 p.m. to 4:59 a.m. with listed exceptions (travels to/from a workplace, activities related to critical services, urgent healthcare and safety related trips, and walking dogs within 500m).
- **Regime on telework**
  - No nationwide regulation on telework but employers are highly encouraged to prioritize work from home if the nature of a job allows it. As of October 26th, the Czech Government called on Employers to provide for telework, however the legal ground for any such widespread order is not feasible under the Czech Law as per the Czech labour code, telework can only be agreed between employee and employer respectively. Employers, as per the request of the Government, do use telework provided the nature of a respective position and the operational conditions allow for it.
- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - N/A (see commerce)
- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - N/A (see commerce)
- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - No accommodation services can be provided except for persons under specific conditions (business trips, foreigners until they leave the country or with a work permit, quarantine and other circumstances regulated by the state).
  - Restaurants and any other catering facilities may provide only take-away parcels via a counter or delivery service. Their opening hours are limited to a period from 6.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. All restaurants in shopping centres with more than 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> in size are closed.
  - All music, dance and gaming clubs and discos are closed as well.
- **Restrictions for public events**
  - As a rule, maximum of 2 people can gather in public with exceptions of household members, job reasons, school activities, etc.
  - A ban on most public events is imposed. Prohibited events include music, theatre and film shows, congresses, trade fairs, and festivals. Furthermore, all indoor sports facilities (gyms, swimming pools, saunas) and leisure and cultural facilities (zoos, museums and galleries, castles) are closed. All sports events (even outdoor) are prohibited except professional hockey and football leagues under special conditions.
- **Regime for commerce**
  - All non-essential retail sales and services from a shop are banned. Essential shops allowed to remain open include food stores, pharmacies, petrol stations, hygiene, cosmetic & household shops, animal feed shops, newsagents, opticians, laundries, car services, spare parts for vehicles and production technologies, e-shop pick-up points, gardening shops, etc. Their opening hours are limited to a period from Monday to Saturday, 5.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. This restriction doesn't apply to pharmacies, petrol stations, shops in stations and healthcare



facilities, etc. (this kind of retail may include some basic goods or foodstuffs, if they had them on offer before the measures took effect),

- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - All schools and education facilities are closed as of 14 November, with exceptions of nurseries, kindergartens, and schools specifically designated for children from 3 to 10 years of parents in critical infrastructure (police, healthcare, social services, selected civil services, etc.). Schools for children with special education needs are closed too (from 02 November 2020). Preliminary reopening is not clear yet, some suggestions were made that at least first grades of elementary schools could reopen as of 18 November, however no such decision has been made so far by the Government.
  - Education in all closed primary, secondary schools and universities is provided via on-line distance learning. Ministry of Education is guaranteeing TV-education program (UciTelka) for 1<sup>st</sup> grade of primary schools (age 6-11) and database of digital education materials (#NaDalku). Also, methodical and financial (notebook purchase) support is provided.
- **Restrictions to travel** (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)
  - In general, it can be said that no restriction to travel within or outside the country as long as confinement measures are observed, it is not recommended, however, to travel abroad for non-essential reasons.
  - As for travels to the Czech Republic, only essential trips are allowed due to the free movement restriction. The Czech Republic has also adopted EU guidelines for classification of safe/low risk/high-risk countries (Re-open EU) and maintains a list of safe non-EU countries. Individuals who spent longer than 12 hours in the last 14 days in a state not on the list of countries with a low risk of infection are required to follow specific rules (on-line registration, negative COVID-19 test or quarantine).
    - The validity of residence permits in the Czech Republic based on short-term work or seasonal visas and work permits for foreigners from third countries has been extended until 16 November 2020. The reason for further extension of work permits and visas of foreigners from third countries is the worsened epidemiological situation in their countries of origin, e.g. Ukraine, where there is still a large incidence of new cases of covid-19 and at the same time, these employees are very important for Czech employers.
    - Foreigners with employment contracts expiring between 12 March and 16 November 2020 may continue to work in the Czech Republic until 16 November 2020. After that, however, holders of short-term visas and visas for 90+ days for work or seasonal purposes must exit the Czech Republic.
  - The Czech Republic has followed up all Guidelines and Communications adopted by the Commission since March 2020. It is being performed with the aim of supporting coordination efforts of Member States and safeguarding the free movement within the Union in times of the COVID-19 pandemic, incl. the last one from October Recommendation on a co-ordinated approach to the restriction to the free movement in response to the COVID 19 pandemic.
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
  - Anywhere in public, it is obligatory to maintain 2-meter social distancing. Wearing of face masks is obligatory in all indoor settings, public transport vehicles and stops, cars (with the exception of members of one's family), and in all urbanized areas where social distancing can't be followed.
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - 185 testing facilities across the country are currently available, run by the state, hospitals, regions or private labs, with the overall capacity of over 40,000 PCR tests a day. Tests are conducted free of charge if ordered by a doctor or hygiene office, also available for a regulated fee of around 63€ for other purposes. Starting from 9 November, all retirement homes and other assisted living centres clients and staff will be regularly tested using an antigen method on a weekly basis. Some businesses also choose to test all their staff as a preventive measure. A debate is currently on about cost compensation for such company-wide tests.
  - The approved testing system is a PCR method, at designated testing places. On 27 October the Czech government approved also testing via the so-called antigen testing. Employers are largely interested in having this antigen testing approved and they actively take part in own

initiatives of antigen testing and tracing systems. For employers this latter testing system significantly improves the entire process.

- Nationwide testing has not been considered yet.
- **Situation regarding tracing**
  - A system of “smart quarantine” is in place to trace all infected cases and their contacts. New infected people are contacted by a local hygiene office to identify as many people under risk as possible who will later be informed about their quarantine and testing requirements. Despite initial shortcomings, measures were taken to increase its capacity and cover the rise in number of new cases. As a tool to automate a part of the tracing process, a mobile app and self-reporting form were developed.
  - A contact with an infected person is defined as high risk when lasting for more than 15 minutes, in distance less than 1.5m, and with no facemask on.
- **Obligations regarding quarantine**
  - Two categories exist: Self-isolation is enforced for people who were tested positive and/or show symptoms of the disease, quarantine is applied to people who were in a high-risk contact but exhibit no symptoms.
  - Self-isolation lasts 10 days if no symptoms occur at the end of the period, in case of ongoing symptoms it can be terminated only 3 days after the last occurrence. A negative test to support termination of self-isolation is required only for healthcare and social care workers.
  - People in quarantine and people with symptoms are obliged to undergo PCR test within the 6th to 7th day after the the initial contact with an infected person. If such a test outcome is negative the quarantine can be terminated.
- **Other measures**
  - Labor regulation and safety at workplace: Draft act on some measures for diminishing the impact of coronavirus in the area of qualification. This act stipulates rights and obligations with regard to qualification criteria examination, which are set for exercise of a job - prolongation of such qualifications. During the emergency status (currently until November 20), the entry medical exam of an employee can be replaced by a personal declaration. Further exemptions exist for some periodic medical examinations. Hygienic recommendations have been put in place - recommendations by employers on how to limit covid transmission at a workplace.
    - Spa centres may be open only for clients with a prescribed treatment at least partly covered by public health insurance.
    - A ban is imposed on drinking alcohol in public.
    - No markets and mobile sale facilities may be open except for those selling fresh produce from the Czech Republic and mourning goods. Consumption of food at farmers' markets is prohibited and a number of people here limited to 20 per 400 m<sup>2</sup>.

*Most restrictive measures are introduced as part of a state of emergency, which is currently designed to last until 20 November.*

*Full details of epidemiological measures described above are available at:*

<https://koronavirus.mzcr.cz/en/current-measures/>

<https://covid.gov.cz/en/>

<https://www.vlada.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/measures-adopted-by-the-czech-government-against-coronavirus-180545/>

*Some other non-governmental organisations publish some information as well:*

<https://www.spcr.cz/en/news>

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

### Tax related measures

- **Deferral of Tax payments** (Corporate income tax, social contributions, etc.)
  - Deferment of tax obligations to those entrepreneurs whose activities were imminently limited. Deferment of all payments affected by government measures - VAT, income tax advances and road tax advances.
  - There is a waiver of the advance on personal income tax and corporate income tax payable in the period from 15 October 2020 to 15 December 2020. The waiver of an advance on income tax (road tax) does not waive the tax itself.
- **Deferral of VAT payments**
  - VAT payers (affected by government measures) shall be waived the default interest on the value added tax. All taxpayers shall also be waived the payment value-added tax for gratuitous supply of goods enumerated and gratuitous supply of goods or provision of services to selected entities for the period from 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020.
- **Acceleration of VAT Credit refunds**
  - There is no acceleration; the limit is now 30 days. Fortunately, the bill prolonging this time to 45 days was stopped in the Parliament.
- **Deferral of Fines/Interest on late tax payments**
  - VAT payers whose activities were restricted or prohibited by the Government Resolution No. 1021 are exempted from **interest** on arrears accrued on value added tax on monthly payers for the tax periods of September 2020, October 2020 and November 2020 and for III. quarter of 2020 for quarterly taxpayers, if the tax, to which the interest on arrears is bound, will be paid no later than by 31 December 2020. The entities concerned are therefore waived the interest on arrears related to the late payment of value added tax. However, it still applies that tax returns and control reports must be submitted within the legal deadline.
  - Remission of fines for delayed tax statement in all cases when the taxpayer **individually requests** remission of default interest, tax deferment or a payment schedule or fines for failure to file a VAT control statement in connection with coronavirus. (*Disease or quarantine of an accountant or other key employees etc.*)
- **Tax returns can be filed later**
  - Blanket remission of fines for late filing of the personal and corporate income tax returns – see above „Deferral of Fines/Interest on late tax payments”
  - Tax returns and control reports (VAT) must be submitted within the legal deadline.
- **Temporary reduction in VAT- rate**
  - There is a reduction to 10% in effect since 1 May 2020 (catering, some craft and professional services as well as water and sewage, books, audio books...) **however, it is not related to COVID-19 pandemic. It is a long-term running reform.**
- **Other tax measures**
  - **Loss Carry-back Principle.** Introduction of the Loss Carryback Principle (retroactive effect of tax loss) for personal and corporate income tax for the year 2020. It will be possible to apply it retroactively in the tax return for 2019 and 2018
  - **Abolition of Real Estate Acquisition Tax.** Abolition of real estate acquisition tax for 4 % of the total purchase price. The government bill abolishes the real estate acquisition tax with retroactive effect. The tax will no longer be paid by anyone who acquired the property in December 2019 at the latest.

### Subsidies

- **non-sectoral state aid (grants)**
  - Subsidy program COVID-Rent II: Contribution of 50% of the rent for the period July, August and September 2020, i.e. 3Q 2020. Max. approx. 370 00 EUR cumulated per one applicant.

Grant of the subsidy to the applicant is not conditioned by the provision of a discount from the property owner to the tenant. It is aiming on those operations that were banned or significantly restricted by the Government Resolution.

- **sectoral state aid (grants)**

- COVID-Culture II: Support in the form of a contribution to the performance of performers and professional technical professions, as well as support for cultural enterprises. Intended as compensation for wasted expenses incurred in connection with the organization of cultural events and continuous cultural activities in the period from 10 March 2020 to 31 December 2020 that have been limited, moved or abolished in direct connection with emergency government measures. The aid may cover up to 50% of eligible expenditure for relocated or cancelled cultural events and up to 80% of eligible expenditure for continuously developed cultural activities. The maximum amount of the subsidy per entity is approx. 370 000 EUR. One-time support for artistic and professional technical professions in culture takes the form of a one-time state contribution of approx. 2 200 EUR.
- COVID-Bus. The aid is intended for non-scheduled bus operators to compensate for the fall in sales due to the COVID - 19 epidemic in times of emergency. The support covers the critical period in spring 2020, from 12 March to 30 June. The amount of aid will be derived from the emission class of the bus (higher emission class = lower environmental impact = higher purchase price of the bus); the bus capacity itself will also be considered.
- COVID-Sport II. Support for business entities in the field of sports, which were limited in their business activities in connection with the negative effects of extraordinary measures of the Ministry of Health.
  - Support A: support for business entities that participate in professional championships
  - Support B: support for business entities organizing or co-organizing sports events.
- COVID-Tourism. Support for travel agencies - up to 2.75% of planned revenues from the sale of tours. Support for travel agencies by approx. 18,5 EUR per a cancelled trip due to a pandemic, if the trip was purchased in the period from 1 December 2019 to 1 October 2020. Support for inbound travel agencies - subsidies in the amount up to approx. 1850 EUR provided if the revenues from this activity in 2020 is at least 50% lower than in 2019, the agency has been operating on the Czech market for more than 3 years, and had sales in 2019 approx. 37 000 EUR minimum. Support for tourist guides - a subsidy up to 1850 EUR.
- COVID Programme for carriers (transport in the public service obligation) is under preparation.
- COMPENSATION BONUS (The program is still in the legislative process; this is the presumed form of the program.) Applicants (self-employed and SMEs) can claim the CZK 500 bonus for each day of the immediate ban or restriction of business due to government regulations within the first bonus period from October 5th, 2020 until November 4th, 2020, and the second bonus period from November 5th until November 21st, 2020.

## Loans/guarantees /Payment suspension

- **state guarantees on loans**

- Guarantees for entrepreneurs affected by coronavirus (now in round COVID III) (for SMEs and MID-CAPs). The aim of the program is to support self-employed persons and companies through guarantees for operating bank loans. Provision of guarantees:
  - Up to 90% of the principal of a guaranteed loan for undertakings with up to 250 employees
  - Up to 80% of the principal of a guaranteed loan for undertakings with between 250 and 500 employees
  - The maximum amount of the guaranteed loan must not exceed CZK 50 million
  - Liability period max. 3 years
- The support is provided in the form of a CMGDB (ČMZRB) guarantee to the cooperating bank for the portfolio of transactions of final beneficiaries.
- The guaranteed loan can be used to cover operating expenses, such as wages, rents, energy payments, payment of supplier-customer invoices, acquisition of inventory, materials, etc.
- Administered by Czech-Moravian Guarantee and Development Bank

- COVID III should in the future also cover investments (not only operational loans) in the future.
- **COVID plus guarantee**
  - The Covid Plus program is intended to help large employers maintain the liquidity needed to maintain operations and the possible development of export companies.
  - The condition for obtaining guarantees is a minimum number of 250 employees and the share of exports in total sales in 2019 must reach at least 20 percent, which, however, also includes production deliveries for another exporter.
  - The loan amount is set in the range from CZK 5 million to CZK 2 billion, where the maximum loan amount corresponds to 25% of the company's annual turnover. The amount of coverage provided by EGAP is 80 percent, so the bank's minimum share will be 20%.
  - The applicant for the guarantee is a commercial bank, not a company.
  - Administered by: State Export Guarantee and Insurance Company (EGAP)
- **export guarantees**
  - The package of measures to support exporters facing the consequences of the necessary restrictions to prevent the spread of viral infection aims to:
    - introduction of the so-called Fast Track, i.e. priority processing of insurance applications for exporters who are looking for new customers due to the global coronavirus pandemic
    - significantly reduced fees for exporters who will demand EGAP insurance products covering new risks
    - reduction of the time required for the recognition of the right to indemnity (waiting period) for insured loans from 6 months to 3 months and for insured guarantees from 3 months to 1 month, which will help solve any cash flow problems of the exporter.
    - Any Czech exporter who is afraid of new risks can contact EGAP immediately via online applications at <https://eol.egap.cz/> and EGAP will do the following:
      - EGAP will check the creditworthiness and solvency of a foreign customer
      - in a shortened process, EGAP will prepare insurance contracts addressing the risk of non-collection of goods or non-payment of the exporter's invoice
      - insurance will be provided for receivables from CZK 100,000
      - insurance is offered to all Czech exporters, including SMEs (natural person with permanent residence or legal entity with its registered office in the Czech Republic).
- **rescheduling loan payments with state intervention**
  - Currently, banks and non-bank lenders allow individual solutions for specific cases. Moratorium ended in October.

## Labour market and social policy measures

- **subsidy for wages (employees)**
  - There is no direct subsidy assigned to employees. Under the Antivirus Program the subsidy is assigned to an employer as a compensation of wages they pay. The real "kurzarbeit" program, where the subsidy will be assigned directly to employee, is under preparation, the parameters are being discussed. Kurzarbeit should be a different setup where the state is reimbursing the wage to the employee him/herself (technically still through the employer) according to the portion of the work that cannot be allocated to that specific employee.
- **subsidy for wages (self-employed)**
  - Compensation bonus for the self-employed and partners of small companies (limited liability companies with max. 2 partners). For each day of closing the establishment or a direct impossibility or restriction of business, the Financial Administration will pay 500 Czech crowns per day. Those who are directly linked to closed businesses as suppliers and lost at least 80% of the business in their major source for living, are eligible as well. Persons working based on contracts on the performance of work or contracts for work activity (*means those without standard employment contract*) are also covered if they worked on such a contract at least 3 out of 4 last month. It is impossible to combine this assistance with other direct assistance (for example from the COVID - Culture program).





- **short time working schemes**
  - The Antivirus Program (A, B), Compensation of Wages and Salaries Self-employed people who employ workers may also use the program. This a specialized temporary program to fight COVID-19 induced crises.
  - Scheme A (prolonged up to December 31, 2020): targeted at nationwide lockdown and quarantine requirements - 80% of the wage compensation by state (gross, including social contributions) for
    - quarantined workers (they receive wage compensation of 60% of their average reduced earnings);
    - close-down of an operation by a government decree (the workers receive wage compensation of 100% of their average earnings);
    - Maximal amount of reimbursement is approx... EUR 1430
  - Scheme A+ (new since October): The state will compensate 100% of paid wage, including levies to the employer, who has paid wage compensation to the employee according the Labor Code, if the obstacle at work arose due to forced closure of the business (or had been significantly restricted). (For example, the ability to provide catering services through the window - the operation is not closed as such, however it is significantly limited.) The maximum state compensation is approx. 1850 EU. Some additional conditions will apply with regard to state aid rules. Contribution under the Antivirus Plus Scheme can't be provided to an employer who has received public support provided under point 3.1 of the Temporary Framework in the amount of more than EUR 800,000. However, in such a case, the employer is still eligible for standard scheme A.
  - Scheme B (prolonged up to December 31, 2020): Targeted at closure/disruption of supply chain due to closure of borders or missing deliveries 60 % of the wage compensation (gross, including social contributions) paid to workers for hours not worked due to:
    - Barriers to work on the part of the employer due to the order of quarantine or childcare for a significant part of employees (the remaining workers receive- wage compensation of 100% of their average earnings)
    - Limitation of the availability of inputs (workers receive wage compensation of min. of 80% of their average earnings)
    - Limitation of demand (workers receive wage compensation from 60% to 100 % of average earnings according to the obstacle)
    - State compensation 60% of paid wage, including levies, maximal amount of the government contribution is approx... EUR 1060
  - Scheme C = remission of social security levies - but only to SMEs with max threshold of 50 employees. The Scheme C has been already terminated.
- **government to assume part/entire cost of sick leave**
  - N/A - However in the Czech Republic the government pays sick leave to employees from the 15<sup>th</sup> day of incapacity for work onwards, i.e. employer bears the first 14 days.
- **extending social benefits to self-employed**
  - "Nursing benefits" program for self-employed II. Subsidy compensating self-employed for measures against coronavirus - nursing of a family member in an amount of approx. 15 EUR for each day of nursing. It will be paid ex-post for each month for which it has been requested. "Nursing benefits" for self-employed persons cannot be combined with the Compensation Bonus paid by the Ministry of Finance
- **extra allowance for workers taking care for sick relatives or taking care of children**
  - Standard "sickness" care allowance increased to 70 % of reduced base (instead of regular 60 %, in the spring increased to 80%), with current minimum allowance of approx. 15 EUR/day, for parents taking care of school children up to 10 years of age (in the spring up to age of 13) or disabled of any age for the entire period of closure of school/care establishment, max. up to June 30, 2021.
- **double salary for people in isolation or in risk of contagion:**
  - Not a general double salary, but there are special bonuses derived from how many hours the employee worked under risk conditions. E.g. doctors and medical staff of inpatient facilities – the medical facility apply the Ministry of health for contribution, Ministry of Labour

and Social Affairs provided special bonuses to social workers in municipal offices, special bonuses were also provided to police officers and firefighters.

## Regulatory changes

- **moratorium on insolvency**
  - There is Act No. 191/2020 Coll. on Certain Measures to Mitigate the Effects of the SARS CoV-2 Coronavirus Epidemic on Litigants, Victims, Victims of Crime and Legal Persons and on Amendment of the Insolvency Act and the Execution Code, also known as Lex Covid or Lex Covid of justice. It concerns the regulation of legal matters concerning legal entities, forced enforcement and insolvency law and the waiver of missed procedural deadlines in selected proceedings.
  - Among others, it brought the temporary abolition of the obligation to file a debtor's insolvency petition for debtors, whose bankruptcy occurred after the beginning and in direct connection with the adoption of extraordinary measures, which will last for 6 months from the end of extraordinary measures, but no later than 31 December 2020.
  - According to this Act, creditors lost the opportunity to file a creditor insolvency petition until 31 August 2020. The Act introduced directly into the Insolvency Act the possibility of exempting the debtor from the payment of receivables, the so-called institute of an extraordinary moratorium. Until the 31 August 2020, debtors were able to file a petition with the insolvency court.
  - A new act, known as "lex covid justice II" is now in the process of adoption by the Parliament. It is bringing some parametrical changes and a new deadline to activate the extraordinary moratorium and the final date for filing file a debtor's insolvency petition for debtors, which is now 30 June 2021.
- **relaxation of various regulations**
  - Electronic Records of Sales (EET) is suspended and the planned process of broadening this obligation to other business branches is suspended as well. Within Lex Covid of justice (cf above), deadlines for general meetings were extended ex lege as well as elapsed periods of office of statutory representatives.

## Financial sector measures (such as easing in capital requirements)

- An amendment to the Act on the Czech National Bank (CNB), easing the existing restrictions on open market transactions, has been approved. Thanks to the amendment, the CNB can now trade instruments with maturities of more than one year. In addition, the CNB can from now on trade with other entities, for example, with insurance and pension companies or with other institutional investors (normally the CNB may trade only with banks and credit unions). All of this has been carried out within the framework of the ECB rules; the aim of this amendment is to strengthen the stability of the Czech financial market.
- The Czech National Bank (CNB) has reduced the two-week repo rate to 0.25 %, the Lombard rate to 1.00 % and the discount rate to 0.05 %. The CNB has revised the countercyclical capital buffer for exposures located in the Czech Republic to 1.75 %.

## Other measures

- **Extension of OP EIC Calls Deadlines**
  - Along with this, all fixed deadlines specified in the calls were extended by 30 days (deadline for completion of the project, fixed deadlines for substantiating the relevant mandatory annexes, etc.).
- **Postponement of lease or sublease payments for business premises, prohibition of termination**
  - The property owner may not unilaterally terminate the lease during the protection period (from 27 April to 31 December 2020) only because the tenant is in delay with the payment of rent, associated with the use of business premises. It is applicable if the delay occurred at the relevant time (from 12 March to 30 June 2020), and in relation to the restrictions caused due to extraordinary measures during the pandemic, which prevented or made their

business substantially more difficult. The tenant is obliged to pay all receivables that became due at the relevant time and which the tenant did not pay duly, by the end of the protection period.

- **Loan repayment postponement**

- It was possible for borrowers to request a postponement of loan repayment, if they agreed and drew it before 26 March 2020. The protection period lasted 6 or 3 months. This measure already expired at the end of October. Banks will now assess cases individually and promise to be helpful. The government does not want to impose another moratorium.



## Denmark

Date: 05 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

- **Regime on confinement**

- it has been reported that a mutation of COVID-19 in mink farms poses the risk of interfering with the effectiveness of vaccines in humans. For that reason, a lockdown has been imposed in the affected municipalities located in Northern Jutland (Hjørring, Frederikshavn, Brønderslev, Jammerbugt, Vesthimmerland, Thisted and Læsø). The restrictions are expected to last until at least 3 December 2020. The affected municipalities are in a *de facto* confinement. In the meantime, all minks are being put down.

- **No curfew**

- **Regime on telework**

- Teleworking is recommended to the extent possible given the nature of the job. In a number of municipalities in Northern Jutland, is *highly* recommended to telework for both employees in the public and private sector.

- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**

- It is recommended to telework as much as possible given the nature of the industry and the work. Moreover, there are strict conditions for continuing in-office work etc. in the private sector. Employers should specify guidelines, e.g. to restrict the number of employees physically present at the office.

- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**

- For both services in the private and public sector, it is recommended to telework as much as possible given the nature of the work. If physically present at the workplace, strict conditions apply depending on the nature of the service. Employers should specify guidelines.

- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**

- Restaurants, cafés and bars are obliged to close no later than at 10 pm. Stricter conditions apply in a number of municipalities in Northern Jutland as all restaurants, cafés and bars have been forced to close.

- **Restrictions for public events**

- There is ban against public gatherings of more than 10 people outdoors as well as indoors. Gatherings of less than 500 people are allowed in certain events, e.g. professional sports events and religious ceremonies if the participants remain seated.

- **Regime for commerce**

- All shops remain open without restrictions regarding opening hours, but the sale of alcohol is prohibited after 10 pm. Non-essential shops in a number of municipalities in Northern Jutland have been forced to close.

- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**

- All nurseries, kindergartens, schools and universities remain open and physical presence is allowed as long as certain guidelines are complied with. Stricter conditions apply in a number of municipalities in Northern Jutland.

- **Restrictions to travel (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)**

- Despite the outbreak of a mutated coronavirus in Northern Jutland, there are currently no internal travel restrictions within Denmark. However, it is strongly advised against traveling to and leaving a number of municipalities located in Northern Jutland. In these municipalities, all means of public transportation has been forced to close.

- Every Thursday at 4 pm, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark updates its list of so-called 'open countries' and 'quarantine countries'. Traveling to the latter mentioned countries are strongly advised against and if entering Denmark from one of these countries, 14 days of quarantine and testing is highly recommended. Moreover, travellers must have a worthy purpose for entering Denmark (e.g. a business trip) and present proof of a negative test for COVID-19 if they are traveling from a quarantine country. The test must have been taken no more than 72 hours prior to entry in Denmark. These requirements do, however, not apply to Danish citizens and other citizens who reside in Denmark.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark update their list of open countries and quarantine countries with regards to the EU Council's recommendations on the lifting of travel restrictions at the external borders for residents of third countries.
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
  - The health authorities recommend keeping a social distance of at least 1 meter to people who are not a part of your household.
  - As regards to face masks and/or face shields, you are obliged to wear one or the other while in supermarkets, shops, public transportation, hospitals, cultural institutions, sports facilities, schools and universities as well as in restaurants, cafés and bars (however not when sitting at your designated table).
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - In case you experience symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in close contact with someone who has received a positive test result for COVID-19, testing is highly recommended. Close contacts will need to go into quarantine and undergo testing on both the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> day after the latest day of contact with the infected person. If both test results are negative, the close contact can end the quarantine.
  - Generally, everyone including asymptomatic persons have the possibility of undergoing tests for COVID-19 in the public testing centres, e.g. without consulting a general practitioner and obtaining a prescription.
- **Situation regarding tracing**
  - The Danish Patient Authority will contact persons who have tested positive for COVID-19, i.a. to offer to inform close contacts of the infected person.
  - In addition, the Danish Ministry of Health has developed a contact tracing app to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.
- **Obligations regarding quarantine**
  - If entering Denmark from a quarantine country or tested positive for COVID-19, 14 days of quarantine is highly recommended. In case of close contact with an infected person, the quarantine can be shortened by undergoing two tests for COVID-19 provided both results are negative.
- **Other measures**
  - The Danish government has introduced a COVID-19 warning system. The system provides risk levels and the restrictions that will be imposed for each level with the aim to make it more predictable for companies which restrictions will apply and when. The system contains five risk levels where risk level 1 means that there are merely low and local rates of infections while risk level 5 means that there is a widespread infection in society and a risk of treatment capacity in hospitals being exceeded. The risk levels may differ regionally. At the moment, all regions of Denmark are at risk level 3. However, due to the outbreak of a mutated coronavirus in Northern Jutland, the risk level in this region may soon be upgraded to 4 or 5.

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

All current compensation and guarantee schemes have been extended to 31 January 2021 and the scope of some of these have also been widened. In addition, several other support measures have been introduced.

### Tax related measures such as

- **Deferral of Tax payments (Corporate income tax, social contributions, etc)**
  - Certain deadlines for payment of income tax and labour market contributions have been extended. As an example, the original deadline for SME's payment for October 2020 has been extended from 10 November 2020 to 31 May 2021. The original deadline for large companies' payment for October 2020 has been extended from 30 October 2020 to 17 May 2021.
- **Deferral of VAT payments**
  - Filing and payment deadlines for VAT returns on a monthly, quarterly and half-yearly basis have been extended.
  - The deadline for VAT returns on a half-yearly basis has been extended from 1 September 2020 to 1 March 2021 for the settlement period 1 January to 30 June 2020. An additional filing and payment must be made prior to 1 March 2021 for the settlement period 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020.
  - The deadline for VAT returns on quarterly basis has been extended from 2 June 2020 to 1 September 2020 for the settlement period 1 January 2020 to 31 March 2020, i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2020. Moreover, another filing and payment must be made prior to 1 September 2020 for the settlement period 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020, i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2020. The deadline for filing and payment of the settlement period for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2020 has also been extended so that the deadline is the same as for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2020 on 1 March 2021. So far, the deadline for filing and payment for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2020 has not been extended.
  - The deadlines for VAT return on a monthly basis have generally been extended up until the settlement period for 1 August to 31 August 2020 where the deadline was extended from 25 September to 2 October.

### Subsidies such as

- **non-sectoral state aid (grants)**
  - As part of the 9 tripartite agreements made by the social partners in Denmark, Companies with a proof of fall in turnover of minimum 30 pct. as a direct consequence of COVID-19 are eligible to receive compensation. SMEs can receive compensation of up to 90 pct. of their loss of turnover while larger companies can only receive compensation of up to 70 pct. of their loss. The maximum compensation for companies is 30 million DKK per month.
  - The state will extend its guarantee coverage of companies' trade and export with an additional six months if the COVID-19 crisis continues, i.e. until 30 June 2021. 30 million DKK has been allocated to the guarantee coverage. Hereby, companies will still be able to insure themselves against lack of payments from their customers.
  - Companies that have been forced to close due to the COVID-19 restrictions, including night clubs, conference organisers and possibly other de facto closed sectors, are eligible to receive compensation for up to 100 pct. of the loss of turnover.
  - In light of the newly introduced restrictions on gatherings of more than 10 people, direct suppliers to private and social events of at least 10 participants may be compensated as such events are cancelled.
  - Social partners have agreed to an additional 10 million DKK has been dedicated to Omstillingsfonden which is a foundation that gives access to diploma programmes etc. for employed and skilled persons in order for them to adapt and upskill.
  - The activity pool has been extended until 31 January 2021 and on top of the previously unused funds, the state has dedicated an additional 300 million DKK. Furthermore, 15 million DKK have been earmarked for activities in the cinematic sector. 150 million DKK

has been allocated to pools placed under different sports confederations (DIF, DGI, Firmaidrætten and DUF) to support amateur sports.

- **Special aid package for Northern Jutland**
  - Due to the lockdown imposed because of the outbreak of a mutated coronavirus in Northern Jutland, the Danish government and parliament have adopted an extended aid package for this region, which will last until 3 December 2020. The aid package implies that:
    - 1) Companies that have been forced to close local production sites are eligible to receive wage compensation. For companies in the rest of the countries, all the company has to be forced to close in order to receive the wage compensation in this category.
    - 2) Due to the internal travel restrictions in Northern Jutland, companies are eligible to receive wage compensation for commuting employees who need to be physically present to perform their tasks. The compensation rates are 75 pct. of the wage for salaried employees and 90 pct. for non-salaried employees with a maximum of 45,000 DKK a month.
    - 3) Companies that temporarily need to lay off at least 30 pct. of the staff or more than 50 employees are eligible for wage compensation. The compensation rates are 75 pct. of the wage for salaried employees and 90 pct. for non-salaried employees with a maximum of 30,000 DKK a month.
- **sectoral state aid (grants)**
  - The travel operators' possibility to use the guarantee scheme via the Travel Guarantee Fund has been extended until 31 January 2021.
  - Companies that experience a sufficiently great decrease in turnover in relation to the ban against the sales of alcohol after 10 pm are eligible to receive compensation for their loss in turnover.
  - Companies working as permanent suppliers to mink farms are eligible to receive compensation, e.g. feeding centres and veterinarians.
  - The state will refund the expenses amusement parks have had in relation to inspections of carousels and other amusement rides.
- **direct company state aid**
  - Described in relation to the point on non-sectoral state aid.

#### **Loans/guarantees/payment suspension such as**

- **additional loans**
  - SMEs can receive the VAT they paid in March or the tax on labour costs they paid in the middle of April as an interest-free loan.
- **state guarantees on loans**
  - The match facility scheme for entrepreneurs in their early phases have been expanded to a total of 500 million DKK as well as a state guaranteed loan facility of 335 million DKK to Vaekstfonden (the Danish state's investment fund).
- **export guarantees**
  - The share of export guarantee covered by state agencies, including EFK (Denmark's Export Credit Agency) and Vaekstfonden has been increased from 80 to 90 pct. This will provide better access for SMEs to obtain loans to finance export activities as the state will cover a larger part of the risk taken by private banks.

#### **Labour market and social policy measures such as**

- **subsidy for wages (employees)**
  - Companies that have been forced to close due to the COVID-19 restrictions, including night clubs, conference organisers and possibly other de facto closed sectors, are eligible to receive compensation for wages to employees.
- **subsidy for wages (self-employed)**

- The state has allocated 25 million DKK to the Danish Arts Foundation with the purpose of setting up a number of work grants targeted at professional artists that have been struggling financially due to the COVID-19 restrictions.
- government to assume part/entire cost of sick leave
- Persons receiving sickness benefits can extend the period of time in which they receive the benefits with three months until 21 January 2021.
- In addition, employees are eligible for sickness benefits on the first day of sickness caused by COVID-19.
- **help for apprentices**
  - Following the special aid packaged adopted for Northern Jutland, which is currently in lockdown due to the outbreak of a mutated coronavirus, apprentices are eligible for wage compensation. The aid package lasts until 3 December 2020.
- **help for students**
  - The expanded student loan schemes have been resumed until 31 January 2021. Furthermore, the state has allocated 18 million DKK to co-finance necessary extensions of PhD programmes due to the COVID-19 restrictions.
  - The state has also allocated 60 million DKK to i.a. night schools and folk schools where the number of participants has decreased and/or the number of expenses has increased due to the new restrictions on gatherings.
- **extra allowance for workers taking care for sick relatives or taking care of children**
  - Rights to obtain sickness benefits have been extended so that exposed people and relatives in the same households are eligible to receive benefits without proved sickness.
- **greater flexibility in laying off workers**
  - Normal flexibility applies if the company in question is not receiving wage compensation.
- **extra unemployment benefits**
  - Persons using their right to unemployment benefits in the time period 1 November 2020 to 1 November 2021 will automatically be able to extend their right to receive unemployment benefits with two months.
  - Several other measures have been introduced to tackle an increase of unemployment. The state has allocated an additional 30 million DKK to the regional pool for education in order to ensure that unemployed persons can adapt and upskill to new jobs and industries. Moreover, the state has dedicated 10 million DKK in 2021 to a new application pool in which industry organisations, companies lacking employees etc. can apply for means to coordinators to develop and support upskilling. As a measure targeted at a specific group of unemployed persons, a new pool of 20 million DKK will be established in 2021 to finance certifications of pilots and air traffic controllers that have been dismissed since 11 March 2020.

**Financial sector measures** (such as easing in capital requirements)

- Since March 2020 financial institutions have been permitted to set out looser accounting requirements when providing loans for financially sustainable companies.
- In addition, financial institutions are allowed to boost their liquidity by using the buffer from the Liquidity Coverage Requirement (LCR)

**Other measures** (such as public authorities to pay contractors more rapidly, force majeure clause not be invoked by public actor)

- A new restart team has been established with the aim to formulate recommendations on how cultural and sports sectors can continue to function and develop while taking the COVID-19 situation into account. 50 million DKK has been allocated to the restart team.

## Estonia

Date: 12 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

Estonian Government issued new rules on 12 November 2020.

- **No regime on confinement**
- **No regime on curfew**
- **Regime on telework**
  - as of 16 November 2020: We recommend employees to work remotely if possible. Employers are advised to prepare a remote working plan and arrange remote working in case someone becomes infected with the coronavirus at work. We recommend cancelling all joint events, including Christmas parties, which are attended by people who do not come into contact on a daily basis. Celebrating Christmas with family is, of course, allowed.
- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - Industries are functioning
- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - Services are functioning
- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - The government limits the opening hours of catering and entertainment establishments from midnight to 6 a.m. to prevent crowds. The restriction does not cover the take-away of food. **The rule will take effect on 16 November.**
- **Restrictions for public events**
  - There is a strong recommendation not to held public events (Christmas parties, New Years celebrations etc should be canceled, government decision on 12 November 2020). Public meetings, public events and sports competitions may be held under special conditions. Up to 2,000 guests can take part in outdoor events from 15 July and a maximum of 750 guests indoors from 29 September. At the same time, the requirement of 50% occupancy and dispersion must still be met indoors. Exceptions to the 50% occupancy requirement are made for theatre performances, concerts, cinema screenings, as well as for conferences and public meetings and events held in rooms with fixed seating. To reduce the risk of infection, visitors must be dispersed at entrances and exits, in toilets and rest areas and in other places where people may congregate.
- **Regime for commerce, public transport, service halls, public areas**
  - On public transport, in the service halls and public areas of commercial enterprises, and at conferences, concerts, theatres, and cinemas, a mask must be worn or the nose and mouth must otherwise be covered. We ask carriers, enterprisers, and event organisers to monitor compliance with this requirement and to inform people thereof. People for whom it is medically indicated (for example, asthmatics or the deaf) and children under the age of 12 do not have to wear a mask. Other justified situations are also possible (for example, if there are no other passengers in the vehicle).
  - Carriers are asked to put up a notice on wearing a mask on public transport, such as 'Dear passenger, put on your mask!' Other safety information must be displayed in a visible place on public transport.
  - **Measures in public places and public transport**
    - The government establishes by its order a 2 + 2 rule in service halls and public areas of commercial enterprises, in accordance with which no more than two people may move together and a distance of at least two metres must be kept with others, except



- for families and if this cannot be reasonably guaranteed. **The rule will take effect on 16 November.**
    - The government establishes a two-metre distance rule between groups of people in catering and entertainment establishments, with a maximum of 10 people per group. The restriction does not apply to members of the same family, nor does it apply to, for example, hobby education and children's playrooms. **The rule will take effect on 16 November.**
  - The shopping center may be open to all shops and offer all services, provided that the following requirements are met:
    - compliance with the dispersion requirement;
    - Disinfection equipment is provided in sales and service halls for both employees and customers.
  - The following rules apply at the restaurant:
    - compliance with the dispersion requirement;
    - disinfectants must be provided for both staff and customers.
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - Nurseries, kindergartens, schools and universities are opened - The 50% occupancy requirement has been abolished for schools and other educational institutions. This means that from 1 September, the school year started in the usual way for the most part. But there are some exceptions – e.g. in Tallinn schools the “one-week school, one week distant studying” – not obligatory, just decided by the City Council to disperse students.
- **Restrictions to travel (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)**
  - Estonian citizens, residents and their family members. Estonian citizens and residents are allowed entry regardless of whether or not they show symptoms of the disease.
  - Citizens and residents of the European Union, the Schengen area, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and Vatican, and individuals with a long-stay visa and their family members if they show no symptoms. [Read the list here.](#)
  - Residents of Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Rwanda, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore and Uruguay, if they show no symptoms.
  - Citizens of foreign states without symptoms arriving in Estonia from states not named above for work or studies. On arrival they are subjects to 10-day restriction on freedom of movement, which means that:
    - the employer or educational institution must provide transport for the employee or student on their arrival in Estonia and ensure that they comply with the 10-day compulsory restriction on freedom of movement;
    - the employer or educational institution ensures that the employee or student undergoes two SARS-CoV-2 tests. The first test must be administered on their arrival and the second on the 10th day after their arrival;
    - the employee and student are not allowed to start working and studying respectively for the first 10 days following their arrival in Estonia;
    - the employee and student can start work and studies respectively from the 11th day since their arrival on the condition that their second coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 test was negative.
  - On the Tallinn-Stockholm ferry line, **pleasure trips are not allowed**, i.e. you cannot go on a cruise.
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
  - Wearing a mask is STRONGLY recommended (not mandatory). The government establishes by its order a 2 + 2 rule in service halls and public areas of commercial enterprises, in accordance with which no more than two people may move together and a distance of at least two metres must be kept with others, except for families and if this cannot be reasonably guaranteed. **The rule will take effect on 16 November.**
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - Testing data [here](#). Short version - From 1 September, those returning to Estonia from COVID-19 risk countries will have the opportunity to be tested for coronavirus at the airport and port in order to shorten the 10-day restriction on the freedom of movement and allow them to return

to work sooner. Test is free to Estonian citizens for foreigners it costs 67 euros. One must take 2 tests the second one no earlier than on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. Long version [here](#)

- **Situation regarding tracing**
  - tracing app HOIA.ME <https://www.hoia.me/en/> is optional.
- **Obligations regarding quarantine**
  - People diagnosed with COVID-19 have a quarantine obligation and restrictions on their movement in close contact.
  - People diagnosed with COVID-19 in residential care are not allowed to come into contact with other people, except for residential care staff and medical staff.
  - On 29 October 2020, the government decided to reduce the duration of both the restriction of freedom of movement after crossing the border and the quarantine of close contact of those infected with the coronavirus from 14 to 10 days.
  - According to the decision, the restriction on freedom of movement after crossing the border, which applies when arriving from a country with a high risk of infection, will be shortened from 14 to 10 days. The possibility to replace the restriction of freedom of movement with two tests remains, one of which is performed immediately after coming to Estonia and the other not earlier than on the seventh day after receiving the first negative result. If both test results are negative, the person can resume normal life without waiting for the end of the 10-day isolation period. Differences when traveling to Estonia from Latvia, Lithuania and Finland also apply.<sup>2</sup>
- **Other measures**
  - **Measures at home (as of 16 November 2020).** Before meeting a person at risk, make sure you are safe from infection and ensure safety when visiting: wear a mask, keep your distance, and clean your hands and surfaces. Social welfare institutions must ensure safe opportunities for contact and non-contact communication for people belonging to the risk group. The safety rules applicable to living with a person infected with the coronavirus must be observed, including wearing a mask, keeping distance and avoiding contact with them, if possible, and cleaning hands and surfaces regularly.

## **2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government**

### **Regarding tax, subsidies and loans/grants**

- Not many support measures in place.
- Following the end of the emergency situation, the interest rate has been reduced to 0.03% per day until 31 December 2021. Due to a special situation, the tax authority may reduce the interest rate for deferral of payment of a tax debt from 1 May 2020 to 31 December 2021 up to 100 per cent as of the date of adoption of the deferral decision. Declarations must still be submitted. There are many customs / foreign trade posts, but they come from EU law.
- Temporary reductions in mitigation of emergency consequences include actual metering of fuel and electricity. The temporary reduction of excise duty rates starts on 01.05.2020 and see ends on 30.04.2022.
- The Covid-19 aid measures offered by [Kredex](#) and [EAS](#) will continue until the funds are exhausted.
- There is no information regarding the other sectoral aid (there is promised something for the tourism sector, but nothing concrete).

### **Regarding labour market and social policy measures**

- COVID-related salary compensation ended with June 2020, further compensation scheme is currently not provided, and any other labour market and social policy measures are also not taken.

<sup>2</sup> In situations where the infection rate of countries is more than 1.1 times the Estonian average or more than 50, without the obligation of self-isolation, you can come to Estonia from Latvia, Lithuania or Finland if a person has passed a coronavirus test the result is negative. It must be taken into account that a person must not have travelled outside the Baltic States and Finland in the last two weeks. Coming from Latvia, Lithuania and Finland, there is still an exception, according to which a person without symptoms does not have to remain in isolation or take a test when traveling to Estonia in five cases: when coming to Estonia to work, study, health care, for unavoidable family reasons or transit.



**On 19 November 2020, the Estonian Government adopted several decisions regarding COVID-19 crisis management:**

- approved the extension of the regulation governing sickness benefits starting from the second day of illness (current system is from fourth day). The Minister of Social Affairs will submit this proposal to Parliament to initiate the corresponding amendments to the law. The regulation is temporary and is planned to remain in force from 1 January – 30 April 2021.
- adopted the Employment Programme 2021-2023 where measures are foreseen to mitigate the negative labour market effects associated with the spread of COVID-19 by providing appropriate labour market services, including further retraining and counselling. According to the draft, the following changes have been made in the employment program 2021–2023 compared to the employment program 2017–2020:
  - 1) the provision of continuing support and development training has been added to the list of additional services;
  - 2) the conditions for employer's training support, business start-up support and advisory services have been changed for services provided on more favourable terms.
- decided to allocate 8 million euros from the reserve to the Estonian Health Insurance Fund to ensure the provision of health care services, restructuring planning and restructuring under COVID-19 conditions.

## Finland

Date: 17 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

- **No regime on confinement**
- **No Regime on curfew**
- **Regime on telework**
  - The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health recommend working remotely to the extent possible in both the public and private sectors. This recommendation will remain in force throughout the country until further notice and will be reviewed by 31 December 2020.
- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - All industries are allowed to function.
- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - The public transportation is operating, wearing a mask is highly recommended. Social distancing rules should be respected while using public transport.
  - Travel within Finland is allowed if health and safety guidelines relating to coronavirus are observed.
  - All travel must be avoided when ill. During travel, it is important to observe good hand and respiratory hygiene. It is important to avoid unnecessary physical contact. Tourism businesses must pay particular attention to cleaning, preparedness planning and training of staff.
- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - The opening hours of food and beverage service businesses and the hours when alcohol may be served will be subject to regional restrictions starting on 1 November. The new restrictions will remain in force until 15 December.
  - **Current regional restrictions**
    - In Regions of Uusimaa, Southwest Finland, Kanta-Häme, Pirkanmaa and Ostrobothnia businesses must stop serving alcoholic beverages by 22.00.
    - In Ostrobothnia, all food and beverage service businesses must close by 23.00.
    - In the other regions mentioned above, businesses that primarily serve alcoholic beverages must close by 23.00, while other food and beverage service businesses may be open until 24.00 at the latest. Pubs, bars, and nightclubs may allow half the normal number of customers in the premises at a time restaurants and cafes may allow three quarters of the normal number of customers in the premises at a time.
    - Other parts of Finland businesses must stop serving alcoholic beverages by 24.00. Businesses that primarily serve alcoholic beverages must close by 1.00 other food and beverage service businesses may be open round the clock and there are no restrictions on the number of customers.
    - Guidelines on restaurant activities in force throughout Finland: Every customer must have their own seat, customers must be provided with information and instructions on how to prevent COVID-19 infections, customers must be able to wash their hands, and premises and surfaces must be kept clean. Businesses are responsible for ensuring safe distances between their customers.
- **Restrictions for public events**
  - The regional state administrative agencies have made decisions on restrictions to performances, concerts, shows and other public events under the Communicable Diseases Act.
  - The restrictions and recommendations concerning events, gatherings and meetings differ from one region to another depending on the phase of the epidemic. The guidelines on good

hygiene and safe distances issued by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) and the Ministry of Education and Culture are in force at all phases.

- Epidemic at a stable level
  - The number of participants at events is restricted at the regional level.
  - Restrictions on gatherings currently in force and entering into force in November – avi.fi (available in Finnish and Swedish).
  - When organising leisure activities and in the use of public spaces, care should be taken to ensure that participants and parties can avoid close contact.
- Acceleration phase of the epidemic
  - The regional state administrative agencies will assess the adequacy of the restrictions and limit e.g. customer numbers at the local level as necessary number of persons at public events restricted to half (50 per cent) of the normal capacity.
  - Public spaces must be used in such a way that participants and parties can avoid close contact adult group leisure activities indoors are suspended if the risk of infection is high.
  - All leisure activities must be arranged in such way that participants and parties can avoid close contact.
  - Municipalities may recommend limiting the number of users in spaces to half the normal permitted number.
  - Municipalities may recommend suspending indoor group leisure activities for adults if the risk of infection is high. Groups may continue their activities remotely.
- Community transmission phase of the epidemic
  - At the regional level, the number of participants at public events may be limited to 10 persons or, if necessary, events may be prohibited altogether.
  - Municipalities may also issue similar recommendations for private events.
  - Group leisure activities should be arranged remotely or, if necessary, suspended altogether. Special discretion should be used when deciding to suspend children's and young people's hobbies.
  - If necessary, public spaces may be closed down altogether.
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - The Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare have issued recommendations to help reduce coronavirus infections and limit exposure to the virus in contact teaching and early childhood education and care. The recommendations will support local actors in seeking the best ways to arrange teaching and early childhood education and care in a safe and well-functioning manner. The regional restrictions and recommendations in place depend on the phase of the epidemic in the region in question.
  - **Epidemic at the stable level**
    - Normal contact teaching.
  - **Acceleration phase of the epidemic**
    - Higher education institutions should seriously consider switching to distance learning.
  - **Community transmission phase of the epidemic**
    - Apart from comprehensive schools, all educational institutions may, at their discretion, switch to distance learning altogether.
- **Restrictions to travel (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)**
  - Citizens of Finland always have the right to return to Finland, and everyone has the right to leave the country. The Government recommends avoiding unnecessary travel to countries other than those for which the restrictions on entry have been lifted.
  - On 11 September, the Government agreed that, as of 19 September, restrictions on entry could be lifted for traffic between Finland and those EU and Schengen countries (including the United Kingdom) where the incidence of COVID-19 has not exceeded 25 new cases per 100,000 persons in the previous 14 days. The same threshold applies to the countries on the Green List defined by the Council of the European Union.

- In the case of third countries outside the EU and the Schengen area, restrictions on entry may be lifted if the number of cases is below the same limit value and they are included on the Green List.
- Although Finland has lifted internal border control and quarantine recommendations for certain countries, these countries may have their own restrictions on the entry of tourists.
- The Government will reassess the need for and extent of the restrictions on entry in approximately two weeks based on the epidemiological situation. The restrictions on entry may change on a weekly basis.
- Restrictions on entry as of 12 October
  - Starting from 12 October, internal border control will be reinstated for traffic between Finland and all Schengen countries.
- Entry restrictions and health measures in place in Finland

New approach to border traffic and travel from 23 November

- In the new testing-based operating model, internal border controls will be replaced with health security measures. The model is to be introduced on 23 November, and the transition period will begin on 1 October. With the new approach, passengers arriving from countries with a high incidence of COVID-19 must have a certificate of a negative test taken less than 72 hours prior to their arrival.
- As of 1 October, special groups and charter or group tours will be permitted to enter Finland even from high-incidence countries, subject to certain conditions. The conditions for work and other day-to-day interaction between border communities will be improved by allowing traffic at the northern land border and in ferry and air services to Estonia and Sweden without a test certificate and quarantine.
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
  - Wearing a mask is recommended. The proper use of face coverings and face masks may reduce infections by preventing the spread of droplets. The recommendation aims at protecting people from possible exposure to coronavirus infection. People must acquire their own face coverings and face masks, but municipalities will ensure that they are available free of charge for people in the most vulnerable groups in the areas subject to the recommendation.
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - In case of having symptoms or exposure, a person should make a symptom assessment in the Omaolo service or contact their health care provider. In the feedback from this assessment, a person will receive instructions on how to request a test and how urgently you should seek treatment.
- **Situation regarding tracing**
  - Koronavilkku is a contact tracing app produced by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) to help people to find out whether they may have been exposed to coronavirus. If they have a coronavirus test and are diagnosed as infected, they can use the app to share this anonymously with those you have been in close contact with. Approximately 1.8 million Finns has downloaded Koronavilkku app.
- **Obligations regarding quarantine**
  - 10-days voluntary quarantine. You can shorten a voluntary quarantine by taking two tests.
  - If you have a negative coronavirus test certificate that is no more than 72 hours old at the time of your arrival in Finland, do not take another coronavirus test until at least 72 hours after your arrival. If the result of this second test is negative, you can stop your self-quarantine.
  - If you do not have a certificate of a negative coronavirus test from less than 72 hours before, we recommend self-quarantine regardless of the length of your stay in Finland. You can shorten the quarantine by getting a coronavirus test as soon as you arrive in Finland and a second test 72 hours after the first test at the earliest. If the result of both tests is negative, you can stop your self-quarantine. When waiting for test results, stay in voluntary quarantine at home or in your accommodation.

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

- **Financial measures announced by Finnish government on 17th March:**

- 5 bln euro further support to economy.
- The State Pension Fund will buy 1 billion euros worth of commercial papers.
- The government will increase Finnvera Oyj's (Export Credit Agency) capacity to guarantee working capital loans to small and medium-sized companies by 2 billion euros.
- **1-billion-euro fund to invest in corporate bonds.** E.g. also about 73 million euros to stave off acute corporate funding pressures.
- Companies having difficulties paying taxes due to the coronavirus situation can request a payment arrangement with eased terms starting 25 March 2020. According to the new terms, the first instalment of the payment arrangement will fall due in three months after the arrangement has become active, as opposed to just one month. The Tax Administration will automatically include in the arrangement any new tax debts that form after the payment arrangement has been taken into use until 31 May 2020. In addition, the rate of late-payment interest on taxes included in a payment arrangement will be lowered from 7% to 4%. The lowered interest rate would only apply to taxes that are included in a payment arrangement and that fall due after 1 March 2020. The arrangement is available for businesses/entrepreneurs that do not have taxes in recovery by enforcement and have filed all the required tax returns and reports to the National Incomes Register (earnings payment reports and employer's separate reports).
- Businesses and private individuals can request more time for filing your tax return, if necessary, if you have a justified reason, such as illness, that prevents from filing the tax return by its original deadline. However, the Finnish tax administration does not grant more time for filing VAT returns. However, a request can be made for a fine for late payment to be removed. If you have a justified reason for filing late, such as illness, you may not have to pay a fine.
- Postponement option for pension insurance payments (Tyel and Yel) as well as easing the pension insurance company capital requirements.
- To review further measures based on the negotiations with the social parties (enclosed proposal made by parties 19th March).
- **Other measures of Financial Supervisory Authority (FIN-FSA) decided to lower Finnish credit institutions' capital requirements.** The reduction is implemented by removing the systemic risk buffer and by adjusting credit institution-specific requirements so that the **structural buffer requirements of all credit institutions will fall by 1 percentage point, all in all. The decision will increase the lending capacity of the Finnish banks by around EUR 52 billion.**
- **The Bank of Finland has decided to restart its activities in the domestic corporate paper markets. The size of the programme is initially EUR 500 million.** The decision was announced on 15th March

- **New package of measures on 20 March**

The first supplementary budget will safeguard the resources of the authorities and increase the appropriations allocated to companies. The scope of the supplementary budget will be around EUR 400 million. Further supplementary budgets will be introduced over the coming weeks.

- **The guarantee mandate of the state-owned special financing company Finnvera will be increased by EUR 10 billion to a total of EUR 12 billion.** The increase in the mandate will allow additional financing of € 10 billion for businesses.
- **Employers' earnings-related pension contribution shall be reduced by 2,6% of salaries. It will be implemented as soon as possible and will be valid until the end of 2020. It will ease the companies' payments by EUR 910 million.** Pension companies refrain from paying customer bonuses for a period when employers' pension contributions are reduced.

- An increase of EUR 150 million in Business Finland's mandate to be used for fast-start business support activities. An increase of EUR 50 million is proposed to support business development projects.
- **Own-risk days in unemployment benefits are cancelled in the event of lay-offs and redundancies.** Unemployment insurance is immediately accessible. Working conditions to be eligible for income-related unemployment benefits are shortened. These measures will cost the state more than EUR 100 million.
- **Based on the negotiations of the Social Parties - notice period for layoffs is reduced from the current (from 14 days to 6 weeks) to five days.** The right to lay-offs is also extended to fixed-term workers.
- Unemployment protection for entrepreneurs and freelancers is ensured. In order to be eligible for unemployment insurance, you don't have to close your business.
- The Government promises max. EUR 600 million guarantees to airline company Finnair.
- An increase of EUR 26 million is proposed for the control of infectious diseases. An additional budget of EUR 12,8 million is proposed for the operating costs of the Institute for Health and Welfare for coronavirus expenditure.
- An increase of EUR 5,6 million is proposed to the police for additional expenditure due to the coronavirus epidemic.
- An amount of EUR 200 million is proposed for non-specific expenditure linked to exceptional circumstances.

- **Package of 27 March**

**The state will direct a total of EUR 1 billion in direct support for companies in the coronavirus-crisis.** Of this sum, EUR 700 million is earmarked for grants from Business Finland and EUR 300 million for grants from the ELY Centre (Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment).

- ELY Centres support small businesses that have suffered from market and production disruptions caused by the coronavirus around the country. ELY Centres fund companies that employ between 1 and 5 people. Financing is available for small enterprises in all sectors, except agriculture, fisheries and forestry, and processing of agricultural products.
- Business Finland has opened two new financial services due to the corona virus situation. They are intended for SMEs in Finland, employing between 6 and 250 people, and for medium size companies, which may have more than 250 employees but with a turnover of less than EUR 300 million per year. Financial services are targeted at the following sectors: tourism, tourism auxiliary services, creative and performing industries, and all sectors whose production chains have been or will be affected by the coronavirus situation. With funding, the company can identify, plan and implement new development measures to prevent and fix market and production chain disruptions caused by the coronavirus epidemic.

- **Package of 9 April**

**The package of support intended to safeguard business activities will be increased by approximately EUR 1 billion.**

- **Business development support for SMEs will be increased by EUR 200 million in relation to previous decisions.**
- **Business Finland's grant authorisations will be raised by EUR 100 million to support companies.**
- **An increase of EUR 300 million is also proposed in Business Finland's authority to grant loans.**
- A further EUR 150 million in discretionary government grants to municipalities compared to previous decisions is proposed to enable municipalities to support those who are sole self-employed.
- Capital funding of EUR 150 million is proposed for Tesi (Finnish Industry Investment Ltd) to set up a new stabilisation programme to help in easing the liquidity difficulties caused by the virus crisis.



- A one-off increase of EUR 7.5 million is proposed for the operating expenses of the ELY Centres (Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment).
- EUR 10 million for the operating expenses of Business Finland, to meet the costs of processing of business support applications.
- An increase of EUR 20 million (approximately 340 person-years) is proposed for the operating expenses of the TE Offices (Employment and Economic Development Offices).
- The Government proposes that EUR 30 million be allocated to companies engaged in business activities in rural areas.
- EUR 10 million to companies engaged in fisheries as temporary aid for combating the negative effects of the coronavirus epidemic and for controlled adaptation to the crisis.
- A transfer of EUR 6.5 million to the Development Fund of Agriculture and Forestry (Makera) is proposed to prepare for an increase in the guarantee liabilities on state guarantees granted from the Fund, and for an increase in guarantee losses.
- **Guarantees of up to EUR 600 million for shipping companies to operate and maintain cargo transport essential to the security of supply during the coronavirus crisis.**

- **July-August 2020**

**Business Cost Support I - Finland's Covid-19 package to support fixed costs of the worst affected businesses**

Approximately 126 million euros has been paid under the support instrument. The support is aimed at companies and fields of business that have been negatively affected by the coronavirus pandemic. To be eligible, the turnover of a company must have decreased by more than 30% compared to the reference period. The decrease in turnover is proven by VAT returns submitted to the Tax Administration. The cost support determined for a company must be at least EUR 2,000 in order to be paid. A maximum of EUR 500,000 per company can be granted. The support can only be paid into an account that the company has notified to the Tax Administration.

- **Government bill in October 2020**

**Business Cost Support II - Finland's Covid-19 package to support fixed costs of the worst affected businesses**

Program's total size 550 million euros - 410 million euros new funds in addition to 140 million euros left unused from the first fixed cost support package of the summer of 2020. It is not yet possible to apply for the cost support. The State Treasury will announce the start of the application period soon. The support package will be targeted to:

- Industries with a decrease in turnover of x% and companies with a decrease in turnover of y%.
- In the summer, the percentages in cost support I were 30% and 10%, now the same at maximum.
- The analysis of companies' need is based on a comparison of net sales with the corresponding period in 2019.
- The classification of industries is decided by a Government regulation and is based on data obtained from state registers concerning the companies' turnover. This is an attempt to target the worst affected industries.
- The allocated money will be a compensation for the fixed costs of the company.
- The support is temporary, and the money will be distributed as long as it is available. It is aimed to be distributed still by the end of 2020.
- Minimum aid amount is EUR 2 000, maximum EUR 500 000, and if combined with other financial aid the maximum is EUR 800 000.
- The supporting authority is the State Treasury and financial aid will be digitally applied for.
- All subsidies granted are public and the payment information publicly available at the State Treasury's website.

## France

Date: 18 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

- **Regime on confinement**
  - 4 weeks of confinement from 2 November to 1 December 2020
- **Regime on curfew**
  - from 9 pm to 6 am (fines from 135 to 3,750 € if repeated offense)
  - as of 13 November, limited travel (1 hour per day) and with compulsory certificate
  - no more curfew if you present a travel certificate
- **Regime on telework (as of 13 November)**
  - mandatory for activities that allow it
- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - Yes
- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - Yes
- **Regime for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - Closed
  - Delivery and pick-up activities authorized (ban in Paris from 10 p.m.)
  - Hotels open for business trips (closure of their restaurant)
- **Regime for public events and other leisure activities (as of 13 November)**
  - Closed leisure activities: festivals, concerts, cinema, theaters, Libraries, amusement parks
  - Gatherings of max 6 people on public roads
  - Except for protest demonstrations, funeral ceremonies (max 30 people) and weddings (max 6 people)
- **Regime for commerce (as of 13 November)**
  - essential shops open (pharmacy, computer stores, food stores, gas stations, laundry, bank, materials and tools stores.
  - 4 m<sup>2</sup> per customer
  - Closure of non-essential shops (clothing and / or shoes, shopping centers, hairdressers, independent booksellers
  - Reopening possible at the beginning of December with reinforced sanitary protocol
  - Closure of non-essential departments (textiles, flowers, cultural products, household appliances, etc.)
  - Non-essential purchase possible via Click & Collect stores
  - Possible reassessment in 2 weeks
  - Paris: no alcohol sale after 10 p.m.
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities (as of 13 November)**
  - schools, colleges and high schools open with wearing a mask from 6 years old
  - universities and higher education establishments only remotely
- **Regime on obligation to wear masks (as of 13 November)**
  - compulsory in closed public spaces, in schools from 6 years old.
  - Paris (+ inner suburbs), 13 municipalities of Bas-Rhin, Lyon and Marseille: compulsory throughout the territory



## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

Since the onset of the health crisis, the Government has put in place massive and cross-sectoral support for businesses by adapting support and financial support mechanisms to the evolution of the health crisis.

The **solidarity fund** is reinforced and extended with aid of up to € 10,000 for companies with less than 50 employees closed administratively and for those belonging to the tourism, events, culture and sport sectors (list S1) which, without being administratively closed, suffer a loss of turnover of at least 50%. Companies which depend on these sectors (wholesalers, subcontractors, suppliers, etc.), which belong to the S1bis list, will also be able to benefit from aid up to € 10,000 within the limit of 80% of the loss of their turnover. To encourage the maintenance of economic activity, despite health restrictions, the turnover achieved by "click & collect" by companies' subject to administrative closure will not be taken into account in the calculation of aid. Finally, for all the other companies with less than 50 employees which can remain open, but which suffer a loss of more than 50% of their turnover, the government reactivates the assistance of the solidarity fund which can go up to 1,500 € per month. This "safety net" will support all self-employed regardless of their sector of activity.

The aid for the month of November can be requested by companies from 4 December 2020 on the site [impots.gouv.fr](https://impots.gouv.fr) and will be disbursed two days after the request.

The government is also stepping up its support for the **digital transformation** of companies, in order to enable them to maintain a certain level of activity "at a distance" and to make this crisis an opportunity to go digital. Thus, the website [www.clique-mon-commerce.gouv.fr](https://www.clique-mon-commerce.gouv.fr) was launched in early November 2020 in order to offer digital solutions for small businesses to create a website, set up a logistics, delivery or delivery solution, remote payment, joining an online marketplace, etc. Expenses related to the digitization of administratively closed businesses will be covered through a digital check in the amount of € 500, available through the Service and Payment Agency (ASP) on presentation of an invoice. The government will also support local communities in setting up a local e-commerce platform, through aid of € 20,000.

Thus, all companies with less than 50 employees closed administratively, as well as all companies with less than 250 employees belonging to the most affected sectors or to sectors related to them (S1 and S1bis) and realizing a loss of turnover more than 50% will benefit from an **exemption from their employers' social contributions as well as assistance for the payment of social contributions of 20%** of the payroll for employers and flat-rate reductions for the contributions of the self-employed. Employers will be able to benefit from deferral of social contributions on simple request that is tacitly accepted. For self-employed workers, the deductions will be automatically suspended, without any action. The deadline of 5 November has been automatically extended.

Finally, the government is **maintaining and extending its support for business' cash management**. State guaranteed loans (PGE) and direct state loans for the most troubled companies (participatory loans for companies with less than 50 employees, repayable advances for companies with 50 to 250 employees, financed loans by the economic and social development fund for those with more than 250 employees) are extended until June 30, 2021. For PGEs, banks will offer in a personalized way, at the end of the first year, the possibility of integrating a second year of deferred repayment.

All of these measures, which represent **more than € 15 billions per month of containment**, will enable companies to face this new stage of the economic crisis. These measures are also supplemented by specific support measures for the cultural and sports sectors.

While these emergency measures are necessary to preserve the economic fabric and provide an immediate and massive response to the crisis, the government also remains active on the concrete implementation of the France recovery plan to allow the French economy to find its way back to growth, job creation, innovation and export.

## Germany

Date: 06 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

Basis of the current restrictions is a decision from the Chancellor and the presidents of the Länder from 28 October. From November 2, following additional measures are in force at least until the end of November 2020 in force.

- **Regime on confinement**
  - Only people from the own and another household, but in any case, a maximum of 10 persons, are allowed to gather in public.
  - Overnight accommodation for touristic purpose is prohibited.
  - Moreover, it is urgently recommended to refrain from parties and gatherings in private homes as well as to refrain from private travelling
- **Regime on curfew**
  - None specific
  - Related measures result from the “regime on confinement” and the restrictions for restaurants, bars etc.
  - However, no curfew for people.
- **Regime on telework**
  - Urgent recommendation for companies to make mobile working (at home) possible again, wherever feasible. Authorities responsible for occupational health and safety as well as the casualty insurance institutions shall advise companies and carry out inspections.
- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - No restrictions – the provisions for occupational health and safety under COVID conditions apply
- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - Service providers in the field of body care (e.g. cosmetic studios, massage practices, tattoo studios and similar businesses) will be closed.
  - Medically necessary treatments (e.g. physio-, ergo- and logo-therapies and podiatry/pedicure) remain possible.
  - Hairdressing salons remain open under the existing hygiene regulations.
- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - Overnight accommodation for touristic purpose is prohibited.
  - Accommodation in the context of business travels is allowed.
  - Restaurants, bars, clubs, discotheques and pubs are closed.
  - Delivery services and take-away food are still allowed.
- **Restrictions for public events**
  - Events for entertainment purposes are prohibited.
  - Professional sports events can only take place without spectators.
- **Regime for commerce**
  - Wholesale and retail stores will remain open overall, subject to requirements for hygiene, access control and queue avoidance. It must be ensured that there is no more than one customer per 10 square meters of sales area in the stores.
  - Institutions and facilities that can be classified as leisure activities are closed. This includes:
    - Theatres, operas, concert halls, and similar establishments
    - Trade fairs, cinemas, amusement parks and providers of leisure activities (indoor and outside), amusement arcades, casinos, betting shops and similar facilities
    - Prostitution, brothels and similar establishments

- Recreational and amateur sports, with the exception of individual sports alone, in pairs or with your own household on and in all public places and private sports facilities,
- Swimming and fun pools, saunas and thermal baths,
- Gyms and similar facilities.
  
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - Kindergartens and schools remain open, subject to the relevant safety measures.
  - No specific mentions made for nurseries and universities. Here, regional provisions apply.
  
- **Restrictions to travel (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)**
  - Urgent recommendation (but no official violation, most likely due to uncontrollability) to refrain from private travelling (domestic and abroad).
  - Travel warnings for high-risk area countries remain in place.
  - Borders to neighbouring countries remain open.
  - Access remains possible from EU, Schengen-associated countries, UK and further countries from which entry is permitted based on the epidemiological situation assessment by the EU
  
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
  - See also “regime on confinement”.
  - Regarding masks, multiple cities have decided to introduce the obligation to wear masks in particularly crowded areas.
  
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - At the moment, anyone having spent time in a risk area up to 14 days before their entry into Germany must either provide proof of having tested negative (conducted no more than 48 hours prior to entry)
  - Some federal states require to take another test after a few days or get tested within 10 days of their entry into Germany (while being in quarantine).
  - The concrete implementation, however, lies with the federal states.
  - There are many exemptions for mobile workers – especially in border regions
  - Presumably as of 8 November the following changes are expected:
    - After arriving at their destination in Germany, individuals entering from risk areas must self-isolate at a home for 10 instead of the prior 14 days.
    - If no other grounds for exception apply, these individuals may be released from quarantine obligations – no earlier than 5 days after entering Germany – if they provide proof of a negative test result.

Further special provisions that are new

- The costs for so-called rapid tests are covered for patients, their visitors and staff in hospitals, nursing homes and institutions for senior citizens and the disabled.
- The available rapid tests are now to be used quickly and as a priority in this area.
- Additionally, costs for tests are covered – regardless of symptoms – also for people that have been in touch with an infected person and for staff and pupils in schools and kindergartens where there has been an outbreak.
  
- **Situation regarding tracing**
  - Passenger locator forms in paper form have been used for travellers from risk areas; this will be transposed into a digital form now (as of November 8).
  - Putting fake names on contact forms in restaurants etc. (which will however be closed during November) has been made punishable already since October.
  
- **Obligations regarding quarantine**
  - None specifically new; the existing regime stays in place.
  - Anyone at high risk of infection must be quarantined. This is the case when there has been close contact with a person with a laboratory-confirmed infection within the last 14 days. Close contact mainly means that one has spoken to the person with the disease for at least 15 minutes or came into contact with their secretions, such as by sneezing or coughing, while the person was contagious.
  - Regarding quarantine regulations of entries from risk areas, see “situation regarding testing”.

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

In June 2020, the German Federal Government proposed a stimulus package in worth roughly €130 billion.

### Tax related measures such as

- **Temporary reduction in VAT- rate**
  - VAT will be reduced for a six-month period from 1 July to 31 December 2020. The standard VAT rate will be cut from 19% to 16%, and the reduced VAT rate will be cut from 7% to 5%;
- **Deferral of Tax payments (Corporate income tax, social contributions, etc)**
  - the government will also guarantee that social security contributions will not exceed 40% until the end of 2021. Costs that exceed this 40% cap will be covered by the federal budget.

### Subsidies (*additional measure proposed in the November package*)

- **direct company state aid:**
  - For the companies, businesses, self-employed persons, associations and institutions affected by the temporary closures in November, the federal government will grant **extraordinary economic aid**. The amount to be reimbursed will be 75% of the corresponding turnover of the previous year's month for companies with up to 50 employees. The percentages for larger companies are determined according to the upper limits of the relevant state aid regulations. Important: the aid granted is offset against any state benefits already received for the period, such as short time working allowance or bridging allowance, or against any later benefits from the bridging allowance. The financial aid will provide a financial volume of up to 10 billion Euro.
- **SMEs:** a short-term aid programme will provide assistance to small and medium-sized businesses experiencing major revenue shortfalls due to the crisis. This aid will be available to all sectors of the economy but will also take into account the specific conditions affecting the most hard-hit sectors. The government plans to earmark a total of €25 billion for this purpose;

### Loans/guarantees /Payment suspension such as

- **additional loans (e.g. through state lenders such as German KfW)**
  - The "KfW fast loan" will now also be open to self-employed persons and companies with up to 10 employees.
  - Companies can apply for these KfW fast loans of up to 300,000 euros via their principal banks.
  - The Federal Government assumes the full risk and releases the house banks from liability.

### Labour market and social policy measures such as

- **subsidy for wages (employees)**
  - The "bridging aid" programme (grants to subsidise fixed operating costs) will be prolonged into a third phase (so-called "bridging aid III" from January to June 2021) under improved conditions.
  - Details are still to be determined by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Finance.
- **subsidy for wages (self-employed)**
  - see above: the **extraordinary economic aid** is also intended for self-employed persons
- **short time working schemes**
  - On 25 August 2020 the German government has decided to extend the existing short time working regulations. This has again been updated on 28 October 2020.
    - The duration of short-time work can be extended to up to 24 months (no longer than December 2021) for those companies that have introduced STW until 31 December 2020.

- The simplified access to STW (at least 10% of a company's employees are affected by short-time work (before Covid-19 a third had to be affected) is extended until December 2021 if STW is introduced before 31 March 2021).
- Until 30 June 2021 employers will be fully reimbursed for the social insurance contributions they have to pay in the event of short-time work. From July 2021 until end of December 2021, reimbursement of employers' social insurance contributions will be reduced to 50%. However, employers can be entitled to full reimbursement if STW is combined with training measures for employees.
- STW can also be granted to employees in temporary employment (extended until December 2021 if STW is introduced before 31 March 2021)
- The accumulation of negative hours to avoid short-time working is waived (extended until December 2021 if STW is introduced before 31 March 2021)
- The increased rates of STW compensation of usually 60% (67% with at least one child) to 70/77% (after 3 months) and to 80/87% (after 6 months) are also extended until December 2021 for those employees that have entered STW before 31 March 2021. The short-time work compensation is calculated based on the net loss of earnings due to working time reduction.
- **extending social benefits to self-employed**
  - In September, relevant provisions of the "*Sozialschutz-Paket*" from March have been extended until 31 December 2020.
  - See for details BDA's input on BE's earlier overview on national social and labour market measures.
- **help for apprentices**
  - Implemented in August: federal program "Securing Apprenticeships", which provides a total 500 million euros for small and medium-sized companies (up to 249 employees) in 2020 and 2021
    - Companies that are particularly affected by the Corona pandemic will receive a bonus if they maintain their level of apprenticeships. Specifically, they are to receive 2,000 euros for each contract concluded for the year 2020/2021.
    - Companies that increase the number of apprenticeships they offer will receive a bonus of 3,000 euros for each additional contract concluded compared to the previous level.
    - Special support will be given to companies that continue their activities even during the crisis and do not declare short-time work for apprentices and their instructors. A subsidy of 75 percent of the gross apprenticeship remuneration is planned. It will be paid for every month in which the company has a production downtime of at least 50 percent. This support is limited until December 31, 2020.
    - Support is also available for companies that take over apprentices whose companies are unable to continue the apprenticeship temporarily due to the pandemic. In this case, the time limit runs until June 30, 2021.
    - Companies that take on apprentices from companies that have had to file for insolvency receive a bonus of 3,000 euros per apprentice taken over. This support is also limited until June 30, 2021.
- **help for students**
  - Since May students can apply for an interest-free loan from the KfW (until 31 March 2021).
  - A specific "second wave measure" is the re-launch of the bridging grants for students at state-recognised universities for November. The programme already was in place from June until September.
  - Due to the November lockdown, it is especially intended to help students that are unable to earn an extra income because their (part-time) job is affected by the lockdown.
  - However, funding is eligible for everyone who can prove to be in a "pandemic-related emergency situation"
- **extra allowance for workers taking care for sick relatives or taking care of children**
  - No specific "second wave measures"
  - Taking care for sick relatives
    - In May, a law came into force to improve the situation of caring relatives in the Corona crisis.

- Employees are entitled to 20 working days off work and to a care allowance (as a wage replacement) – twice as many days as before.
- The German government has extended this arrangement until 31 December 2020.
- In addition, it has been made easier to obtain the care allowance – even in cases where the acute work incapacity described above does not exist under the Nursing Care Time Act.

#### Taking care of children

- Compensation entitlement for employed persons who are temporarily unable to work due to caring for their children.
  - Applies in case of official closure of schools, daycare centers and facilities for people with disabilities
  - Compensation amounts to 67 percent of the loss of earnings, up to a maximum of EUR 2,016 per month
  - Maximum 10 weeks; maximum 20 weeks for single parents
  - Payment via employer who can apply for reimbursement to the competent authorities
  - Legislation valid until the end of 2020
  - Families with children will receive a one-time **bonus** benefit payment of €300 **per child**
- **extra unemployment benefits**
    - No specific “second wave measures”
    - In May, the “*Sozialschutz-Paket II*” extended the period for obtaining *Arbeitslosengeld* for three months, valid for all whose claim would expire between 01 May and 31 December 2020.
    - See for details BDA’s input on BE’s earlier overview on national social and labour market measures.

#### **Regulatory changes such as**

- **moratorium on insolvency**
  - In September, the COVID-19 Insolvency Suspension Act has been extended to 31 December 2020 (initially 30 September). The law suspends the obligation to file for insolvency for enterprises which became insolvent as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic and nevertheless have prospects to reorganize themselves under use of national assistance offers or in other way.
  - However, this extension only applies to companies that are overindebted as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic without being insolvent. This is because, unlike insolvent companies, overindebted companies have a chance of averting insolvency permanently.
  - Companies that are insolvent, on the other hand, can already no longer pay their due liabilities. This means that these companies have not succeeded to a sufficient extent in stabilizing their financial situation with the help of the many and varied offers of state assistance.

#### **Other measures**

- **All-day schools and all-day childcare:** the German government will expedite its investment programme to expand all-day schools and all-day childcare. Länder that draw down investment funding in 2020 and 2021 will receive matching additional funds in the programme’s subsequent years. An additional €1 billion in funding is being provided for measures (to be carried out in 2020 and 2021) to increase the capacity of kindergartens, childcare centres and crèches, to expand and renovate existing facilities, and to build new facilities;
- **Automation in public administrations** will also receive funding. A central aim here is to increase the online availability of administrative services.



## Greece

Date: 12 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

- **Regime on confinement**

- Until recently, the government has tried to contain the spread of the virus by imposing limited lockdowns at regional level. However, on 5 November, the government announced a 2<sup>nd</sup> general lockdown that will last from 7/11 until 30/11.

- **Regime on curfew**

- In general, citizens are expected to stay at home. Movement for personal purposes is allowed for six reasons:
  1. Visiting the pharmacy or the doctor
  2. Groceries shopping provided this cannot be delivered at home
  3. Visiting a public service or bank provided this cannot be done remotely
  4. Providing help for people in need or accompanying minors to and from school
  5. Attending a funeral, wedding, baptism provided that all relevant restrictions concerning such events are adhered to
  6. Personal exercise and taking a domestic pet for a walk
- Citizens wishing to use these possibilities must send an SMS to General Secretariat of Civil Protection or fill in a form which they have with them at all time.
- Workers for sectors of the economy that has not been forcibly closed can go to work provided their employer deems this necessary and provides them with a relevant signed authorisation.
- As of 13 November 2020, a national curfew will enter into force between 9pm and 5 am.

- **Regime on telework**

- Teleworking is compulsory for 50% of the staff in the private and public sector for the month of November. Moreover, the arrival and departure of employees to work is being modified in order to allow for a graduated arrival and departure of people in order to avoid overcrowding in public transport.

- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**

- All industries that have not been forcibly shut down by the government lockdown, and also those industries that have been seriously affected by the pandemic, will continue to function provided they respect health and safety measures, the teleworking scheme and protection of vulnerable groups of workers

- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**

- All services that have not been forcibly shut down by the government lockdown will continue to function provided they respect health and safety measures.

- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**

- All restaurants, bars and cafes are closed. Hotels will continue to operate provided they respect health and safety measures.

- **Restrictions for public events**

- Public events are prohibited. Exceptions apply for funerals.

- **Regime for commerce**

- All non-essential commerce is closed. Pharmacies, supermarkets and stores selling reading glasses can remain open.

- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**

- Nurseries, kindergartens and schools for primary students will remain open.
- All school children above 12 will do classes remotely. The same applies for universities.

- **Restrictions to travel (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)**
  - It is prohibited to travel between different regions of the country unless you are returning to your primary residence and due to health reasons. Travel outside the country is possible under certain conditions.
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
  - Masks are compulsory indoors and outdoors. It is also compulsory in all working places. Social distancing of at least 1,5 metres applies.
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - If one appears to have covid-19 symptoms, he/she should take the test in public hospitals or in the private sector (by his/her own cost)
- **Situation regarding tracing**
  - There is a certain procedure followed by General Secretary of Public Protection.
- **Obligations regarding quarantine**
  - Once a confirmed test is presented, there is a compulsory 14 days period of quarantine

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

### Tax related measures such as

- **Deferral of Tax payments (Corporate income tax, social contributions, etc)**
  - Companies that are forcibly closed due to the lockdown will be able to defer the payment of arrears for social contributions that were due in November. The same possibility applies for employees whose contract has been forcibly suspended due to the lockdown for all tax arrears due in November.
  - The exact timetable has not been yet made public by the government.
- **Deferral of VAT payments**
  - Deferral of VAT payment due in November for companies that have been forced to shut down until 31 April 2021. The amount due will be paid in 12 interest free instalments as of May 2021 or in 24 instalments with a 2,5% interest.

### Loans/guarantees /Payment suspension such as

- **additional loans**
  - The list of companies that will be eligible for the 4<sup>th</sup> round of repayable advance (€ 1 billion) will be broadened to include single person companies as well as new companies. Moreover, 50% of the advance will not have to be returned.
  - A 5<sup>th</sup> round with funds of € 700 m will also be launched in the near future.
- **rescheduling loan payments with state intervention**
  - The moratorium on payment of month instalments on bank loans is extended until the end of the year.

### Labour market and social policy measures such as

- **subsidy for wages (employees)**
  - Employees who work for sectors that have been forcibly shut down or have been seriously affected by the pandemic and were employed before 4 November, will receive a compensation of € 800 (the compensation until that date was 534€)
    - Seasonal workers in the tourism sector will be entitled to a compensation of € 534 for the month of October and November.





- From 1.9.2020 to 31.12.2020, the employer's insurance contributions will be paid from the state budget for employees working at hotels that operate throughout the year and that have had during the period from January 2020 to August 2020, a reduction of gross income by at least seventy percent (70%) compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.
  - The state budget will cover 80% of the salary and non-salary costs for a period of up to 12 months in 12-month tourism companies with more than 50 full-time employees, who will implement investment plans for energy and building upgrades of their facilities.
  - Compensation of 534 euros and payment of social security contributions by the state for employees belonging to vulnerable groups and whose employment contracts have been suspended as a result of absence from work due to serious illnesses.
  - The state will cover 100% of social security contributions for the aviation and maritime sector,
- **subsidy for wages (self-employed)**
    - Artists will be entitled to a monthly compensation of € 534 for September, October and November. The same applies for tourist guides.
  - **short time working schemes**
    - The short-term working scheme SYNERGASIA has been extended till 31/12/2020
  - **subsidy for other costs (e.g. mortgage)**
    - Employees whose contracts have been suspended due to the lockdown will be entitled to a 40% reduction in the rent for their primary residence.
  - **help for students**
    - Students whose parents' contracts have been suspended due to the lockdown will be entitled to a 40% reduction of rent.
  - **extra unemployment benefits**
    - The unemployment benefits are extended for an additional two months for unemployed persons who benefits have / will expire during the period September – December.
    - Moreover, a one-off payment of € 400 will be given to long term unemployed persons (approximately 130,000) who are no longer entitled to benefits.

## Hungary

Date: 09 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

As the second wave of the pandemic progresses, with the exception of border closures, no specific measure is imposed (no lockdown) in Hungary despite the rise in the number of deaths linked to covid-19. The number of confirmed people infected with the coronavirus in Hungary now stands at 114,778. In compulsory home quarantine: 36,356. Recovered: 26,161. Deceased: 2,493.

The Hungarian Parliament is to grant another 90 days of extraordinary powers, and Hungary plans to introduce the following measures to take effect at midnight on November 11th:

- **Regime on confinement**
  - Family gatherings and private events may only be attended by a maximum of 10 people
  - All forms of assembly will be forbidden
- **Regime on curfew**
  - A curfew will be instated between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m.
- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - Restaurants must close, but food delivery will remain possible
  - Hotels may only host business travelers
  - Recreational facilities, including gyms, indoor swimming pools, museums, theaters and zoos, must close
- **Restrictions for public events**
  - There will be a general ban on events
  - All sporting events must take place behind closed doors, without spectators
  - Individual sports activities will be possible outdoors, but amateur team sports will be forbidden
- **Regime for commerce**
  - Shops and services (e.g., hairdressers) must close by 7 p.m.
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - Higher education may be continued only in an online format, and university dormitories will be closed
  - Digital curriculum will be reintroduced above the 8th grade in high schools (for kids, typically, 14 years old and over)
  - Kindergartens, nurseries and primary schools will stay open for children under 14
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - Hospital workers, teachers, and nursery and kindergarten staff will be tested weekly.

These measures will be in effect for 30 days.

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

In the second quarter, gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 13.6%, the worst result for the Visegrad countries (Poland, Hungary, Czechia and Slovakia).

### **Tax related measures such as**

- **Temporary reduction in VAT-rate**

- The government decided to reintroduce a preferential 5% VAT rate on home construction until the end of 2022. The VAT rate on home construction had been lowered from 27% to 5% for the period 2016-2019, supporting a sharp increase in home builds, although the numbers still fell short of those before the 2008 global economic and financial crisis.
- Hungarians awarded Home Purchase Subsidy Scheme for Families (CSOK) funding will be allowed to reclaim VAT on new home purchases from the start of next year.

### **Subsidies**

- **Sectoral state aid**

- The state will reimburse hotels 80 percent of the value of bookings made for the next 30 days before November 8, on the condition that hotels will not lay off workers and continue to pay their salaries.

### **Loans/guarantees/payment suspension such as**

- **moratorium**

- The Hungarian Parliament has unanimously approved legislation to extend a moratorium on loan repayments, but only for vulnerable borrowers by six months to next June. It covers families with children, pensioners, the jobless, fostered workers and companies struggling financially because of the pandemic. The moratorium was one of the first measures the government introduced in the spring to shield against the economic fallout from the pandemic. Banks are now prohibited from cancelling any retail or corporate pre-crisis loan contracts until the end of next June, effectively putting the onus on lenders to restructure the credit of distressed borrowers who are not covered by the extended moratorium. The extension could leave up to HUF 450 billion (EUR 1.2bn) with households and businesses.

### **Labour market and social policy measures such as**

- **subsidy for wages (employees)**

- The government focused on "job creation" or "job-centered recovery", when it comes to subsidising companies, with the aim to support those companies that have capacity for employment and innovation. There are several types of support-program for these companies in 2020. A newly introduced state subsidy scheme focuses on job creation and the support of employment of disadvantaged labour market groups. Till now, 33 companies received subsidies for 75.000 employees.
- Employers will get a 30-day exemption from having to pay social contributions for staff at restaurants and recreational facilities. Also, the state will cover 50 percent of these employees' salaries on the condition that employees keep their jobs and continue receiving their salaries.

- **short time working schemes**

- Kurzarbeit-type of measures were limited both in time and in content compared to other countries, and they will not be extended. The subsidy was limited, with a lot of administration.

## Ireland

Date: 10 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

- **Regime on confinement (if any)**

- Due to the second wave of COVID-19, Ireland is at Level 5 under its 'Plan for living with Covid'. The plan has five levels, with the fifth being the most restrictive level. Level 5 has applied in each county since 21 October and will continue to apply for a period of six weeks - expected to be adjusted in December.
- No household visits are allowed until Level 5 and the '5k rule' means that people can only exercise within 5 kilometres of their household. Vulnerable people and over 70s advised to stay at home and limit contact with other households.

- **No curfew**

- **Regime on telework**

- You should work from home unless you are providing an essential service for which your physical presence is required. Essential retail workers, frontline workers, service providers or other essential workers can be physically present at work.

- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**

- A wider range of businesses and services can stay open under the present restrictions, with many non-essential businesses including retail operating a click-and-collect service in lieu of normal service.
- *Each of the below is hyperlinked to a more in-depth breakdown of its essential activities.*
  - Manufacturing
  - Construction and development
  - Wholesale and retail trade
  - Agriculture, horticulture, forestry, fishing, animal welfare and related services

- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**

- *Each of the below is hyperlinked to a more in-depth breakdown of its essential activities.*
  - Education
  - Community and voluntary services
  - Diplomatic missions and consular affairs
  - Supply, repair and installation of machinery and equipment
  - Electricity, gas, water, sewage, and waste management
  - Transport, storage, and communications
  - Accommodation and food services
  - Information and communications
  - Financial and legal activities
  - Professional, scientific, and technical activities
  - Rental and leasing activities
  - Administrative and support activities
  - Public administration, emergency services and defence
  - Human health and social work activities

- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**

- Only delivery services and take-away services open for the above.

- **Restrictions for public events**

- Restrictions continue for public events like concerts, for example.

- **Regime for commerce**

- Only essential retail open including supermarkets, newsagents, pharmacies and off-licences, hardware shops, phone shops, bicycle repair shops, dentists, and opticians. Otherwise click-and-collect, delivery and online services supplement normal service, if feasible.
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - Schools (primary and second level), creche, playgrounds and playgroups open with limited contact pods for learning, play and activities. Universities operating remote classes.
- **Restrictions to travel (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)**
  - *Within Ireland:* The advice is to stay at home and that there will be a penalty for movement outside 5 kilometres of home, with the following exceptions:
    - travel to and from work, where work involves providing an essential service
    - to attend medical appointments and collect medicines and other health products
    - travel to attend disability day services
    - travel to attend a court
    - for food shopping
    - to take school aged children to permitted training as provided for in the Exercise and Sporting section above
    - for vital family reasons, such as providing care to children, elderly or vulnerable people, and for those who live alone but excluding social family visits
    - for farming purposes, that is food production or care of animals
    - to attend a wedding or funeral
    - to visit a grave
  - *Travel outside Ireland:* It is permitted to travel to the airport or port to leave Ireland if you normally live in another country or travelling to where you will stay if you have arrived in Ireland. Travel outside of Ireland is not advised for non-essential purposes. All passengers arriving into Ireland from overseas are obliged to complete a **COVID-19 Passenger Locator Form** before entry. In line with the EU traffic lights approach, there are no entry restrictions on travellers entering Ireland from green regions. Currently, travellers from orange, red or grey regions are requested to restrict their movements for 14 days. From 8 November a new rapid-testing and traffic light scheme is set to become active in Ireland which will allow early release from travellers coming from orange and red zones in the event that they test negative for the virus after a limited number of days. Present advice is available here.
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
  - By law, you must wear a face covering on public transport, in shops and other indoor settings. The rule is that you may be fined or refused entry if you do not wear one. There are currently no indoor or outdoor gatherings, including no arts events, conferences, theatre, cinema, museums, galleries. You are advised to keep a space of 2 metres (6.5 feet) between you and other people, to avoid communal sleeping areas, to avoid any crowded places and not to shake hands or make close contact with other people.
- **Situation regarding testing and tracing**
  - According to the HSE (Ireland's Health Service), If you are a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19, you will be phoned by the contact tracing team. You will be tested even if you do not have symptoms.
  - In the situation that your GP (General Practitioner, i.e. your regular doctor) decides that you need to be tested, they will arrange a test for you. You need to self-isolate while you wait for your test. People in your household will need to restrict their movements. This means they should not go to work or school.
  - According to Ireland's health service, in comparison to the test and trace systems throughout Europe, Ireland continues to process increasingly high volumes of tests. A report published by the ECDC shows Ireland as among the highest ranked counties in Europe for processing high volumes of tests Ireland is second overall, after Denmark, of countries processing the highest volumes of tests, with a population of over 2 million people.
  - The HSE claims to have reached over 1,579,944 lab results completed as of 27 October.
- **Obligations regarding quarantine**
  - You are told to restrict your movements for 14 days if you:

- are a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
    - live with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19, but you feel well
    - arrive in Ireland from another country – follow the travel advice from Gov.ie
  - If you're a close contact of a person that tested positive for COVID-19 you must restrict your movements for 14 days. You must do this even if your test comes back negative. If you live with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 you are told to restrict your movements, even if you feel well. The person who has symptoms should:
    - self-isolate immediately
    - phone their GP for advice
  - The person you live with may be referred for a test for COVID-19. If their test is positive you will become a close contact. If the virus is not detected (negative) in their test, you no longer need to restrict your movements.
- **Other salary related measures:**
    - Under the July Jobs Stimulus Package (23 July) the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) replaced the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) from 1 September 2020 and will run until 31 March 2021. Under the EWSS scheme, employers and new firms in sectors impacted by COVID-19 whose turnover has fallen by 30% or more between July and December of 2020, compared to a year earlier will get a flat-rate subsidy per week based on the number of qualifying employees on the payroll, including seasonal staff and new employees. The scheme will be open for new hires and seasonal staff and will pay the employer a maximum of €203 per week for employees earning over €203 per week and €150 per week for those earning below that level.
    - From April 2021 a new short-time work subsidy based on the German Kurzarbeitmodel will be developed and introduced. As part of the budget announcement and in reaction to the move to the highest level of restrictions on 22 October (Level 5), the scheme was revised with increased payments. For example, if an employer is currently availing of the EWSS for an employee on a weekly wage of €350, the subsidy has increased from €203 per week to €300 per week. Similarly, for an employee on a weekly wage of €475 the subsidy has increased from €203 per week to €350 per week. As of 21 October, 39,300 employers have registered for EWSS and the Government has paid €257m to 33,100 employers in respect of 344,100 employees for EWSS claims for September.

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

### Tax related measures such as

- **Deferral of Tax payments (Corporate income tax, social contributions, etc)**
  - **Commercial rates waiver:** With limited exceptions, all businesses will be granted a waiver to 31 December 2020.
- **Deferral of VAT payments**
  - **'Warehousing' of deferred tax debts:** The scheme will 'warehouse' VAT and PAYE {withholding tax on income payments} (Employer) debts associated with the COVID-19 crisis for one year.
- **Acceleration of VAT Credit refunds**
  - Repayments and refunds have been prioritised for VAT and Professional Services Withholding Tax (PSWT), in the first instance to individual taxpayers. Thereafter, these have also been prioritised for of iXBRL accounts (where applicable) as part of the CT1 for accounting periods ending on or after March 2019.
- **Deferral of Fines/Interest on late tax payments**
  - The application of a surcharge for late CT1 Corporation Tax returns for accounting periods ending June 2019 onwards (i.e. due by March 23, 2020 onwards) has been suspended until further notice. Similarly, the application of a surcharge for late iXBRL financial

statements for accounting periods ending March 2019 onwards (i.e. due by March 23, 2020 onwards) has been suspended.

- As part of the July Stimulus package (23 July), the Government included provisions for a reduction in the interest rate applying to agreed repayments of all tax debt of 3%.
- **Tax returns can be filed later**
  - On 17 September 2020, an additional four-week extension was granted from 12 November to 10 December 2020 for online returns (further information [here](#)). Additionally, Revenue has suspended tax audits and other compliance intervention activities until further notice.
- **Temporary reduction in VAT- rate**
  - **Reduction in the standard rate of VAT (all):** A six-month reduction in the standard rate of VAT from 23% to 21% will apply, effective from 1 September 2020.
  - **VAT rate reduction from 13.5% to 9% (some sectors):** A VAT rate reduction from 13.5% to 9% applies from 1 November 2020 for the hospitality and tourism sector.

#### Subsidies such as

- **sectoral state aid (grants)**
  - €50 million scheme to support the beef sector affected by the coronavirus outbreak (August).

#### Loans/guarantees/payment suspension

- The Irish Government has provided/supported c.20 funds, loan schemes and guarantees. The two main initiatives are as follows:
  - **COVID-19 Credit Guarantee Scheme:** It facilitates up to €2 billion in lending to eligible businesses. Loans from €10,000 to €1 million, for terms of up to five and a half years. Financing is offered via term loans, working capital loans and overdrafts. Loans of up to €250,000 are available unsecured. It is operated by the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland through participating finance providers.
  - **COVID-19 Business Loans:** Business Loans up to €25,000 are available through Microfinance Ireland with zero repayments and zero interest for the first 6 months and the equivalent of an additional 6 months interest-free subject to certain terms and conditions. The loans can range from €5,000 to €25,000. The loan terms are typically up to 3 years and there are no fees or charges.
- **Restart Grant:** The Restart Grant for SMEs includes €550 million in funding. The maximum payment is €25,000 and the minimum payment is €4,000.

You can find full information on all of the schemes [here](#).

#### Labour market and social policy measures such as

- **subsidy for wages (employees)**
  - Under the July Jobs Stimulus Package (23 July) the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) replaced the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) from 1 September 2020 and will run until 31 March 2021.
  - Under the EWSS scheme, employers and new firms in sectors impacted by COVID-19 whose turnover has fallen by 30% or more between July and December of 2020, compared to a year earlier will get a flat-rate subsidy per week based on the number of qualifying employees on the payroll, including seasonal staff and new employees.
  - As part of the budget announcement and in reaction to the move to the highest level of restrictions on 22 October (Level 5), the scheme was revised with increased payments. For example, if an employer is currently availing of the EWSS for an employee on a weekly wage of €350, the subsidy has increased from €203 per week to €300 per week. Similarly,



for an employee on a weekly wage of €475 the subsidy has increased from €203 per week to €350 per week.

- From April 2021 a new short-time work subsidy based on the German Kurzarbeitmodel will be developed and introduced.
- **subsidy for wages (self-employed)**
  - In October, the Government announced that the Earned Income Credit will be raised up to €1,650 from 2020 and self-employed taxpayers will be able to warehouse their 2020 preliminary tax liability.
- **short time working schemes**
  - Ireland has a Short-Time Work Support (STWS) scheme – but take-up has been a real issue. For example, during the years 2009-2011, only around 50, 000 workers were on the scheme. The STWS is paid for a maximum of 234 days depending on the number of PRSI Contributions you have paid.
  - To qualify for Short-Time Work Support, you must be:
    - temporarily working a standard reduced weekly work pattern
    - working 3 days or less per week having previously worked full-time
    - be under 66 years of age
    - be capable of work and be available for full-time work
    - have enough paid or credited social insurance (PRSI) contributions
  - Your rate of payment will depend on your average weekly earnings in the governing contribution year and the change in your work pattern. For example, if you are placed on a 3-day work pattern having previously worked 5 days, you may be entitled to up €81.20 for the 2 days you are no longer working. This represents two fifths of the maximum weekly rate of Jobseeker's Benefit of €203.
  - You may also get an increased rate of payment for a qualified adult and qualified children.
  - Worth noting additional ones like **Redundancy** – The law on claiming redundancy from your employer if you have been temporarily laid off, or temporarily put on short-time work has changed during the COVID-19 emergency period. Normally, if you are laid off or put on short-time hours, you can claim redundancy from your employer after 4 weeks or more, or 6 weeks in the last 13 weeks. If you were put on lay off or short-time hours because of COVID-19, you cannot claim redundancy. This has been extended until 30 November 2020.
- **Subsidy for wages (self-employed)**
  - The COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) is for employees and self-employed people living in Ireland who have lost their employment due to COVID-19. If you lost your job for another reason, you can apply for a jobseeker's payment. Self-employed are also allowed retain PUP and recommence self-employment and earn up to €480 gross per month OR receive partial jobseeker payment and earn more than €480 per month
- **government to assume part/entire cost of sick leave**
  - In addition to the existing Illness Benefit (up to €203) the Government has introduced an Enhanced Illness benefit should an employee be certified as having to self-isolate as a result of COVID-19 or has been diagnosed and certified with COVID-19 which is payable at a rate of €350 per week. If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are medically certified to self-isolate as a result of COVID-19, you can apply for Illness Benefit for COVID-19 absences paid at a rate of €350 per week. You can apply for this whether you are an **employee** or if you are **self-employed**. The Covid-19 illness payment will be paid for a maximum of two weeks to a self-isolating person, but for the duration of a person's absence from work if they are diagnosed with Covid-19.
- **help for apprentices**
  - Entitled to same as others laid off or unemployed due to Covid – EWSS or PUP. In July Jobs Stimulus an apprenticeship incentivisation scheme of €3000 was introduced to encourage employers to take on apprentices in 2020.
- **help for students**

- A fund for student devices worth €15 million to allow higher education institutions and further education institutions place a bulk order of 16,700 devices for students across third level to ensure they can keep up to date with their studies.
- **extra parental leave**
  - Parents of children born during the pandemic will get an extra 3 weeks parent's leave paid at €245 per week.

## **Regulatory changes such as**

- **moratorium on insolvency**
  - The Companies (Miscellaneous Provisions) (COVID-19) Bill includes provisions in respect of business solvency by increasing the period of examinership to 100-150 days and increasing the threshold at which a company is deemed unable to pay its debts to from €10,000-20,000 to €50,000 until 31 December 2020.

## Italy

Date: 10 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

With the last prime minister decree (3 November 2020), Italian Regions have been divided into three sets: yellow, orange and red. There are some minimum restrictions that has to be respected nationwide (and by yellow regions), and some additive restrictions that are specific for the orange and the red one, with increased severity.

- **Confinement**

- Yellow: recommendation not to move if there are no work, health, study or other necessity (VHSN) reasons.
- Orange: it is forbidden to move between Regions and municipalities. Exceptions for work, health, study, or other necessity reasons. It is recommended not to move inside your municipality.
- Red: both between regions/municipalities and within municipality movements are forbidden. The only exceptions are for work, health, or high necessity (VHN) reasons.

- **Curfew**

- Yellow: from 10 pm to 5 am. Exceptions for WHSN reasons.
- Orange: from 10 pm to 5 am. Exceptions for WHN reasons.
- Red: general lockdown. Exceptions for WHN reasons.

- **Teleworking**

- There is no distinction between regions. Teleworking is highly recommended to private employers and has to be done when it is possible until the State of Emergency ends (31 January 2021). Regarding the Public Administration it is stated that it will organize its schedules assuring the highest smart-work percentage possible.

- **Industries allowed**

- Industries are allowed to operate in any region set.

- **Services allowed**

- Nationwide: Public transports have to halve their capacity
- Yellow and Orange: swimming pools, gyms, theatres, cinemas, game & bet centres, bingo, and slot machines have to stay closed. Museums and exhibitions have to stay closed. Shopping centres are closed during weekends and holidays.
- Red: all the commercial activities have to stay closed. The only exceptions are for kiosks, tobacco shops, pharmacies, laundries, hairdressers, and barber shops. Supermarkets or stores that sell food or other indispensable goods can stay open.

- **Hotels, restaurants, bars, and cafés**

- Nationwide: hotels can stay open
- Yellow: bar, restaurants and cafés have to close at 6 pm. Take-away is allowed until 10 pm. Delivery is always allowed.
- Orange: bar, restaurants and cafés have to stay close 24h. Take-away is allowed until 10 pm. Delivery is always allowed.
- Red: as Orange.

- **Restriction for public events**

- Nationwide: public events and public contests are suspended.

- **Nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**

- Nationwide: high schools teaching is completely on distance. Kindergartens, primary and secondary schools continue with on presence teaching, but with the obligation of wearing a mask. Exceptions made for u6 kids.

- **Travel restrictions**
  - Within the country scenario is described in *Confinement*. The Prime Minister decree of 24 October 2020 contains lists of countries, for which different restrictions apply. The restrictions may include mandatory self-isolation at return, mandatory self-declaration, mandatory test before departure/after arrival, major travel restrictions. The list is unchanged.
- **Mask and social distancing restrictions**
  - It is mandatory to wear a mask in all indoor places (except if private habitations) and in outdoor places (except if social distancing can be guaranteed). Exceptions are made for sports activities, u6 kids, impossibility due to pathologies or disabilities.
  - Gatherings are always forbidden outdoor and a social distancing of at least one metre has always to be guaranteed.
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - If you had a close contact with a positive case, you have to stay in quarantine for at least ten days. Then you can make the swab; if negative, you can join the community back. If you do not want to do the swab, you have to complete your quarantine (14 days) without complaining any symptom.
  - If you have been tested positive, you have to wait other 10 days if you are without symptoms, and then get tested for a second time. If you have symptoms, for the second test you have to wait at least 7 days after the last symptoms manifestation. If you are negative, you can join the community back. If you are positive, you have to wait other 7 days then you are free.

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

### ***Decreto Ristori* – Law Decree signed on 28 October 2020**

- **Subsidies to enterprises**
  - Following the same procedure of the previous law decree (DI Rilancio), a new tranche of subsidies is directed to all those enterprises forced to close or diminish their professional activity.
  - Enterprises with revenues bigger than 5 million have been included in the target. The relief is equal to 10% of the revenues decrease.
  - In most of the cases, the contribution of this new law decree is supposed to be from 100% to 400% higher than the contributions of the previous law decree (DI Rilancio)
  - The plafond for each enterprise is equal to 150.000€.
- **Foreclosures block**
  - Every foreclosure procedure – referred to the main debtor residence – has been suspended until 31 December 2020
- **Support to tourism, culture and entertainment sectors and operators**
  - The fund for these sectors has been increased by
    - €400 million for tour operators, travel agencies and tourists guides
    - €100 million for cinema and audio-visual sectors
    - €50 million for cultural enterprises and institutions
  - The possibility to use the holidays tax credit until 31 July 2021
- **Support to the Italian export and to the international fairs**
  - Additional €350 million have been added to two funds (“Fondo per l’erogazione di finanziamenti agevolati” and “Fondo per la promozione integrata”), with the aim of strengthening the Italian export.
- **Subsidies to agricultural and fishing production chains**

- A €100 million fund has been established with the aim of supporting the agricultural and fishing chains, harmed by the restrictions due to Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Tax credits on rents**
  - Already established by the previous law decree (DI Rilancio), tax credits on rents have been prolonged for October, November, and December. Moreover, the target range has been extended to enterprises with revenues over €5 million. To be entitled to the benefit, the demanding enterprise should have suffered a revenue fall of at least 50% of the revenues registered in the respective months of 2019. The credit can be transferred to the owner of the real estate.
- **IMU tax (real estate tax)**
  - All the categories affected by the restrictions do not need to pay the second instalment of IMU tax (real estate tax) for the real estate where the professional activity is done. The only requirement is to be both the owner of the estate and the manager of the activity.
  - With *Ristori Bis* law decree, the second instalment of IMU tax has been cancelled for all those owners/managers that operate in red zones.
- **Layoffs and ordinary allowances**
  - Layoffs and ordinary allowances placed between 16 November 2020 and 31 January 2021 have been extended for six more weeks.
  - A further contribution is expected, and it is calculated on the global retribution of all the time that a worker was unable to spend in professional activities due to restrictions.
  - All the employers that have not fully exploited such tools are prohibited to proceed with individual dismissals.
  - All individual dismissal procedures started after 23 February 2020 are temporarily suspended. Collective dismissals procedures are still possible.
- **Social security contributions suspension**
  - The November social security contribution payment has been suspended. It can be paid through a unique solution or through up to four instalments. The total amount or the first instalment of the amortisation plan should be paid by March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
- **Emergency income**
  - Two new tranches of €400 are available to those who already accessed the emergency income plan or to those households whose monthly income of September was below such digits.
- **Tourism, thermal baths, and entertainment workers benefits**
  - All the workers related to touristic, thermal, and entertaining activities, and that suffered economic losses due to the restrictions, are entitled to receive €1000 una tantum benefit.
- **Social Security contribution suspension for agricultural and fishing production chains**
  - All the enterprises members of agricultural and fishing production chains are exempted to pay the November social security contributions. Insurance contributions should still be paid.
- **Sports workers**
  - Sports workers are entitled to €800 una tantum benefit. Through the precedent decrees they had been previously entitled to a €600 benefit.
- **Parental leaves due to extraordinary reasons**
  - €45.5 million has been allocated in order to allow working parents to work in smart modalities in case their children are obliged to follow a quarantine period.

**Decreto Ristori Bis – Law decree signed on 6 November 2020**

- **Social Security contributions suspension**
  - In all the national territory, the social security contributions of November are suspended for employers of some specific sectors (those sectors already included in *Ristori* law decree). The employers who work in orange and red zones can also benefit from the exemption of December

contributions. All the suspended contributions should be paid in a unique payment or through an amortisation plan until March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

- **Subsidies funds' incrementation**
  - *Ristori bis* decree provides an increment by a further 50% of the fund, directed to specific professional activities (such ice-cream shops, pastry shops, bars and similar activities without kitchen) that operate in orange and red zones.
  - The list of professional activities that are potentially entitled to received subsidies has been enlarged.
  - A new subsidiary fund has been activated, directed to all those professional activities that operate in red zones.
  - A subsidiary fund has been activated for all those professional activities that take place in shopping centres, malls, and food industries.
- **Corporate taxes suspended**
  - The second payment of Corporate and Productive Activities taxes are suspended until April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This measure is only valid for all those economic activities operating in high risk zones, with an assigned fiscal reliability synthetic index (ISA).
- **Babysitter bonus and extraordinary leave**
  - In all the red zones where the second- and third-year middle school courses are suspended, young working parents can benefit from:
    - A €1000 babysitter bonus, and
    - In case of impossibility to work in smart modality, an extraordinary parental leave, with a recognized compensation of 50% of the monthly wage.
- **Tax credits on rents**
  - All the professional activities deserving such subsidies, can also join tax credits on real estate rentals, if the activity is placed in a red zone.
- **Withholding tax and VAT**
  - All the professional activities that suffered restrictions are exempted to pay the November Withholding tax and VAT.
- **Support to agricultural and fishing production chains**
  - The new decree provides the total de-contribution for December to all those enterprises (operating along the agricultural and fishing productive chains) that have been already recognized by the previous decrees as entitled to receive benefits.

## Luxembourg

Date: 17 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

- **No regime on confinement**
- **Regime on curfew**
  - 23h00 – 06h00 with a few derogations (work, studies, hospital, medical consultation...)
- **Regime on telework**
  - Highly recommended (2-3 days/week)
- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - No restrictions
- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - No restrictions
- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - Social distancing
  - Wearing of masks when not seated
  - Max. 4 pp / table unless the people are part of the same household or cohabitate
  - Only seating places are allowed in restaurants and bars
  - Tables placed side by side shall be separated by a distance of at least 1,5 meters if the distance is less, by a barrier or physical separation to limit the risk of infection. These distance and separation measures are not applicable for tables which are not side by side.
  - Reception is limited to a maximum of 100 clients
  - These restrictions apply also on the terraces
- **Restrictions for public events**
  - Any gathering exceeding 100 people is prohibited, are not taken in consideration the speakers, actors...
  - Wearing of masks is mandatory when there are 4 people inside or outdoor
  - Wearing of masks and seating places are mandatory when 10 to 100 people
  - The practice of sport activities in group of more than 4 people is prohibited excepted for championship in the highest division...
- **Regime for commerce**
  - Social distancing,
  - Wearing of masks
  - Any commercial establishment with a sales area equal to or more than 400 square meters, which is accessible to the public, is subject to a limitation of 1 customer per 10 square meters with some exceptions (travel agencies, banks, fitness centers, advertising agencies...)
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - Nurseries, kindergartens, school, universities are open
  - Wearing a mask and social distancing are mandatory but not for children under 6.
- **Restrictions to travel (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)**
  - No restrictions
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
  - Obligation to respect social distancing rules
  - Obligation to wear a mask for groups of more than 4 people
  - Obligation to wear a mask in public transports



- Children under 6, people in situation of handicap, or presenting a pathology with a medical certificate, the religious actors, speakers and sports actors during the exercise of their activities, the theatre and film actors, musicians as well as the dancers who exercise a professional artistic activity, persons who participate in school and extra-curricular activities are not concerned by the obligation regarding mask wearing and social distance
- Social distance obligations don't concern markets and public transports
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - "The Luxembourg government is embarking on a new phase of screening with the aim to test representative samples of the population in order to monitor developments and to be as flexible as possible in the event of an increase in the number of cases. This is the best way to break infection chains and effectively trace the contacts of infected people.
  - The COVID-19 test at the invitation of the Luxembourg Government concerns residents and cross-border workers. It is free of charge.
  - If your present symptoms potentially related to COVID-19, directly consult your doctor for a test on medical prescription."
  - More information, [here](#).
- **Situation regarding tracing**
  - Analog tracing, also with the help of the "Large Scale Testing" which aims at monitoring the evolution of COVID-19 infection among the population.
- **Obligations regarding quarantine**
  - No obligations

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

- **The partial unemployment scheme will be extended** until the end of the first semester of 2021. The modalities of application of partial unemployment beyond December 31, 2020 are currently being discussed with the social partners within the conjuncture committee.
- **Other aid schemes** will also be extended until June 30, 2021:
  - state guarantee scheme for new bank loans;
  - capital grant in the form of a repayable advance of max. 800,000 EUR;
  - financial support for companies carrying out an investment or R&D project for products helping to combat the health crisis;
  - aid to boost investment in the COVID-19 era.
- **The extension, until December 31, 2021, of the Fit 4 Resilience strategic relaunch program**, initiated by the Ministry of the Economy and Luxinnovation.
- **As part of the "Fonds de relance et de solidarité aux entreprises" (Business Recovery and Solidarity Fund), new economic support measures have been presented on 13 November.**
  1. The assistance linked to the existing recovery fund model is extended to several sectors, namely all companies in the HoReCA sector, tourism, events, entertainment but also in-store retail trade as well as to vocational training organisations. This new aid will cover the months of December 2020 to March 2021. To benefit from this aid, a loss in turnover of at least 25% must be recorded compared to the reference month of 2019. The amounts of this aid vary between EUR 250 and EUR 1,250, namely:
    - EUR 250 per employee on full partial unemployment during the month for which the aid is requested and;

- EUR 1,250 per self-employed person and per working employee during the month for which the aid is requested.
- 2. In addition, a new aid entitled « Aide coûts non couverts » (Aid for uncovered costs) aims for the State to temporarily contribute to uncovered costs. The targeted companies are all those in the HoReCa etc. for the period from November 2020 to March 2021. Specific conditions regarding the eligibility applies and a loss of turnover of 40% or more must be observed. The maximum aid intensity is:
  - 70% of costs not covered for medium and large companies and;
  - 90% of costs not covered for micro and small businesses.

Noting that the entry into force of the law will take place at a later date not yet known.

- Through a Grand-Ducal regulation implementing the amended law of 19 December 2014 relating, among other things, to **social measures for the benefit of independent professional artists and intermittent entertainment workers**, additional aid for the latter will be reintroduced for a period of two months (from November 1 to December 31, 2020). In particular:
  - **social assistance for independent professional artists**, with the possibility of paying monthly social assistance up to the minimum social wage for qualified people (instead of 50% of the minimum social wage for qualified people, in "normal" times);
  - **additional daily allowances for intermittent entertainment workers**, up to 20 daily allowances per month, in the event of involuntary inactivity, compared to the 121 daily allowances provided for in "normal" times.

The cost of this measure is estimated at 480,000 EUR. Between March and August 2020, a first period made it possible to release some 930,000 EUR in additional aid for the benefit of professional independent and intermittent performing artists.

## Malta

Date: 3 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

- **Regime on confinement**
  - Mandatory if Covid-19 symptoms appear or if in contact with someone that tested positive.
- **Regime on curfew**
  - No curfew.
- **Regime on telework**
  - Not mandatory but recommended where possible.
- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - Wearing of masks is mandatory at the workplace.
- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - Wearing of masks is mandatory at the workplace
- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - Bars closed until 1<sup>st</sup> December;
  - Other catering establishments cannot sell alcohol;
  - Restaurants continue operating with established health protocols: maximum of 10 guests per table and still possible to serve alcohol
- **Restrictions for public events**
  - For venues in which events are to be hosted, organisers are to ensure that there are four square metres for every person in attendance, and that the maximum number of individuals that may group together is that of ten. Furthermore, a two-metre distance is to be kept between such groups. In the eventuality that the number of attendees is to exceed one hundred, then the event organiser is to submit a risk assessment form to the Malta Tourism Authority as the responsible authority, and the event may only take place upon the approval of the Malta Tourism Authority.
- **Education**
  - Children under three will not be required to wear masks. Primary school children will be required to wear masks only in common areas, where there is a chance of mixing with other children. In secondary schools, children will be expected to wear masks all the time. Desks will be 1.5m apart.
- **Restrictions to travel**
  - No restrictions but conditions on providing information on recent travel, presentation of negative swab test certificate or quarantine is categorised according to 3-colour code country lists.
- **Mandatory obligation to wear masks and social distancing in public spacing.**
  - Public gatherings are limited to 10 people of the same group.
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - There are 6 testing centres in Malta and Gozo and Swab tests are done by appointment. Rapid testing was introduced.
- **Situation regarding tracing**
  - Government issued a scheme for idle workers in the hospitality sector to join the national contact tracing team. Such workers will continue benefiting from an Eur800/month wage supplement in addition to a top up of Eur5.28/hour worked.

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

### Tax related measures such as

- **Deferral of Tax payments (Corporate income tax, social contributions, VAT etc):**
  - Provisional tax, social security contributions of self-employed persons and Value Added Tax which fell due in March up to and including August 2020; Employee taxes, maternity fund payments and social security contributions which fall due in March up to and including June 2020. Settlement period: Eligible taxes to be settled by the 31st May 2021.
- **Tax returns can be filed later**
  - Individuals who were required to file a Tax Return, normally submitted by the end of June, could do so until the **end of August**
- **Temporary reduction in VAT- rate**
  - the VAT rate on protective face masks and visors was reduced to 5%.

### Subsidies such as

- **Non-sectoral state aid (grants)**
  - **Rent refunds:** Enterprises that have been granted the Wage Supplement will be able to apply for a grant of up to €2,500 by submitting their lease agreements.
  - **Electricity refunds:** Businesses eligible for the Wage Supplement will be awarded additional support in the first months after resuming operations. Such businesses will be assisted on 50% of a commercial rate account for the months of July, August, and September up to an amount of €1,500 per applicant.
  - **Reengineering scheme:** €5,000 for every business, allowing them to embark on a reengineering exercise with approved companies. The allocated budget will reach €2.5 million
  - **Micro-invest scheme adaptation:** Beneficiaries of the Micro Invest scheme may opt to receive part of the tax credit as a cash grant
  - **Skills Development scheme:** top-up of €5 million on the budget allocation for this scheme. This top-up shall be directed towards those businesses that employ fewer than 50 persons.
- **Sectoral state aid (grants): Import/Export**
  - Refund of 33% in port charges for those ships that bring cargo to our country to support the supply chains of our economy.
  - 10% refund will also be given on container discharge fees for import and export but not transshipment.
  - Support for export promotion. To reach new markets we need to invest more in supporting digital marketing. A budget of €400,000 has been allocated to Trade Malta to reimburse half of the costs involved, with a maximum of €10,000 for local businesses to invest in campaigns aimed at foreign markets.
  - Up to 80% refund of the costs incurred by businesses participating in international fairs which were cancelled.
- **Direct company state aid**
  - A request was made by Government to provide state aid to national airline Air Malta

### Loans/guarantees /Payment suspension such as

- **State guarantees on loans**
  - The European Commission has accepted a Maltese Government guarantee scheme under the Temporary Framework for working capital loans granted by commercial banks to support companies affected by Covid-19. The scheme has an estimated budget of Eur350 million.

- **Export guarantees**
  - €10M scheme for companies to diversify markets. Details in progress.
- **Rescheduling loan payments with state intervention**
  - Three-month moratorium from banks for business or personal loans. This will alleviate the burden of bank loans for all persons and businesses in this challenging period. Please contact your local bank for assistance.

#### **Labour market and social policy measures such as**

- **Subsidy for wages (employees)**
  - The Maltese Government introduced a wage supplement scheme categorized in 3 annexes.
    - Annex A includes those involved in tourism, hospitality and catering operators that benefit from Eur 800 for full-timers and Eur 500 for part-timers.
    - Annex B that mostly includes manufacturing provides Eur 160 for full-timers and Eur 100 for part-timers.
    - Annex C includes the broader retail and services sector provides Eur 600 for full-timers and Eur 375 for part-timers.
  - Monthly grants. The current scheme is valid at least until the end of March.
- **Subsidy for wages (self-employed)**
  - Self-employed receive a wage supplement of Eur800 per month.
- **Short time working schemes**
  - The wage supplement scheme referred to above is available for companies irrespective whether working time has been reduced or not.
- **Government to assume part/entire cost of sick leave**
  - Quarantine Leave is paid in full by the employer with right of the employer to claim reimbursement of 350 euros for the whole duration of the employee's quarantine. Quarantine Leave is a special leave entitlement and therefore it is an entitlement over and above any other and neither deducted from the employee's annual leave nor from sick leave.
- **Extra allowance for workers taking care for sick relatives or taking care of children**
  - Parents who both work in the private sector requiring one of the parents to stay at home to take care of school-aged children will receive a direct payment of €166.15 per week if working fulltime or €103.85 per week if working part-time provided that they cannot carry out their functions through teleworking arrangements. This measure also applies for single parent families who have school-aged children.
- **Extra unemployment benefits**
  - Employees who had their full-time employment terminated as of 9th March 2020, including those who were self-employed, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic will be eligible for the Contributory Unemployment Benefit and will receive a direct payment of €166.15 if work was in full-time before you became unemployed or €103.85 per week if work was part-time before becoming unemployed.

#### **Other measures:**

- **Voucher scheme**
  - Government issued a €100 voucher to every resident in Malta to stimulate local demand and support the hospitality and retail sectors. A repetition of the scheme was announced in the October budget.

## Netherlands

Date: 20 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

#### • **Regime on confinement**

- People are called upon by the government to avoid public places as much as possible. The Prime Minister has asked people to each time they are going out consider if this is truly necessary. No official confinement is in place.
- People are allowed to receive a maximum of 4 persons per day in their house. Children under 13 and people from the same household are excluded.
- Outside the home, no more than 4 people can form a group outside the home. This does not include children under the age of 13.
  - This applies to all areas that are accessible to the public, indoors and outdoors. This means that you can go to a shopping centre, the beach or the train station as part of 1 household or with a maximum of 3 other people.
- Exceptions to the rule for groups
  - Demonstrations, gatherings and meetings as referred to in the Public Assemblies Act
  - People gathering to practise a religion or belief
  - Funerals
  - Weddings (maximum of 30 people)
  - People taking part in theatre, dance or sport, or performing music as a cultural activity
  - Professions, businesses or associations (maximum of 100 people)
  - Elite athletes with a status at an assigned location, footballers in the Eredivisie and Eerste Divisie.
  - Team sports for children under 18 years (no matches or competition).
  - Public transport
  - Carers
  - Meetings of the States General, a municipal council, provincial council, general board of a water authority or related committees
  - Meetings of international organisations or treaty parties.

#### • **Regime on curfew**

- N/A
- Between 20.00 and 07.00 persons may not drink alcohol or have it on their person in public spaces. This applies both indoors and outdoors.
- In hotels, as of 23 October:
  - Between 20.00 and 07.00 no alcohol may be served or consumed in hotel restaurants, bars or lounges.
  - Between 20.00 and 07.00 no alcohol may be delivered to guests via room service.

#### • **Regime on telework**

- Employers should work from home as much as possible. An organisation or business can be closed down for 14 days, if contract tracing by the Municipal Health Service (GGD) shows that an infection occurred there.

#### • **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**

- All industries remain open.
- It is recommended to telework as much as possible given the nature of the industry and the work.

#### • **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**

For both services in the private and public sector, it is recommended to telework as much as possible given the nature of the work.

#### • **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**

- All establishments serving food and drinks are closed. Exceptions are:

- Takeaway restaurants, including takeaways from coffee shops
- Establishments serving food and drinks at airports (after security)
- Hotels (for guests only)
- Funeral locations
- Company canteens
  
- **Restrictions for public events**
  - Most events are banned. Exceptions are:
    - Theatres, cinemas, casinos, concert venues
    - Demonstrations, gatherings and meetings as referred to in the Public Assemblies Act
    - Markets
  
- **Regime for commerce**
  - All stores remain open.
  - People in all contact-based professions may carry out their work.
    - Both the service provider and their client are strongly advised to wear a face mask.
    - All contact-based professions must ask their clients to provide their contact details for contact tracing by the municipal health service (GGD) in the event someone is infected.
  
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - Primary schools, schools for special education and out-of-school care are open for all pupils as normal.
  - Secondary schools are fully open.
    - Additional agreements have been made with secondary schools, strongly advising that face masks be worn outside of classrooms and in specific situations such as practical training.
    - Pupils at secondary school, regardless of their age, don't need to stay 1.5 metres from each other.
  - Educational institutions (secondary vocational education and higher professional education/universities) are organising induction activities online, wherever possible. In-person activities can only take place in small groups and must be informative in nature.
  - Teachers and childcare staff who have health issues or who fall into one of the at-risk groups identified by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) (aged over 70 or with underlying health conditions) should stay at home.
  
- **Restrictions to travel** (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)
  - The following rules apply to everyone:
    - Travel as little as possible. Keep travel to a minimum.
    - Limit contact with other people.
    - Travel by bicycle or on foot for short journeys if possible.
  - Travelling abroad to yellow, orange or red countries (according to the Dutch colour-coding system; updated regularly) is discouraged because of the risks. Travelling abroad between now and Mid-January is not recommended.
  - Travellers arriving in the Netherlands from orange and red countries and regions are strongly advised to self-quarantine for 10 days. Even if they do not have any symptoms of COVID.
    - Cross-border commuters, people who work in international passenger or goods transport, and Dutch students who are doing part of their course abroad should follow the self-quarantine rules when they return to the Netherlands.
  - Foreigners are strongly advised not to travel to the Netherlands unless it is strictly necessary. Borders remain open.
    - Only essential cross-border traffic – including goods transport, cross-border commuting and travel by keyworkers – is possible.
    - If you do travel to the Netherlands, you are strongly advised to self-quarantine for 10 days.
    - In certain circumstances entry restrictions to the Netherlands are being eased and exemptions to the travel ban apply. Whether you can travel to the Netherlands depends on your situation.



- People travelling into the Netherlands should self-quarantine even when a test comes back negative. The government is looking into the possibility of making it mandatory that travellers show a negative test upon entering the country.
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
  - Everyone aged 13 or over should wear a non-medical face mask in indoor public spaces.
    - People should wear a mask in all buildings and covered spaces that are accessible to the public. This includes shops, town halls, stations, airports, covered car parks and petrol stations.
    - Both customers and staff should wear a face mask in locations where contact-based professions are carried out.
    - Wearing a face mask is mandatory in public transport. People who do not wear a face mask will be fined.
  - People do not have to wear a face mask in the following situations:
    - when taking part in theatre, dance or sport or performing music as a cultural activity.
    - when they are unable to wear a face mask on medical grounds or because of other limitations.
  - People should stay 1.5 metres (2 arms lengths) away from other people.
    - This applies to everyone over the age of 18: in the street, in shops and other buildings and at work – even if you are a key worker. It does not apply to family members or other people that you live with. And it does not apply if you are providing assistance to someone, for example pushing a wheelchair.
    - Leave if you notice it is becoming difficult to keep a distance of 1.5 metres.
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - If you have one or more of COVID-19 symptoms, you should get tested. Stay at home until you receive the results. If you have shortness of breath or fever above 38 degrees Celsius, all members of your household must also stay at home until you receive the results. If they have symptoms, they must also get tested.
    - Children of primary school age and under do not need to be tested if they have COVID-19 symptoms. If your child is very sick, contact your family doctor. They will decide whether your child needs a test. A test can also be arranged for a child who develops symptoms following contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus.
  - If the test shows that you do not have coronavirus, you and other members of your household can leave your home again. If you feel well enough, you can go outside and go to work. Children can go back to school or childcare.
  - If the test shows you do have coronavirus, you and all members of your household must stay at home. The municipal health service (GGD) will tell you what else you and the people you have been in contact with need to do.
- **Situation regarding tracing**
  - The municipal health service (GGD) will carry out source and contact tracing with people who tested positive. People who have been in contact with someone who has coronavirus will be given instructions on what they should and should not do. This includes going into self-quarantine if they had close contact with the infected person.
- **Obligations regarding quarantine**
  - Don't leave your accommodation, whether that is your home, holiday accommodation or other temporary accommodation, like a hotel room. Do not travel or go to another location in the Netherlands. People arriving from abroad may not return to their country of origin.
  - The following rules apply during self-quarantine:
    - Nobody may visit you, except for medical purposes (for example, a doctor or a GGD official).
    - Only members of your household or your travel companions may be in your accommodation with you. You must stay 1.5 metres away from them as much as possible. This means no hugging, kissing or sex.
    - If you need medical assistance, do not go to the doctor or the hospital, but phone the doctor instead.
    - Children under 13 may go to school, out-of-school care and sports clubs.

- Ask other people to do grocery shopping for you. If this isn't possible, you may briefly go out to do grocery shopping. But only if you do not have any symptoms of COVID.
- You can sit outside if you have a garden or balcony.
- Do not go to your place of work but work from home. If you are a healthcare professional you may, only in exceptional cases and under certain conditions, go to work. Discuss this with the municipal health service (GGD) or your company doctor.
- Do not use public transport.
- If you do not develop any symptoms that could be caused by coronavirus, you can end the self-quarantine after 10 days.

## **2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government**

The coronavirus COVID-19, and the measures taken to restrict the spreading of the coronavirus in the Netherlands, mean significant loss of turnover for many businesses. Consequently, the Dutch government has implemented several financial measures to support businesses through the crisis.

On 1 October 2020, the third set of economic support measures for businesses affected by the corona crisis has come into place. Several existing measures, such as NOW, Tozo and TVL have been extended, with new conditions. The third set of economic support measures will be in effect until July 2021.

- **NOW3:** Employers with more than 20% turnover loss will be able to apply for the [Temporary Emergency Bridging Measure for Sustained Employment](#) (NOW, Tijdelijke Noodmaatregel Overbrugging voor Werkbehoud) to receive compensation of their employees' wages from October 2020 - July 2021. NOW1 and NOW2 are now closed. NOW 3 is expected to open on 16 November.
- **Tozo3:** Self-employed professionals will be able to apply for [Tozo](#), the temporary benefit to bridge the loss of income over the months October 2020 - July 2021 in the municipality where they live. Check with your municipality when you can apply.
- **TVL:** The [Reimbursement Fixed Costs Scheme for SMEs](#) aims to compensate SMEs in [selected sectors](#) for fixed costs other than wage costs. Companies can apply for TVL once every 3 months, until 1 July 2021.
- **Extra support for the cultural sector:** The government allots €414 million to providing extra support for cultural organisations and events.
- **SET:** Caregivers can apply for the special corona-related Incentive scheme eHealth at Home: [SET COVID-19 2.0](#). The available funds are for care providers who invest in a structural setup for digital care. The scheme runs from 27 July - 30 November (unless funds run out sooner).

Credits and guarantees:

- **BMKB-C:** From 16 March 2020 to 1 April 2021, the [SME credit guarantee \(BMKB\) scheme](#) is extended to help SMEs that are affected by the coronavirus secure bank guarantees and bridge financing.
- **BL-C:** For agricultural entrepreneurs, the equivalent of the BMKB-C is the [Credit Guarantee scheme for Agriculture \(BL-C\)](#).
- **COL:** Startups and scale-ups can apply for the '[Corona-Overbruggingslening](#)' (Corona Bridging Loan or COL) via the [Techleap.nl website](#). Regional Development Companies (ROMs) supply the loans, that vary between €50,000 and €2 million.
- **GO:** The [Business loan guarantee scheme \(GO\)](#) has been extended.
- **Microcredit:** Entrepreneurs who have a loan from [microcredit](#) provider Qredits do not have to repay their loan for a period of 6 months. During this period, the interest will be reduced to 2%. The government supports Qredits with 6 million euros.
- **Small Credits for Corona Guarantee Scheme (KKC):** SMEs with relatively small financial needs may be eligible for a bridging loan of up to €50,000 under the [Small Credits for Corona Guarantee Scheme](#) (Klein Krediet Corona garantieregeling or KKC).

- **Tozo3:** Self-employed professionals can apply for [Tozo](#), a loan to bridge the loss of income over the months October 2020 - July 2021 in the municipality where they live. Check with your municipality when you can apply.
- **Tozo for entrepreneurs living abroad:** If your company is in the Netherlands, but you live abroad (in the EER or Switzerland), you can [apply to the municipality of Maastricht](#) for a business loan.
- **Growth Facility Scheme:** The intended phasing out of the [Growth Facility Scheme](#) has been extended to 1 July 2021.
- **Proof-of-concept funding:** Businesses that make use of the [Proof-of-concept funding scheme](#) (VFF) or the [Innovation credit scheme](#) (IK) can apply for a repayment extension. Also, no interest will be levied on the VFF.
- **Export credit insurance:** The government has extended the [export credit insurance](#) facility.
- **DTIF:** The [Dutch Trade and Investment Fund \(DTIF\)](#) has been extended to include pre-delivery advances.
- **Temporary support for local media:** New budget has been allocated for the [Temporary Support for Local Media scheme](#). Applications can now be submitted for the period 15 September - 15 December.
- Expected measures
  - **Compensation for legal aid:** Legal aid lawyers, mediators and curators who experience more than 20% income loss due to the corona crisis will receive additional compensation.
- Expired measures:
  - **TOGS:** The [Reimbursement for entrepreneurs in affected sectors scheme \(TOGS\)](#) expired on 26 June. It is replaced by the [TVL scheme](#).
  - **Compensation for turnover loss for horticultural businesses and potato farmers:** Horticultural businesses (food and ornamental) and farmers who produce processing potatoes could claim [compensation](#) for part of their turnover loss until 18 June.
  - **Indirect Emission Costs Subsidy Scheme (ETS):** The [Indirect Emission Costs Subsidy Scheme \(ETS\)](#) was made available sooner. It closed 15 April.
  - **TOFA:** The Temporary Bridging measure for Flex Workers or TOFA compensates flex workers that have been laid off after 1 March due to the corona crisis, and who cannot claim benefits. Application at the UWV closed on 27 July.

In order to find out for which scheme companies are eligible, several tools have been created:

1. **The [Corona Calculator](#):** VNO-NCW and MKB Nederland have prepared this tool to help businesses find the schemes they are eligible for, and calculate their impact on their financial position. In Dutch.
2. **[Krijgiktozo](#):** a tool to see if companies are eligible for the temporary benefit for self-employed professionals Tozo. In Dutch.
3. **Turnover loss calculator:** this tool helps businesses find if they qualify for the NOW scheme. In Dutch.

## Norway

Date: 17 November 2020

### Website for information in English:

<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/koronavirus-covid-19/id2692388/>

#### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

- **No regime on confinement**
- **No regime on curfew**
- **Regime on telework**
  - Current advice from the authorities updated 5 November: No new national guidelines on the use of home offices have been introduced since 7 August.
  - But the requirement for a home office is a relevant tool that municipalities in living and working regions with a high infection pressure can / have introduced. At times, therefore, there may be many local regulations requiring the use of a home office. It is therefore important to familiarize yourself with regional and local regulations in addition to the national guidelines. Special regulations are in place in Oslo and Bergen.
  - For the workplace, national councils from the authorities as of 7 August still apply, in addition to any local regulations: *"Employers should ensure that employees can keep a distance of at least one meter throughout working hours. Employers are encouraged to arrange for half as many to use public transport during rush hour. In this connection, the government encourages everyone who has the opportunity to walk or cycle to work., and it is also encouraged to use home offices and shifted working hours whenever possible."*
- **All industries allowed to function**
- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - Some services, i.e. gyms, are closed in some municipalities.
- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - Licensed sales of alcohol will not be permitted after midnight, guests will not be permitted after 22.00. a distance of at least 1 metre must be maintained between guests not from the same household. All guests must be seated, alcohol will only be available through table service, and contact details must be recorded for those guests who consent. Total ban on alcohol sale in restaurants etc. in the city of Oslo.

#### Restrictions for public events

- Private gatherings: A maximum of 20 people at private gatherings in public places and hired premises.
- A maximum of 50 people at events indoors without fixed seating, and a maximum of 200 if the full audience is seated in fixed seating.
- A maximum of 600 people at outdoor events where everyone is seated in fixed seating divided in groups of 200 people. The organizer must ensure that there is at least 2 meters distance between people in different groups at all times. For events where the audience does not sit in fixed seats, the limit is 200 people.
- *Employees and contractors who are responsible for the implementation of an event are in addition to the 50/200/600.*
- All events must have a responsible organizer who ensures that the gathering is carried out in accordance with the infection control rules. The organizer can be a private person or a professional actor. Those who are present must be informed about who is the organizer and who can be contacted with questions about infection control.
- The organizer must ensure that:

- guests can keep a distance of one meter, measured from shoulder to shoulder, to those they do not live with normally (exceptions to the distance rule apply to the groups specified in the covid-19 regulations §13c).
- implement measures that contribute to the absence of the sick.
- make it possible to maintain good hygiene on arrival and during the event.
- write down the name and contact information if necessary to have an overview of the participants in the event of an infection detection, and delete the information after 14 days.
- provide table service if the event has a liquor license.
- ensure that there is at least one seat between participants in the same row (excluding persons from the same household) and that there is a meter distance between the participants in all directions, if the event is held in a room with fixed seats.
- Regime for commerce
- *Some constituencies have stricter regimes.*

- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**

- Traffic light guidelines:

Green level:

No sick person should attend school. Good hygiene and normal cleaning.

Contact reduction measures: Avoid physical contact between people (handshake and squeezing) Regular organization of classes and everyday school life

Yellow level:

No sick person should attend school. Good hygiene and enhanced cleaning.

Contact reduction measures: Avoid physical contact between people (handshake and squeezing) Entire classes can have classes together Students should have permanent seats in each classroom or regular partners / groups.

Staff can alternate between classes but should keep their distance from students as much as possible Outside the classroom, students and staff are encouraged to keep one-meter distance in all situations. Avoid congestion and large gatherings

Red level:

No sick person should attend school. Good hygiene and enhanced cleaning.

Contact reduction measures: Avoid physical contact between people (handshake and squeezing). Divide students into smaller groups. At least one-meter distance between students / staff in all situations. Avoid congestion and large gatherings. Consider alternating attendance times for students.

- Nurseries/kindergartens:

It is the municipal health service that must decide the necessary measures. It is the kindergarten owner who is responsible for ensuring that the kindergarten operations take place in accordance with current laws and regulations. If you have respiratory symptoms or feel unwell: do not go to kindergarten.

- Schools (1-10 grade):

If you have respiratory symptoms or feel unwell: do not go to school. It is the school owner who is responsible for ensuring that the operation takes place in accordance with current regulations. The school owner is responsible for establishing internal control routines that ensure that the environment in the school promotes health, well-being, good social and environmental conditions and prevents illness and injury.

The school should have a contingency plan for a quick transition to the red level. If infection is detected among students / employees, and municipal or national authorities decide that there is a need to raise the level of measures, the change can be implemented quickly.

The school should be able to help with an overview of close contacts at the school. Duty of confidentiality and privacy requirements must be complied with.

- Universities:  
Since 15 June, universities, colleges, and vocational colleges have been completely open again, as long as they comply with current rules and advice on infection control. Also for students, advice and recommendations apply as in working life. The access students have to campus varies from place of study to place of study depending on local conditions, such as the infection situation, municipal measures and the like. Distance-learning via digital lectures has become the norm for many universities.
- **Restrictions to travel (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)**  
Domestic travel:
  - Per 5<sup>th</sup> November: Avoid unnecessary domestic travel. This does not apply to work-related travel or travel to or from second homes that can be completed without coming into contact with others.
  - *Traveling home for Christmas can be important for many and can therefore be accomplished. If you are traveling from a high infection area to a low infection area, you should take precautions for 10 days after arrival:*
    - Reduce the number of close contacts.
    - Keep 2 meters away from people in the risk group.
    - Be especially careful with hand and cough hygiene
    - Pay special attention to symptoms
    - Have a low threshold to test yourself if you get symptoms or think you may have been exposed to infection.
  - If you are ill, in quarantine or in isolation: do not travel, not even to the cabin. The only exception is when you are without symptoms and staying in a cabin is the only way to avoid close contact with a family member who is ill with covid-19.

EU/international travel:

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs advises against all travel that is not strictly necessary to all countries. The travel advice is valid **until 15 January**. Exceptions have been made for countries and regions in the Nordic countries and countries in the EEA / Schengen area that meet the National Institute of Public Health's criteria for low spread of infection.
- Entry to Norway (9 November 2020): Read info-paper here:  
[https://www.helsedirektoratet.no/brosjyrer/informasjon-til-de-som-ankommer-norge-covid-19/Innreise%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf/\\_attachment/inline/0cc78b1f-87bb-4387-9f3f-4a7322a5d487:0d4c7d6d9c5768ea97b08530a10f789e3e66e8f3/Innreise%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf](https://www.helsedirektoratet.no/brosjyrer/informasjon-til-de-som-ankommer-norge-covid-19/Innreise%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf/_attachment/inline/0cc78b1f-87bb-4387-9f3f-4a7322a5d487:0d4c7d6d9c5768ea97b08530a10f789e3e66e8f3/Innreise%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf)
- For Business travellers arriving in Norway (9.november 2020): Read info-paper here:  
[https://www.helsedirektoratet.no/brosjyrer/informasjon-til-de-som-ankommer-norge-covid-19/Arbeidsreisende%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf/\\_attachment/inline/f118b9f0-84de-4e1a-a4be-155772d28dfb:096ce514707d001f43e985dc4a21be6cb2cc2089/Arbeidsreisende%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf](https://www.helsedirektoratet.no/brosjyrer/informasjon-til-de-som-ankommer-norge-covid-19/Arbeidsreisende%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf/_attachment/inline/f118b9f0-84de-4e1a-a4be-155772d28dfb:096ce514707d001f43e985dc4a21be6cb2cc2089/Arbeidsreisende%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf)

• **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**

Masks:

- Wearing a face mask is **mandatory** if you are over 12 years of age when:
  - You travel by public transport from the place of arrival in Norway to the place where you will be in quarantine
  - You leave Norway prior to completing your quarantine duty period and travel by public transport to your place of departure
  - The municipal doctor specifically assesses your situation while you are in transmission quarantine to travel by public transport in order to reach a suitable place of residence.
- The Government **recommends** that face masks are used in the following situations:
  - When you are infected or show symptoms of a COVID-19 infection and need to interrupt the isolation in order to travel to and from a health institution or for testing.



- When you have a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and are closer than one metre to other household members, given that your state of health allows for it.
- Alternatively, when you as a close contact of someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 wear a face mask when it is not possible for the patient to wear a face mask.
- Children and face masks:
  - The recommendations on wearing a face mask when travelling by public transport does not apply to children in 7th grade or younger (under 13 years).
  - Under no circumstances should a mask be worn by a child under the age of two years as this may prevent free breathing.
  - The recommendation to wear a face mask applies to the same type of situations for young people as for adults. The use of face masks is not required while at school where infection control measures are based on separate guidelines. Young people above the age of 12-13 years are recommended to wear a face mask in certain situations on the same basis as adults and can wear the same size face masks as adults.
- **Social distancing:**
  - The advice of at least one meter distance applies both indoors and outdoors, but not for people in the same household. Young people and adults who have been with friends and in other situations where there has not been a meter distance, should keep two meters distance to people in the risk group. The distance from face to face is most important. If you stand back to back, or one after the other as in a queue, there is less risk of infection. If you sit next to each other, it should be one meter from shoulder to shoulder. The one-meter advice has no end date and lasts until further notice.
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - The following should be tested:
    - Everyone with acute respiratory tract infection or other symptoms of COVID-19
    - Everyone who has been exposed to infection to COVID-19, either as a close contact or after travel to countries or regions with high incidence during the last 10 days.\*\* It is particularly important that new arrivals from Denmark are tested.
    - Other groups can be tested after assessment by a doctor.
    - Anyone who suspects that they have COVID-19 should have the opportunity to be tested

\*\*Children play a smaller role in transmission of COVID-19 than adults, so testing of children of primary school or childcare age without symptoms will therefore be of less significance. However, testing can be carried out if desired and in consultation with parents/guardians.

Additional information on who should be tested can be found here: <https://www.fhi.no/en/op/novel-coronavirus-facts-advice/testing-and-follow-up/test-criteria-for-coronavirus/>

#### • **Situation regarding tracing**

When a covid-19 case is confirmed, infection tracking starts as follows:

- Notification of the municipal doctor: The diagnostic laboratory and the requesting doctor for the proven covid-19 case notify the municipal doctor in the infected municipality's municipality of residence.
- Interview with index case: The municipal doctor follows up the case for personal infection control guidance, mapping of the source of infection and close contacts.
- Definition of close contacts: The municipal doctor assesses identified close contacts by type of contact.
- Conversation with close contacts: The municipal doctor follows up all close contacts, informs about the quarantine where relevant and the municipality's follow-up procedures.
- Follow-up of close contacts: The municipal doctor follows up and ensures that close contacts are encouraged to be tested (between day 3 and 7 after exposure, preferably on day 5), and that they notify the municipal doctor if they test positive or develop symptoms of covid-19.
- Assessment of extension of infection tracing: The municipal doctor continuously assesses the need for extension of infection tracing to several sections and municipalities based on information about probable exposure that is obtained from close contacts.
- Registration of data: The municipal doctor registers all cases and close contacts in a suitable tool.



- Summary and reporting: The municipal doctor keep track of the number of infected and close contacts during follow-up and reports relevant clusters and outbreaks to NIPH.
- **Obligations regarding quarantine**
  - Entry to Norway and quarantine rules (9 November 2020): Read info-paper here: [https://www.helsedirektoratet.no/brosjyrer/informasjon-til-de-som-ankommer-norge-covid-19/Innreise%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf/\\_attachment/inline/0cc78b1f-87bb-4387-9f3f-4a7322a5d487:0d4c7d6d9c5768ea97b08530a10f789e3e66e8f3/Innreise%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf](https://www.helsedirektoratet.no/brosjyrer/informasjon-til-de-som-ankommer-norge-covid-19/Innreise%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf/_attachment/inline/0cc78b1f-87bb-4387-9f3f-4a7322a5d487:0d4c7d6d9c5768ea97b08530a10f789e3e66e8f3/Innreise%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf)
  - Entry to Norway and quarantine rules for **Business travellers** (9.november 2020): Read info-paper here: [https://www.helsedirektoratet.no/brosjyrer/informasjon-til-de-som-ankommer-norge-covid-19/Arbeidsreisende%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf/\\_attachment/inline/f118b9f0-84de-4e1a-a4be-155772d28dfb:096ce514707d001f43e985dc4a21be6cb2cc2089/Arbeidsreisende%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf](https://www.helsedirektoratet.no/brosjyrer/informasjon-til-de-som-ankommer-norge-covid-19/Arbeidsreisende%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf/_attachment/inline/f118b9f0-84de-4e1a-a4be-155772d28dfb:096ce514707d001f43e985dc4a21be6cb2cc2089/Arbeidsreisende%20til%20Norge%20-%20engelsk.pdf)

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

### Tax related measures such as

- **Deferral of Tax payments (Corporate income tax, social contributions, etc)**
  - Norwegian tax measures overview: <https://www.skatteetaten.no/en/measures/#new-rules-concerning-deferred-payment-and-reduced-interest-rate>
- **Deferral of VAT payments**
  - Private owners can take advantage of a temporary scheme of deferred payment of wealth tax on the enterprise's wealth for the 2020 income year. The scheme applies to personal taxpayers who owns an enterprise with an accounting obligation that has negative net income for the 2020 income year, and that will have assessed wealth tax of at least NOK 30,000 in the 2020 income year related to the enterprise's wealth.
  - *Proposed instalment scheme from 1 January 2021:* It has been proposed that those who are granted deferred payment according to the temporary deferred payment scheme mentioned above, should be allowed to pay what they owe in instalments over a period of six months. The first instalment will fall due on 1 February 2021
- **Deferral of Fines/Interest on late tax payments**
  - For the time being, enforcement fines will not be issued for late submission of the tax return for self-employed persons and businesses.
- **Tax returns can be filed later**
  - Change in the corporate tax regulations so that companies that are lossmaking can re-allocated their loss in 2020 against taxed surplus in 2018 and 2019 (loss-carry back provision). (Still stands – announced in spring)
  - Change in the tax regulations so that owners of lossmaking companies can postpone payments of the wealth tax. This will reduce the need for firms to provide dividends to owners to cover the wealth tax. (Still stands – announced in spring)
  - The valuation discount increases from 25 to 35 percent for 2020 for:
    - shares, the share component of securities, equity certificates, shares in businesses assessed as partnerships
    - fixed assets, including commercial property
- **Temporary reduction in VAT- rate**
  - The low VAT rate for passenger transportation, accommodation, public broadcasting and entry to cinemas, sports events, amusement parks and adventure centres, is reduced from 12 percent to 6 percent for the payment period 1 April to and including 31 December 2020.

- [The interest rate on overdue payments is reduced to 6 percent](#) has been reduced to 6 percent for most tax and duty claims in the period from 10 June to 31 December 2020. The exceptions include withholding tax, deductible tax and compensation claims that will have a normal rate. The reduced interest rate will also apply to claims on which interest is calculated by the Norwegian National Collection Agency

### Subsidies such as

- **Non-sectoral state aid (grants)**
  - 5 billion NOK (proposed) for companies with 30% turnover loss or more, from September 2020 until and including February 2021 – split in three two-month periods. Covering up to 80% of their fixed, unavoidable costs, in a given period. Max. 80 million NOK per month per company.
- **Sectoral state aid (grants)**
  - Tourism: 2,8 billion NOK to support for companies with 30% loss of turnover – covering up to 80% of their fixed, unavoidable costs. September until December. One time payments. 250 million NOK will be for transition and innovation in the tourism sector, managed through Innovation Norway.
  - Aviation: Proposal for 1690 million NOK for purchasing of domestic flight routes that were previously run operated on a commercial basis. Air passenger tax will be abolished throughout 2020.
  - Conference and event sector: 300 million NOK for large, open events (e.g. festivals).
  - Health sector: The government proposes about NOK 1 billion for the health sector. Of this, NOK 771 million is proposed for a national emergency stockpile for infection control equipment, NOK 110 million for medicines for migraines and NOK 80 million for practice compensation for GPs.

### Loans/guarantees /Payment suspension such as additional loans

- The Government Bond Fund was re-established in March 2020 with 50 billion NOK to aid liquidity of mostly large firms.
- **State guarantees on loans:**
  - The state guarantees 90 per cent of the amount in new bank loans to companies facing an acute liquidity crisis resulting from the corona pandemic. Prolonged until June 2021.
  - 20 billion NOK through GIEKfund for reinsurance of short-term credit insurances – for all sectors. ([source](#))
- **Rescheduling loan payments with state intervention**
  - Possibility of one-year repayment postponement for SMEs through Innovation Norway
- **State-backed loans**
  - Interest rate reduction on loans for SMEs through Innovation Norway

### Labour market and social policy measures such as:

- **Subsidy for wages (employees)**
  - The first round of wage support was passed by the Parliament in June and applied to the months of July and August. The precondition for receiving support was that the employee was laid off as of 28 May 2020 and returned to work at the beginning of the month for which support is provided.
  - Round two will apply for October, November, and December. The prerequisite for receiving support is that the employee was laid off as of 31 August 2020 and will be brought back to work at the beginning of the month for which support is provided.

- The scheme applies to companies that have more than a 10 per cent drop in turnover, as well as to non-profit organizations, associations, and foundations without acquisitions for purposes that take back their own layoffs.
- Enterprises can receive up to NOK 15,000 a month in support for each laid-off person who is taken back to work. The maximum subsidy is NOK 80 million per enterprise/month.
- The scheme includes all employees, including apprentices. It applies to both wholly and partly laid-off workers, provided that the employee is taken back in at least as high a fraction of positions as before redundancy.
- **Subsidy for wages (self-employed)**
  - Basis for calculation for self-employed persons: The parties have agreed on a scheme that will provide compensation corresponding to 80 per cent of the average income over the past three years. The compensation has an upper limit of 6G. A person with an average income of NOK 600,000 or higher will thus receive 80 per cent of NOK 600,000. This corresponds to 480,000 kroner. The compensation can be reduced against other income during the benefit period. The compensation basis for the self-employed is calculated generally based on business income from and including 2017.
- **Government to assume part/entire cost of sick leave**
  - Employers should only pay sick pay for the first three days of corona-related sick leave. New rules apply from 16 March. Freelancers and the self-employed will also receive sickness benefits from the authorities from the fourth day. The social security authorities are given the opportunity to deviate from the requirement for a doctor's certificate for sickness benefits.
- **Subsidy for other costs (e.g. mortgage)**
  - No. However, the government has suspended certain rules, and several banks are providing deductions.
- **Extending social benefits to self-employed**
  - The temporary scheme for the self-employed and freelancers, which will compensate for loss of income because of the corona pandemic, has been extended until the end of 2020. Compensation is provided at a rate of 60 per cent for November and December, and the rate for deduction for income as self-employed Businesses and freelancers are also reduced to 60 per cent at the same time.
- **Help for apprentices**
  - Solution on 03.04.2020: The parliament has adopted a temporary scheme that ensures that apprentices at the lowest rates receive 100% compensation if they lose their apprenticeship or are laid off. The apprentices receive compensation of 100 per cent of salary up to NOK 12,482 per month, and 62.4 per cent of salary above this, up to NOK 49,929. The compensation is calculated on the basis of the salary the apprentice had upon dismissal or termination of the apprenticeship.
  - Laid off or dismissed apprentices can receive unemployment benefits at the same time as theory lessons. We have received written feedback from NAV on 10.06.2020 that it is accepted in the unemployment benefit scheme that apprentices who become unemployed or laid off at the apprenticeship company can continue with theory teaching. NAV, together with the Vocational Training Board and the school authorities, has a joint responsibility to ensure that laid-off or dismissed apprentices complete their education.
  - According to Nav, the apprentice is also exempted from the condition of being a real jobseeker and from the condition of not participating in education or training. In this way, it will be ensured that the situation related to the pandemic does not mean that apprentices interrupt the apprenticeship they are in the process of doing.
- **Help for students**

- Students can apply for additional loans. Students who can confirm by self-declaration that they have had a decrease in income due to the corona situation, can apply for an additional loan. The additional loan is NOK 26,000 for university students and NOK 13,000 for pupils. Students who can document that they have lost income due to the corona situation will later receive NOK 8,000 of this additional loan as a scholarship.
- Everyone who can get the additional loan will be notified. It is also not possible to apply until the rules are ready
- **Extra allowance for workers taking care for sick relatives or taking care of children**
  - The government has extended the temporary care allowance framework until June 2021. The quotas will also be doubled in 2021. A family will therefore be entitled to a minimum of 40 days of care allowance in 2021, compared to the 20 days they receive under normal circumstances. The allowance can be shared and transferred between parents.
  - If a child is kept home despite his/her school or nursery still being open, a parent must provide a medical certification stating either the child or another family member is at an increased infection risk.
- **Greater flexibility in laying off workers**
  - Furlough scheme: The government has discontinued its regime of providing economic compensation to workers for a period of 18 days after the end of their pay period. As of September 1., the pay period to be covered by the employer was extended to 10 days. According to the government this rendered the compensation superfluous. From November 1. the redundancy period is extended to 52 weeks.
  - The government has also introduced a new and temporary wage support scheme for companies to take their own laid-off workers back to work. The company receives a cash subsidy per employee which is taken back from redundancy, so that people return to work faster.
- **Extra unemployment benefits**
  - The temporary increase in unemployment benefits has been extended from January 2021 until March 2021. The government has also allowed for advances of the unemployment benefits, to support those who lost their income whilst their application is processed.
- **Suspension of pension payments**
  - Laid off workers still have access to private pension schemes. The access applies to employers in the private sector who have schemes where employees must in principle be notified of the pension scheme if they are laid off because of operational restrictions, etc. In this case, the employer can choose whether the laid-off employees are still to be covered by the pension scheme's insurance coverage. Layoffs who are not allowed to continue their insurance coverage are entitled to take out their own individual insurance (continuation insurance). The employees who remain members of the pension scheme benefit from the fact that no pension capital certificate is issued, and that the employer thus pays for the administration and management of the employees' pension funds.
- **Double salary for people in isolation or in risk of contagion:**
  - On the contrary, those who do not abide by the government's travel advice and are quarantined upon their return may be refused illness benefits.

#### **Financial sector measures (such as easing in capital requirements)**

- **Easing of capital requirements and state guarantees** in connection with specific loans granted struggling businesses.

#### **Other measures**

- Some recommendations to speed up payments etc.

## Poland

Date: 22 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

Restrictions as of 22 November 2020

- From 28 November, commercial malls will be opened and able to operate under the highest sanitary regime;
- The schools will remain closed until 23-24 December, but then the winter holidays will be accumulated in one period between 3 and 18 January;
- "After 18 January, we may have a situation, where we return to the red zone, in which we would have to survive until a vaccine is available" - said Prime Minister calling repeatedly for social discipline.
- Events organised at home, including Christmas and New Year's Eve, with the participation of max. 5 people. This limit does not apply to people who live together;
- "If the number of cases falls below 19,000 on average, we anticipate going back to the red zone, less than 10,000 we may go back to the yellow zone and less than 4,000 we may go back to the green zone," said the Health Minister;
- The government has announced the adoption of a whole package of regulations in case of return to the red, yellow and green zones, specifying their meaning;
- The Deputy Minister responsible for the economy announced that new solutions for entrepreneurs, such as long-term investment loans, are being prepared - "We are trying to convince the European Commission to agree that part of the instalments would be covered by the Polish Development Fund".
- Social dialogue consultations are under way to release an additional Sunday in December from the trade ban, possibly an additional Sunday with trade allowed would be 6 December.

Restrictions as of 10 November 2020

- **No confinement**
- **No curfew**
- **Regime on telework**
  - Telework highly recommended, whenever possible.
- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - Industries like factories continue their work as usual.
- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - HAIR AND BEAUTY SALONS, TATTOO PARLORS. All over the country, beauty salons, tattoo parlors, hairdressers and beauticians operate under a sanitary regime. Workstations must be at least 1.5 m apart, unless they are separated by a partition of at least 2 m in height from the floor surface. The guidelines for beauty salons include, among other things: the use of disposable towels whenever it is possible; appointments must be booked by phone or online on beforehand. Note! Only the staff and customers are allowed in the place of operation of such establishments (max. 1 person per 1 workstation, except for the staff), and if the customer requires care, their guardian is also allowed in.
  - GYMS, FITNESS CLUBS AND CENTRES, SWIMMING POOLS AND AQUAPARKS. The operation of swimming pools, aquaparks, gyms, fitness clubs and centers is suspended throughout the country, except for those which: operate in entities performing therapeutic activities intended for patients, are intended for people practicing sports as part of sports competition, sports activities or events are intended for students and pupils – as part of classes at university or school.

- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - GASTRONOMY. Stationary business activity in restaurants is forbidden. It is only possible to provide services consisting in preparing and serving food for take-away and delivery.
  - Hotel restaurants. It is allowed to run restaurants in hotels, but only for hotel guests staying for at least one hotel night. Meals shall be served only to the table and under a sanitary regime (with the customers and staff covering their mouth and nose, keeping a distance, etc.). Note! Guests may occupy every second table. The distance between the tables must be at least 1.5 m, unless there is a partition of at least 1 m in height between the tables, counting from the table surface.
  - HOTELS. The operation of hotels is currently permitted, except for the activity of clubs and discos and places intended for dancing. However, it is permitted for potential visitors to stay at the hotel only if it is business trip. The regulations concerning congresses, gastronomy and cultural or sporting activities – if provided at the hotel – apply. Swimming pools, fitness centers and gyms – only for hotel guests staying at the hotel for at least one hotel day.
- **Restrictions for public events**
  - CULTURAL EVENTS – RESTRICTIONS. The number of audience members at cultural events may not exceed 25% of the particular venue's capacity, with every fourth seat made available, alternating every row. If there are no designated seats for the audience, or the event is taking place in open air – a distance of 1.5 meters must be maintained and your mouth and nose must be covered. The obligation of making every fourth seat available does not apply to:
    - people in the audience with children under 13 years of age;
    - people in the audience accompanied by a disabled person, person with determined degree of disability, person holding a disability degree certificate, or a person who cannot move on their own for health-related reasons;
    - people living in or running the same household;
  - GATHERINGS AND MEETINGS. Public gatherings may be attended by no more than 5 persons. Participants are obliged to cover their mouths and noses and maintain a distance of 1.5 meters from each other. In addition, gatherings may not be organised less than 100 m apart. It is prohibited to organise meetings and parties, regardless of their nature – except for parties and meetings organised at private homes and attended by up to 20 persons.
  - WEDDINGS, COMMUNIONS, FUNERAL RECEPTIONS AND OTHER CELEBRATIONS are prohibited.
  - NIGHT CLUBS, DISCOS AND OTHER PLACES FOR DANCING - the activity of such venues is prohibited in the entire country, except for sports dance clubs.
  - FAIRS, EXHIBITIONS, CONGRESSES AND CONFERENCES may be held only online.
  - OPEN-AIR TRAINING AND SPORTS COMPETITIONS. Persons practicing sports as part of sports competition are exempt from the obligation to cover their mouth and nose. Persons practicing sports for recreation are not exempt from this obligation, unless, for example, they run in forests, parks, green areas, botanical or historical gardens, family allotment gardens and beaches.
  - COMPETITIONS AND SPORTS EVENTS. All over the country, sports competitions, classes and events are organised without the participation of the public. Sports classes, events and competitions (excluding golf courses, tennis courts, stables, stud farms and horse racing tracks, water and air sports infrastructure, which are not limited in terms of the maximum number of people allowed) may be attended by no more than 250 participants at the same time, not including the people organising the event.
- **Regime for commerce**
  - SHOPPING CENTERS AND LARGE-SCALE RETAIL FACILITIES. In the entire country, restrictions concerning the activity of malls and shopping centres have been lifted. Keep in mind, however, that you are still obliged to wear gloves or disinfect your hands as well as cover your mouth and nose.
  - NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS IN SHOPS, MARKETS AND POST OFFICES. There is a limit concerning the number of people allowed in commercial establishments, markets or post offices. The restrictions in shops depend on their size. For stores with a surface area of up to 100 m<sup>2</sup> - 5 people per 1 cash register, above 100 m<sup>2</sup> - 1 person per 15 m<sup>2</sup>.
  - SENIOR HOURS. From Monday to Friday, from 10:00 to 12:00, only persons over 60 years of age are allowed in shops, drugstores, pharmacies and post offices.



- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - EDUCATION. Students of grades 4 – 6 of elementary schools, all secondary school grades, continuing education facilities, training centres will be taught remotely. The new rules concerning the operation of schools and education facilities will be effective until Sunday, 8 November 2020. Important! Kindergartens and grades 1 – 3 of elementary schools will operate without changes.
  - NURSERIES AND KINDERGARTENS. Children of working parents can attend nurseries and kindergartens. Starting from 6 May, entities running such facilities have been allowed to open them, bearing in mind the guidelines of the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Family, Work and Social Policy. Important! Due to the epidemiological situation, entities in charge of these facilities may limit the number of children in kindergarten groups or the number of children at nurseries. **Important!** Based on the current general provisions, bodies of local self-governments are allowed to close all nurseries and kindergartens in their area.
- **Restrictions to travel (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)**
  - TRAVEL. It is allowed to travel within country without restrictions.
  - BORDERS OF POLAND. On 13 June 2020, Poland resumed border traffic within the framework of internal borders of the EU. It means that traveling and crossing the internal borders of the EU is permitted. Travelers have regained their right to freely enter, leave or transit through the territory of the Republic of Poland. Quarantine is not required. One should consider the restrictions which are in force in a neighbouring country while planning a trip abroad. The restrictions pertain to foreigners crossing the external border of the EU.
  - MOVEMENT OF PERSONS
    - Children and adolescents under 16. From Monday to Friday, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., children under 16 must be under the care of a parent or carer while moving from one place to another. The rule does not apply to children traveling to school or returning home from school, or on weekends.
    - Seniors. Seniors stay at home, please! We urge seniors, particularly persons above the age of 70, to limit their movement at all times except for the following circumstances: performance of professional activities, taking care of essential matters associated with daily life, performance or participation in activities related to a religious worship, including religious ceremonies.
    - Obligations regarding masks and social distancing
  - 1.5 METER – MINIMUM DISTANCE BETWEEN PEDESTRIANS- It is mandatory that a distance of least 1.5 meters be maintained between pedestrians. The following persons are exempt from the restriction:
    - parents with children who require care (younger than 13),
    - persons who live in one household or run a household together,
    - disabled persons, persons incapable of moving on their own, persons with a special educational needs statement and their caregivers.
  - COVERING MOUTH AND NOSE IN PUBLIC PLACES. It is mandatory to cover your mouth and nose in such places as:
    - on streets, roads and in town squares, within cemeteries, promenades, boulevards, vehicle parking areas, forest car parks,
    - in buses, trams and trains,
    - in shops, malls, banks, markets and post offices
    - in cinemas and theatres,
    - at physician's offices, in outpatient clinics and hospitals, in massage and tattoo parlours
    - in churches, at schools and universities,
    - In government offices (when going there to take care of certain matters) and other civic centres.
    - Where covering mouth and nose is not obligatory? In forests, parks, within green spaces, in botanical gardens, historic gardens, family allotment gardens and at the beach.
    - Important! Exemption from the obligation to cover the mouth and nose is limited only to persons who have a medical certificate or a document confirming: a pervasive



developmental disorder, a mental disorder, moderate, severe or profound intellectual disability, difficulties in uncovering the mouth or nose on their own.

- Covering the mouth and nose in public spaces is obligatory in the entire country.

- **Situation regarding testing**

- 50-60.000 tests per day. Experts say that Poland should do around 80-100.000 per day. Regarding COVID test system in Poland – there is no any central governance system, it depends on hospitals and employers. If you have symptoms that qualify you for the coronavirus test, your GP will refer you to the test. Test costs (only in this case) are covered by the state.
- However, there are private companies/laboratories doing COVID test on demand as well. The cost of that is around 500 PLN (around 110 eur) if at laboratory and around 800 PLN (around 175 eur) if you test at home. One of such companies is <https://warsawgenomics.pl/en/#/>. The tests used are RT-PCR and they are recognised by state official authorities. However, there are no clear provisions regarding testing and quarantine - if you were tested for coronavirus during quarantine and the result is negative, the state sanitary inspector may (but doesn't have to) release you from quarantine earlier.

- **Situation regarding tracing**

- It is possible to install government application enabling tracing potential contacts with COVID.

- **Obligations regarding quarantine**

- This restriction applies to persons who:
  - are crossing the border of the Republic of Poland which constitutes the external border of the EU\*,
  - had direct contact with persons infected (or potentially infected) with the coronavirus,
  - live together with a person who is placed in quarantine
- The following persons are exempt from quarantine after crossing the Polish borders:
  - citizens of Member States of the European Union, Member States of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) – Parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area or the Swiss Confederation and their spouses and children;
  - passengers of an aircraft, as defined in Art. 2 item 1 of the Act of 3 July 2002 – Aviation Law, making an international flight from an airport located within a country not subject to air traffic bans specified in provisions issued under Art. 119 para. 2 of the Act of 3 July 2002 – Aviation Law, except for passengers of an aircraft making an international flight from an airport located within the Republic of Belarus or Ukraine.
- Obligatory quarantine does not apply to all students, postgraduate students and specialist education students studying in Poland, as well as all doctoral students and researchers carrying out academic activities in our country. Foreigners who are spouses or children of Polish citizens or remain under their constant care are also not subject to obligatory quarantine.
- *Effective 2 September 2020, there are new rules concerning:*
  - quarantine (confinement of a healthy individual due to exposure to infection);
  - isolation (confinement of a person with a positive result of the first diagnostic test for SARS-CoV-2).

Home isolation lasts for 10 days, provided that the patient does not exhibit symptoms of COVID-19. Should coronavirus symptoms appear during isolation, a primary healthcare physician orders prolongation of the period of isolation, which cannot end earlier than 13 days after the symptoms have appeared. In case of isolation in hospitals and isolation wards, the end of the period of isolation is decided by the physician responsible for the patient but cannot come earlier than 13 days after the symptoms have appeared, wherein the last three days must be symptom-free. Quarantine imposed by sanitary inspection and on persons crossing the border has been shortened to 10 days, and quarantined symptom-free persons are no longer tested. During this time: you may not leave your home, you may not walk your dog, go shopping or go visit a physician, if a person in quarantine is in close contact with other persons at home, they must also be quarantined, should you experience symptoms of the disease (feeling unwell, fever, coughing, shortness of breath), you must report this by phone to the sanitary and epidemiological station. **Important!** As part of their regular patrols, police officers visit

quarantined persons and make sure that they are staying at their place of residence. Regulations provide for a fine of up to PLN 30 thousand for breaking the quarantine.

- **Other measures**

- **PUBLIC TRANSPORT.** Public transport vehicles may be boarded by a limited number of persons. In the entire country, the number of persons who can board a public transport vehicle at the same time may not exceed: 50% of the seating capacity, or 30% of the combined seating and standing capacity, leaving at least 50% of seats in the vehicle unoccupied. These limits do not apply to vehicles for the transport of disabled passengers.

More information, regarding borders and international traffic here:

<https://www.gov.pl/web/coronavirus/temporary-limitations>

## **2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government**

In addition, to the anti-crisis shields already provided in the spring 2020, the government at the end of October issued anti-crisis shield for particular sectors: food, entertainment, fitness and retail. As part of the Industry Shield, entrepreneurs can count on support instruments, such as:

- exemption from social security contribution (for November) - in case of revenue in XI lower by 40% year-on-year;
- closure benefit (for November) - in case of gain in revenue in X or XI lower by 40% year-on-year;
- small subsidy of 5 thousand PLN - in case of gain in revenue in X or XI lower by 40% year-on-year;

Employers in the industries most affected by the pandemic will have deferred payment of the PIT (income tax) advances collected from their employees. The government will postpone payment of advance payments for October, November and December by six months. As a result, in these three key months, 300 million PLN will remain in companies' accounts.

In addition, the government will extend the possibility of taking advantage of already existing forms of aid. Companies which did not meet the conditions in the spring, and only now have felt the deterioration of the economic situation for the first time, can benefit from subsidies for salaries, micro-loans and closure benefit. They have time to apply until 30 June 2021.

The government estimates that 200 000 companies with over 370 000 employees will benefit from the new instruments. The cost of the support will be over 1.8 billion PLN.

## Portugal

Date: 10 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

#### • **Regime on confinement**

- No mandatory confinement was adopted, although there was a civic duty to stay at home since 23 October 2020. In the high-risk municipalities, circulation has been allowed only in the following situations:
  - acquisition of goods and services;
  - performance of professional activities;
  - health reasons;
  - assistance to vulnerable persons;
  - attendance at school;
  - enjoying moments in the open air;
  - trips to events and access to cultural facilities;
  - practice of physical activity in the open air;
  - pets' walking;
  - trips necessary to leave the national continental territory;
  - other activities duly justified or authorized.

#### • **Regime on curfew**

- As of 9 November 2020, in the high-risk municipalities, mandatory curfew will be adopted on weekdays from 11 pm and 5 am, and at weekends from 1 pm to 5 am.

#### • **Regime on telework**

- From November 4, there has been an obligation to adopt regime on telework, regardless of the employment relationship, whenever the functions in question allow unless there is a strong impediment of the employee;

#### • **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**

- From November 4, companies with workplaces with 50 or more workers have to apply an exceptional and transitional work reorganization framework, in all high-risk municipalities. It involves a mismatch of entrance and exit of workers in order to assure the Directorate-General of Health (DGS) rules are followed.

#### • **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**

- From October 23, all service provision establishments, as well as those in commercial complexes, have to be closed until 10 pm;

#### • **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafes**

- Restaurants, cafes, pastries, and terraces must have a minimum distance of 1.5m between the seats to be occupied. Since November 4, groups of more than 6 people cannot be admitted, except if the persons belong to the same household. Restaurants must close until 1 am, and in high-risk municipalities, restaurants must close until 10:30 pm. Restaurant establishments exclusive to home delivery services may close until 1 am. As of 9<sup>th</sup> November, these measures change according to the mandatory curfew.

#### • **Restrictions for public events**

- From September 15, agglomerations were limited to 10 persons; As of 4<sup>th</sup> November, it was adopted a prohibition on having celebrations and other events with more than five people, unless they belong to the same household. Also, fairs and markets had to present a contingency plan and operate in accordance with the guidelines of municipal councils. Religious ceremonies had to start to follow the rules of capacity reduction, social distancing, and the mandatory use of a mask.

- **Regime for commerce**
  - Commercial establishments have a maximum indicative capacity of 0.05 persons per square meter. As of 15<sup>th</sup> September, commercial establishments must close between 8 pm and 11 pm, in accordance with the provisions of the city hall of the geographical area. In municipalities considered to be at high-risk, establishments must close by 10 pm.
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - As of 15<sup>th</sup> September, there has been a limitation of groups of 4 persons in restaurants, cafes, or pastries nearby schools. Contingency plans in every nursery, kindergartens, schools, universities; distribution of masks, alcohol, among others. Obligatory use of a mask for children from the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of studies or above. Prohibition in the universities of academic celebrations and activities of a non-scientific character.
- **Restrictions to travel (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)**
  - Air travel to and from Portugal is allowed to:
    - European Union countries;
    - Schengen Associated Countries - Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland – and the United Kingdom;
    - Australia, China (including Hong Kong and Macao), South Korea, Japan, New Zealand, Rwanda, Singapore, Thailand and Uruguay.
  - It is not necessary to present the COVID-19 Test on these flights unless the destinations are the archipelagos of Madeira or the Azores. Flights between Portugal and other destinations will only be permitted for essential travel. In this case, passengers must present a negative test to COVID-19, carried out within 72 hours before departure time. This test is not asked in Portugal for those who are in transit and do not have to leave the airport facilities.
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
  - Five rules policy: physical distancing; frequent handwashing; obligatory use of masks, respiratory etiquette, and download of the tracing app (App Stayaway Covid). Mandatory use of a mask in public transport, in commercial areas, and in the access or when remaining in public spaces in which social distancing cannot be applied.
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - According to the DGS until 4 November 2020, on average 280 thousand tests per 1 million inhabitants were conducted. As of 9 November 2020, there is the possibility to request for negative tests to Covid-19 when accessing: Health establishments, structural residences, education establishments, when leaving or entering the country by aerial or maritime way, and in prison establishments.
- **Situation regarding tracing**
  - App Stayaway COVID is an application endorsed, to be downloaded voluntarily, by the government, which has already more than 2 million downloads. Although it was made available by 1 September, until 19 October 2020, only 323 individuals inserted the code that reveals the positivity to covid-19, so there have been some doubts about its efficacy.
  - As of 9<sup>th</sup> November, the government might mobilize human resources to join the tracing effort.
- **Obligations regarding quarantine**
  - Mandatory confinement, besides the aforementioned curfew measures from November 9, only for the following individuals:
    - Covid-19 infected;
    - Others to whom this measure has been determined by the DGS or health professionals.
- **Other measures**
  - Public transports are limited to 2/3 of the capacity.
  - As of 15<sup>th</sup> September, the sale of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in service areas or gas stations and, from 8 pm, in shops including supermarkets and hypermarkets. The

consumption of alcoholic beverages in open-air spaces and public pathways is forbidden unless it is integrated into meal service.

- Museums, monuments, and cultural spaces have reopened with specific circulation measures and social distance. Cinemas, theatres, auditoriums, and showrooms must have marked seats, reduced capacity, and must keep a physical distance. The use of a face mask is mandatory.

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

### Tax related measures

- **Reporting period for tax losses:** a new specific and transitory framework with the following rules:
  - Disregard the years 2020 and 2021 for the purposes of counting the term for using tax losses in force on January 1, 2020;
  - In relation to tax losses for 2020 and 2021, change for companies that have a reporting period from 5 to 10 years, as well as extend the deduction limit from 70% to 80% for all companies when these 10 points percentages are at stake in tax losses in 2020 and 2021;
- **Extraordinary investment tax credit:** it is proposed to reinstate the Extraordinary Investment Tax Credit, creating for investment expenses made in the second half of 2020 and in the first half of 2021, a deduction from the collection of corporate income tax, corresponding to 20% of the investment expenses up to a limit of 5 million euros, to be used for a maximum period of 5 years, with the obligation to maintain jobs during the period of use of the tax credit, with a minimum of three years.
- **Foster SME mergers and acquisitions:**
  - In the concentrations of SMEs held in 2020, disregard the limit for the use of tax losses by the incorporating company (by reference to the assets of the companies involved in the operation), with the rule of non-distribution of profits, for 3 years, dispensing, during the same period, the application of state surcharges (when applicable);
  - Consider the transfer of tax losses in the acquisition of shareholdings of SMEs that, in 2020, have been considered as “companies in difficulty”, for the use of these tax losses by the acquiring company, with the rule of non-distribution of profits and the commitment to maintenance of jobs for 3 years.

### Subsidies

- **Company capitalization fund** (to be created)
  - Creation of a capital and quasi-public capital fund (Fund), to be managed by Banco de Fomento, to participate in capitalization operations of viable companies with high growth potential, in strategic sectors and oriented towards external markets, with public intervention temporary and preferential co-investment mechanisms.
  - Financing: mainly through European funds and financing within the framework of crisis response instruments through the Recovery Fund (Solvency Support Facility) and the EIB (Pan-European Guarantee Fund).
- **Sale and Lease Back**
  - It is proposed to launch calls in the global amount of 60M €, within real estate investment funds managed by Turismo Fundo-SGOIC SA, for Sale and Lease Back operations, with an obligation to invest in modernization and energy efficiency or circular economy, of which 40 M € goes to tourism (of which 50% goes to low density territories) and 20 M € goes to industry.
- **Apoiar.PT** (Approved from November 5)
  - Launch, operation and monitoring of support for the Apoiar.PT treasury, in the form of a non-repayable subsidy, aimed at SMEs operating in sectors particularly affected by the

pandemic, in the global amount of 750M €. This support will be financed by Turismo de Portugal and IAPMEI (Agência para a Competitividade e Inovação).

### Loans/guarantees /Payment suspension

- **Credit lines** (Expected)
  - reinforcement of the volume of credit lines with state guarantee until the end of the year by 6,800M €, for SMEs and mid-caps and revision of the model of distribution of credit lines with public guarantee, in order to ensure the quickest availability of funds to companies.
- **Credit insurance** (in phase of evaluation)
  - requires adjustment of the respective national legal framework and will still have to comply with the European Union rules on state aid, thus requiring authorization from the European Commission.
  - Recipients: all companies
  - Amount: 2000M € of guarantees for public coverage
- **Credit lines with a public guarantee from 5 November 2020** (approved)
  - The Council of Ministers approved the launch, operation and monitoring of a credit line, with the possibility of 20% of the credit granted being converted into non-repayable loans in case of maintenance of jobs, financed by the BPF (Banco Português de Fomento):
  - Aimed at industrial companies with a strong export tendency, regardless of their size, in the global amount of 750M €.
  - Aimed at SMEs that operate in sectors supporting cultural and festive events in the global amount of 50M €.

### Labour market and social policy measures

- **Support for employment in the recovery**
  - The simplified lay-off regime which applied the first months of the crisis covered around 100,000 companies and 800,000 workers. It was replaced by new measures:
    - Companies that remain closed as determined by the Government continue to be able to benefit from the simplified lay-off regime;
    - The simplified lay-off, in the model currently in force, is extended until the end of July;
    - Companies that have a turnover drop of 25% or more (previously 40% or more but changed from October 13) can benefit, between August and December 2020, from a mechanism to support the progressive recovery;
  - Companies that have benefited from the simplified lay-off regime can now benefit from an extraordinary incentive to normalize business activity, choosing one of two modalities: 1 SMN one-off or 2 SMN over 6 months, with conditionalities regarding the prohibition on dismissals and the extinction of jobs.
- **ATIVAR.PT Support for employment, especially for new unemployed**
  - The Program includes active policy programs for specific sectors and audiences. Overall information:
    - Target group: unemployed, with a special focus on new unemployed and young people
    - Target: cover 50,000 new unemployed and maintain coverage rate for active policy measures close to 20% between 2020 and 2021
    - Amount: budget increase of EUR 106 million IEFP, I. P.
    - Funding: ESF
- **ATIVAR.PT Professional Training**
  - Review and reinforcement of responses to training and requalification programs for the unemployed. Specific training programs for emerging areas - digital economy; energy and climate change; social sector.
- **ADAPTAR 2.0**



- Adaptation and modernization of commercial establishments, modernizing and adapting them in the current context.
  - Recipients: micro-enterprises in the secondary and tertiary sectors
  - Amount: 50 / 50M € (2020-21)
  - Financing: Community funds
- **«PMECrescer +»: SME acceleration program**
  - One of the great difficulties of our productive fabric is the inability to grow, to gain scale. Program centered on mature (> 5 years) and viable companies, in strategic or systemic sectors, lasting 1 year, providing the company with the necessary skills to develop and enhance its brand, adapt to regulatory requirements, direct growth to markets leverage their added value, find partners and financing, etc. It focuses on consulting, training, networking (supplier networks, integration in value chains, external partners, etc.)
  - Target group: SME
  - Amount: 20 M €
  - Funding: ERDF
- **Strengthening the local production capacity of innovative and strategic equipment**
  - Support business projects and networks of companies and technological and research and development (R&D) centers for the insertion of the national productive fabric in value chains, namely in European networks of products and services with higher added value.
  - Greater integration between the design, production and distribution chains means blurring the boundaries of services and manufacturing, allowing for a productive specialization based on rapid response with sophisticated integrated logistics, especially in areas where shortening of the chains may be a factor of strategic autonomy.
  - Defining a focus on attracting foreign investment to densify production chains and engineering centers, in order to obtain production of basic materials, mechanical and electronic equipment, sensors, medicines and other medical products and devices, food products, associated technologies to energy and ecological changes, in order to improve the integration of our companies in the chains of European strategic autonomy.
  - Amount: € 30 M (2020) / € 50 M (2021)
  - Funding: PT2020 (2020) / OE + PT2020 (2021)

## Regulatory changes

- **Bank moratorium**
  - The main guidelines are:
    - Extension of the current bank moratorium until March 31, 2021;
    - Enlargement of beneficiaries, including emigrants
    - New eligibility factors related to loss of income that make it possible to reach a greater number of people with temporary liquidity restrictions;
    - Expansion of the moratorium to all mortgage credit contracts, to consumer credit for education.
    - In addition to the aforementioned changes, the review will include a mechanism for the inclusion of individuals who have benefited from private moratoriums and who, as a result of the changes, become eligible for adherence to the public moratorium.
    - Recipients: natural persons, non-financial companies, sole proprietors, private institutions of social solidarity, non-profit associations and other entities of the social economy

## Financial sector measures

- **Financing of SMEs in the capital market** (To be created)
  - special vehicle whose purpose to acquire debt issued by SMEs and to place that debt on the capital market, through the issuance of bonds, with the possibility of associating Mutual Guarantee.
- **«Bolsa de Valor»: Program to facilitate the purchase and sale of companies**



- a new platform to facilitate the purchase and sale of companies, promoting the meeting of different parties and ensuring transparent, standardized information and financing solutions.

#### **Other measures**

- **COVID Innovation/COVID R&D**

- Launch of Productive Innovation and RTD notices worth 220 M € (of which about 30% are allocated to the interior territories), to support companies that redirected their production to current needs (gowns, masks, gels, visors and other types) personal protective equipment, hospital equipment, including ventilators, medicines, diagnostics and medical devices), but also for the scientific system and for supporting research (treatments, vaccines, tests) in the area of COVID-19. Financing of investment projects with 80% non-refundable reference rates, with increased support for companies that complete the project within 2 months, and with retroactive support to anyone who has been working on these new needs since February. Higher rates in R&D projects until full financing of the total eligible costs. Projects are analyzed in 10 days, after the submission date.
- Recipients: Companies / R&D Units; Amount: 220 M € ; Funding: ERDF

- **Digital Commerce**

- Creation of incentives for the digital transition of the SME business model (in particular of micro and small companies), through the promotion of electronic commerce, materialized in the support to the adhesion to already existing platforms, to the reformulation of the websites - as long as they have integration with the logistics chain or coupled reservation systems -, and the design of projects by business or commercial associations, which are also associated with decarbonized logistics solutions. It is intended to support SMEs, as long as integration into logistics and distribution solutions or reservation systems is ensured.
- Recipients: Commerce SMEs; Amount: 40M €; Number of Companies Covered: approximately 10,000 companies and 25 joint projects, with the possibility of expansion; Financing: Community funds

## Romania

Date: 27 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of COVID-19

- **Regime on confinement (if any)**
  - Confinement for persons tested as positive or direct contacts as per the case definition (living in the same household, having direct physical contact or being at less than 2 m for at least 15 minutes): **14 days**. Lockdown can be imposed in those localities with high rates of infection, the decision rests upon the local authorities.
- **Regime on curfew (if any)**
  - Curfew is in force from 23:00 until 05:00, with exceptions related to work, urgent medical care, childcare or elderly assistance. Shops can function only between 5:00 and 21:00, except for gas stations, pharmacies, home delivery services.
- **Regime on telework**
  - Telework is mandatory during the whole period of alert (OUG 192), where the activity allows it. In those situations where telework is not possible, employers having more than 50 employees have the obligation to re-organize the working hours as to allow a difference of at least two hours between groups of employees. Wearing a mask is mandatory also in all enclosed spaces, including at work.
- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - There are no country-wide restrictions for the functioning of hotels. Restaurants and cafés are allowed to function inside at max. 50% capacity if infection rate in the locality is at most 1,5/1000 inhabitants during the last 14 days, at max. 30% capacity if the infection rate is higher than 1,5 but lower than 3/1000 inhabitants. They can function only between 06:00 and 23:00. If the infection rate is higher than 3/1000 inhabitants, restaurants and cafés cannot function and those in hotels can only serve people who are accommodated there. Takeaway services are permitted in all scenarios.
  - Restaurants and cafés are permitted to operate outside buildings, in open air (the space should have at most one wall) and are obliged to maintain a distance of at least 2 m between tables. A max. of 6 persons can be seated at a table, if they are from different families.
  - Bars and clubs are closed.
- **Restrictions for public events**
  - Cinemas and concert/show halls can function at max. 50% capacity if the infection rate during the last 14 days is at most 1,5/1000 inhabitants, at max. 30% capacity if the infection rate is higher than 1,5 but at most 3/1000. Activities in these venues are prohibited if the infection rate is higher than 3/1000.
  - Drive-in shows, shows, concerts and public festivals in open air are allowed under certain conditions only if the infection rate is at most 1,5/1000.
  - Religious activity is allowed inside or outside places of worship, in line with sanitary measures imposed (physical distance, mask). Pilgrimages can be attended only by inhabitants of the locality where it takes place.
- **Regime for commerce**
  - Shops can function between 05:00 and 21:00, regardless whether they sell essential or non-essential items.
  - Markets and fairs organized in enclosed spaces are prohibited. Food markets organized in open air can function.
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - Nurseries and after-schools are open on condition they respect the sanitary measures. Same applies to universities.
  - Schools and kindergartens conduct their courses online for a period of one month starting 8 November.
- **Restrictions to travel**
  - Foreign citizens are prohibited to enter Romania. Exemptions from the measure are granted, among others, for: a) family members of Romanian citizens; b) family members of citizens of other EU member states, EES countries or the Swiss Confederation, having their residence in Romania; c) holders of a long-stay visa, residence permit, or an equivalent document; d) persons travelling for professional purposes, proven through a visa, residence permit, or an equivalent document; e) diplomatic missions, international organizations, military, or humanitarian aid personnel, including family members; f) persons

transiting, including those repatriated following consular protection; g) passengers travelling for imperative reasons; h) persons in need of international protection or for other humanitarian reasons.

- Certain border crossing points are totally or partially closed.
- Sanitary and disinfection measures must be respected when conducting air, railway, road, and naval transport.
- Persons arriving from a country included in the Yellow Zone must remain in quarantine for a period of 14 days.
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
  - Wearing a face mask is mandatory in both enclosed and open public spaces, including public transport. Exceptions are when smoking, eating, drinking, and during individual sports activities, only if persons are outside areas of pedestrian traffic and the minimum 2 m distance from other persons can be maintained.
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - There are 170 testing facilities across the country, run by public or private entities (hospitals, Public Health Departments, laboratories, clinics), with a maximum capacity of 30.000 tests/day. Testing is free for those having COVID-19 – related symptoms, symptomatic direct contacts of positive persons, persons having chronic illnesses (tested with max. 48 h before treatment/intervention), asymptomatic institutionalized persons (twice/month), asymptomatic pregnant women if they are contacts of a positive person.
  - Besides the RT-PCR testing method, Romanian authorities have also recently authorized the antigen tests. So far, 40.000 tests have been purchased for hospitals across the country. The Government plans to purchase an additional 3 million such tests. Only symptomatic persons will be tested.
  - Mass testing has not been considered for several reasons: lack of capacity, lack of financial resources.
- **Situation regarding tracing**
  - Public Health Departments are in charge with monitoring persons in quarantine and tracing their direct contacts. There is no local smart tool (app) for self-reporting and tracing areas with high rates of infection that can be used by the population.
- **Obligations regarding quarantine**
  - Persons arriving in Romania from a country included in the Yellow Zone, direct contacts, with or without symptoms, of persons tested positive, persons tested positive, with or without symptoms, as well as persons living in the same household must remain in quarantine for a period of 14 days.
  - Quarantine is lifted in day 10 if the person is asymptomatic and has a negative RT-PCR test made in day 8.
- **Other measures**
  - Private events (weddings, baptisms, anniversaries, etc.) are prohibited.
  - Rallies and demonstrations can be organized with a maximum of 100 persons and must respect all the sanitary measures in force.

## **2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government**

### **Tax related measures**

- Zero interest for due fiscal obligations
- Postponing instalments on loans for a period of one to nine months, but not exceeding 31 December 2020.
- Taxpayers benefited from various rebates on taxes: on corporate tax (5% for major taxpayers, 10% for medium and other taxpayers); on income tax for micro-enterprises (10%)
- Fiscal incentives for taxpayers who paid their obligations in time – rebates of 10%
- Facilities to postpone the payment of interests and fees related to loans granted to natural persons, including authorized individuals, individual and family enterprises, liberal professions, as well as legal persons from loan or leasing contracts, for a period of 9 months, but not exceeding 31 December 2020.
- Exemption from payment of specific taxes for certain activities in the hospitality industry.

## State aid measures

### • Non-sectoral state aid

- Supporting SMEs in the context of the COVID-19-generated economic crisis – IMM INVEST program – state guaranteed-loans
- Financing the business environment by injecting liquidity from the Operational Program for Competitiveness (POC) through three measures: a) microgrants for SMEs not having employees at the end of 2019, authorized persons and NGOs conducting economic activities in specific domains; b) grants for working capital; c) investment grants.
- *De minimis* aid scheme – SMEs EQUIPMENTS AND MACHINERY LEASING
- IMM FACTOR Program for SMEs guaranteeing product for commercial loans
- Guarantees for SMEs approved by the National Loans Guaranteeing Fund for SMEs (FNGCMM)
- For companies directly affected by the state of emergency: postponed payment of utilities and rents for secondary office spaces, grants for working capital (a maximum of 15% of the turnover registered at the end of 2019 for the activities directly or indirectly affected by the state of emergency/alert).

### • Sectoral state aid

- state-aid schemes targeting tourism economic operators – one scheme provides for guarantees (100%) of vouchers offered by tourist agencies and accommodation structures, and the other scheme provides for grants.
- State aid for air transport (airports and operators) (62,13 million EUR for BLUE AIR (private) and 19,33 million EUR for TAROM (public))
- Temporary support for farmers and SMEs especially affected by the crisis – total worth of 150 million EUR
- State-aid for producers (beef, pork, and poultry)

## Labour and social measures

- Payment of **technical unemployment benefits** – 75% of the basis salary, but not exceeding 75% of the gross medium salary for the employees whose individual contracts have been suspended by the employer, due to the pandemic. (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage/currently in force only for activities where the activity is suspended by the authorities)
- Supporting new jobs: grants for employers amounting 50% from the salary, not exceeding 2.500 LEI, for an undetermined period, if they employ: persons +50yo, fired during the state of emergency/alert; unemployed young people 16 –29yo, Romanian citizens whose labour relationships abroad ended. The measure is applicable for 12 months, with the obligation of maintaining the labour contracts for at least another 12 months.
- **Short-time work** – can reduce working time up to 50%, with the state to support 75% of the difference between the gross base salary and the gross base salary related to the effective working hours following the implementation of the short-time work scheme.
- Benefits of 41.5% of the gross medium salary to persons with revenues from independent activities;
- Supporting **day workers** – 35% of the daily remuneration provided from the state budget.
- Supporting employers who employ **seasonal workers** – 41.5% of the gross basis salary, not exceeding 41.5% of the gross medium salary.
- Post-factum support for **telework** – 2.500 LEI (~500 EUR) for employers who teleworked at least 15 days during the state of emergency, to buy the IT&C goods and services.
- **Granting right to free days for parents** who care for children during the temporary suspension of school and kindergartens, granting benefits of 75% of the base salary for a working day, not exceeding 75% of the gross medium salary.

## Financing measures – EU funds

- Financing of medical-related expenses (equipment, medical and medical protection devices, equipment for specialized transport, decontamination, triage support, etc.)
- Financing of technical unemployment measures

- Financing the risk incentive granted to persons working in the social and community assistance sector and the risk incentive granted to the medical-sanitary personnel, paramedics, including auxiliary personnel who work directly with Covid-19 patients.
- Purchasing mobile devices for school use (tablets), medical protection equipment and mobile sanitary containers for the proper conduct of the educational process – estimated budget.
- Flexibilization of European funds usage - launching 55 new project calls and/or approving state aid/de minimis measures to support beneficiaries affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Increasing pre-financing from a maximum of 10% to 30% from the project's eligible value, until 31.12.2020.

#### **Other measures**

- **Hospitality**
  - Extension of the validity for holiday vouchers (issued by the state for own employees) from 2020 until 31 May 2021
  - Partial payment of employees' salaries by the Government (see Labor section above)
- **Digitalization**
  - The Agency for the Digitalization of Romania, together with tech volunteers, created an ecosystem of 6 online tools facilitating citizens' access to verified information, as well as self-help mechanisms. In total, the 6 sites part of the ecosystem registered over 17 million hits.
  - A special platform (aici.gov.ro) was created to facilitate governmental support programs for those affected by the pandemics (e.g., submit applications for technical unemployment)
- **Transport**
  - Green corridors for freight transport – 5 such corridors established on Romania's territory
- **Agriculture**
  - Monitoring prices of food and agricultural products & stocks of basic products
- **Education**
  - Allocation of 150 million LEI to support the digitalization of the educational system. (250.000 electronic devices)
  - Allocation of 100 million EUR for purchasing the necessary IT equipment for online schooling (tablets, laptops, interactive tablets, webcams, etc.)
- **Culture**
  - Financing program ACCES Online 2020 – exclusively dedicated to the private sector operators who continue activity online
  - Purchasing contemporary art from young artists –, the project will end in November 2020.

## Serbia

Date: 30 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

Epidemiologists in Serbia talk about a 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of COVID-19, considering the beginning of Summer spread to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave. In more detail:

- **Confinment**
  - people are invited to limit movement only to needed, such as going to grocery, work and similar, to restrain from home visits and other forms of gathering, to maintain physical distance even in the open
- **Curfew**
  - there are talks about it, but it is not introduced during the current wave of epidemics;
- **Telework mandatory**
  - not mandatory but recommended wherever possible
- **Industries allowed to function**
  - in general, all industries are allowed to function, but certain limitations are introduced in certain sectors
- **Restrictions: hotels, restaurants, etc.**
  - working hours of restaurants, bars, cafes, clubs, malls, theatres, cinemas restricted from 18.00 hours to 5.00 hours the next day; exempted; measure to be valid 10 days, starting from November 24, 2020
- **Restrictions: public events**
  - all public gatherings of more than five people, indoors and outdoors, are prohibited, except for companies, educational institutions, shops and similar objects where prescribed minimum of 4 square meters per person must be followed
- **Restrictions: commerce**
  - pharmacies, gas stations, grocery stores and food delivery operate normally, according to own working hours; green markets operate as usually 6.00 – 19.00 hours;
  - retail parks - each shop operate in accordance with “winter mode”, all days except Monday, 8.00 – 16.00 hours
- **Restrictions: nurseries, schools, universities, etc.**
  - preschool institutions decide on number of children in group/institution, depending on local situation and in cooperation with founder and local crisis headquarters; primary and secondary schools are all to completely switch to online and winter holiday will be extended from 2 to 4 weeks; universities and faculties make decisions on own work, depending on current local situation;
- **Restrictions to travel**
  - within the country there are no restrictions, as long as the precaution measures are observed; public transport in Belgrade introduced limitations on maximum number of passengers, depending on type and size of vehicle
  - travel abroad advised to be taken only if needed
  - foreign citizens, with several exceptions, entering the territory of the Republic of Serbia are not obliged to have a negative PCR test; more information on the page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Covid19 – Travel Advisory \(mfa.gov.rs\)](https://mfa.gov.rs/Covid19-Travel-Advisory)
- **Obligations to wear masks**
  - valid for all persons, whenever in closed area; highly recommended also for open space
- **Social distancing required**
  - minimum distance of 1,5 m required, whenever in closed area and recommended outside
- **Testing system**
  - there is no legal obligation to test, only when needed or otherwise required for those who come to Serbia from certain countries
- **Tracing system**
  - all domestic and foreign citizens entering Serbia from certain countries with a worsening epidemiologic situation are obliged to report to health authorities and their condition is monitored



- **Quarantine obligations**
  - for persons who are positive on COVID-19 without symptoms or with mild symptoms and for those who were in contact with infected ones: 14 days
- 2. **Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government**
  - **Deferral of tax payments**
    - salary tax and social contributions for one tax period (August 2020) with delayed payment of liability (till January 5, 2021) – this tax measure will be available for self-employed entities, micro, small and medium and large companies in the private sector.
    - for other entities – payment of salary tax and social contributions that are due in September 2020, payment is postponed till January 5, 2021
  - **Non-sectoral state aid**
    - direct payment of 60% of the minimum wage for 2 months (July and August) - for self-employed entities, micro, small and medium companies in the private sector
    - direct payment of 50% of the minimum wage for 2 months (July and August) - for big companies
    - direct payment for other entities:
      - entities not included in the previous two groups and entities that are registered or became VAT payer during the period March 15, 2020 – July 20, 2020 – under the condition that they submit certain forms
      - sole proprietors, irrespective of tax treatment of their earnings, having no employees or chose not to be self-employed – the cash subsidy is paid automatically
      - cash subsidies will be paid in September 2020 in the amount of 120% of the minimum salary in March 2020
    - postponed payment of salary, salary compensation, salary tax and contributions for one month for all that entities
    - obligation of commercial banks to offer borrowers/lessees (individuals, farmers, entrepreneurs and legal entities) a postponement on obligations' payment (moratorium), but only those approved to the debtor before 28 July 2020, and are due in the period from 1 August to 30 September 2020, as well as to obligations, which were due in July but which were not paid
  - **Sectoral state aid:**
    - hotels: only city hotels received a one-off direct aid of EUR 350 per bed, and an additional EUR 150 per accommodation unit, under condition that no more than 10 percent of their employees is laid-off by the end of the 2020
  - **Direct company state aid (partly mentioned within non-sectoral state aid)**
    - direct payment of 60% of the minimum wage for 2 months (July and August) - for self-employed entities, micro, small and medium companies in the private sector
    - direct payment of 50% of the minimum wage for 2 months (July and August) - for big companies
    - cash subsidy for other entities
  - **Additional loans**
    - small and medium enterprises and sole proprietors in tourism, catering and passenger transport provided with favourable loans for liquidity and working capital through the Development Fund
  - **Short time working schemes**
    - for some sectors, depending on the epidemiological situation (e.g. commerce – mentioned above)
  - **Help for apprentices**
    - recently introduced the Program called “My First Salary” – employers can hire a person without previous experience for 9 months without direct costs, while the State pays net salary to apprentice



## Slovakia

Date: 12 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

#### • **Regime on confinement**

- Slovakia's 45-day general state of emergency came into effect on October 1. It was prolonged for another 45-day period from November 15.
- Government is negotiating few changes in conditions of the general state of emergency. The main question of the current negotiations on the form of the future partial lock down is, whether government will require any negative corona test while citizens moving in public or going to work. It's probable that the government will liberate this rule. Future strategy should be based on local testing in risky regions in cooperation with local enterprises and public authorities.

#### • **Regime on curfew**

- During a general state of emergency, it's possible to visit only necessary services and shops i.e. grocery, or pharmacy. Only people with negative COVID test results from the last round of the general screening program (2 rounds of general testing until Today) or another accepted coronavirus test have exemption from general state of emergency restrictions.
- 10- day long isolation in quarantine is required when a citizen has not got a negative coronavirus test during the general screening program period.
- It is necessary to stay in a 10-day long quarantine after returning from a risky foreign country.

#### • **Regime on telework**

- Telework is still standard. Around 35 percent of workers are able to work in telework mode.
- It's recommended but not mandatory.
- The national administration has a problem to arrange telework regime even in its own bureaus and offices. Insufficient level of public digitalization is still a visible barrier.

#### • **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**

- Slovak industry isn't limited by some general restrictions. However, it is mandatory to have a negative coronavirus test from the general screening program or another accepted coronavirus test for all employees. It caused some problems in some sectors, because of higher numbers of quarantined workers (either they haven't got negative tests because of not being tested or their positive diagnoses). As an example, is the issue in the steel factory Zlievareň Zábrež, where 60 percent of workers had to stay in quarantine, or few bakeries in some regions.
- Employers have to provide working conditions according to epidemiological measures. Wearing a mask is compulsory, physical distances between workers are required.

#### • **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**

- Services such as hairdressers, barbershops, pedicures and manicures, cosmetics and solariums, rehabilitation services (dry procedures), taxi service, driving schools, wedding service, etc. are allowed to offer to clients with negative test results from general screening program or another accepted coronavirus test.
- However, some sectors are limited by epidemiological measures, e.g.:
  - Taxi service: driver must have suitably covered upper airways, passengers are advised to sit in the rear seats, driver has to disinfect the premises after each customer, etc.
  - Hairdressers, barbershops, pedicures and manicures, cosmetics and solariums: employees are required to use face masks, they have to adjust the time schedule of operation so that there is always space between individual customers for cleaning and disinfecting, the sanitary facilities of the establishment must be equipped with liquid soap and paper towels, etc.
  - Driving schools: driver and instructor must have the upper airways covered in an appropriate manner, it's required to disinfect interior of the vehicle after each driving and training, etc.
  - Wellness, swimming pools, sauna centers, fitness centers are required to stay closed during the general state of emergency.

- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - Consumption of food and drinks is allowed only on the outdoor terraces. Technically, it's not prohibited to stay open even during the confinement general state of emergency. However, restaurants aren't allowed to offer indoor service, but only via drive in, terrace or take away.
  - Accommodation services aren't technically prohibited (if they respect epidemiological measures: rooms only with separate bathroom/toilet, disinfection after the guest leaves, the possibility of food delivery to the room or with the possibility of eating on the terrace, but without eating together indoors, etc.). However, restrictions of public life mean a fatal lack of visitors.
- **Restrictions for public events**
  - Public events and large gatherings are forbidden. It's possible to meet. Max. 6 people in public.
- **Regime for commerce**
  - Only a healthy person with a body temperature of no more than 37 degrees Celsius will be able to enter the store premises. For department stores, there is a limit of one customer per 15 square meters of sales area. Consumption of food is forbidden in stores.
  - Food and drugstore opening hours for seniors over the age of 65 from 9:00 to 11:00.
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - Majority of schools moved to remote learning from October 1. Only kindergartens and 4 grades of primary schools stayed open for in person education.
  - Majority of schools stayed closed during the general screening program period.
  - Government, schools and epidemiologists are negotiating options of getting children and students back to schools since November 30. Two scenarios are: general opening of schools with strict restrictions and delivering older age categories to distance education, or "semaphore" managing of reopening schools in only less risky regions.
- **Restrictions to travel (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)**
  - No obligation to report to regional public health offices after arrival from less risky countries.
  - When person is returning from high-risk EU countries:
  - Option 1 - She/he is obliged to stay in domestic isolation with members of the common household and register on the government epidemic website. Person is asked to pass the Covid-19 test on the fifth day after arrival, or without symptoms of the disease, she/he can end the home isolation after 10 days without the test.
  - Option 2 - to prove after entry into the territory of the Slovak Republic by a negative RT-PCR test not older than 72 hours.
  - When returning from high-risk countries outside the EU:
  - Home isolation with members of the common household, registration on the government epidemic website and test for COVID-19 on the fifth day are required.
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
  - People in the territory of the Slovak Republic are required to use facemasks in all interiors and public areas outside their own households.
  - Two meters social distance is recommended to Slovak citizens in the majority of areas. Stores are required to watch the capacity of one customer per 15 m<sup>2</sup> of the sales area.
- **Situation regarding testing**
  - Slovakia has organized two rounds of national mass-testing (general screening program) for Covid-19. Some 3.6 million people from a 5.5 million population were tested with antigen tests in the first round.
  - Around 2 million people were tested in the second round of the general screening program.
  - Small children (aged up to 10) and the elderly (65+ years-old) were advised not to take part.
  - Around one percent of those participating tested positive (1.06% first round; 38,359 tested citizens). Second round of testing was focused on chosen region where the positive rate was over 0.75%; The outcome of second round of testing was 0.66 % positive cases.
  - Citizens were required to show a negative test certificate when they were asked by authorities during the testing period ending 15 November 2020.
  - Government is negotiating about next steps. Future plans of testing are focused more on risky regions. Regions with lower rates of positive tested citizens would have more freedom.
  - Enterprises also take a part in testing, organizing testing for employees + family members.

- **Situation regarding tracing**
  - The lack of epidemiologists caused situations when they fail to record enough cases of the infection and their contacts.
  - There are around 180 employees of the epidemiology department in 36 regional offices. Slovak ministry of health recruited around 60 people for the tracing of contacts for the temporary contracts. There is also a group - for about 30 volunteers - consisting of students and volunteers. However, the state administration has to use the help of private sectors - for example call centers of banks, energy companies etc. This option has not been used enough yet. State authorities are focused on mass testing and tracing isn't a priority now.

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

### Tax related measures such as

- **Deferral of Tax payments (Corporate income tax, social contributions, etc)**
  - Non - payment of advances on personal and corporate income tax: Entrepreneurs who meet the conditions defined by law will not be required to pay income tax advances in the relevant month or quarter.
  - Postponement of the deadline for filing a tax return for local taxes. The municipalities and the higher territorial units should postpone tax obligations until the end of the general state of emergency.
  - There has been a special tax measure of deferring income tax returns, reports, annual settlement agreements, the notification of the payment of non-monetary income to health-care providers, and motor tax in specific cases since April 2020. These exemptions ended by the end of October 2020.
- **Acceleration of VAT Credit refunds**
  - Debt in customs arrears has no influence to accounting of an earlier refund of the excess VAT deduction if these arrears are paid by the end of the month following the pandemic period.
  - VAT Credit refunds have to be returned within 40 days from the end of the month in which the tax return was filed.
- **Deferral of Fines/Interest on late tax payments**
  - Authorities postponed recovery of arrears in customs enforcement proceedings during the pandemic period.
- **Temporary reduction in VAT- rate**
  - The liberation from import duties and VAT in the case of the medical material incomes from non-EU countries. The measures also include no updates to the list of VAT debtors who violated their duties.

### Subsidies such as

- **non-sectoral state aid (grants)**
  - Slovak government laid down a "First aid +" program. It helps entrepreneurs from all sectors. Program is delivering subsidies based on the decrease of enterprise's sales. Program is focused on helping employers, especially those who closed their businesses.
  - The Ministry of Economy prepared a helping scheme to cover part of rental expenditures of entrepreneurs. They can also negotiate some deferral of rent payments.
- **sectoral state aid (grants)**
  - Slovak government delivered a subsidy channel to touristic entrepreneurs whose sales will fall by more than 40 percent compared to 2019. Depending on the decrease in sales, the applicant will then receive from 4 to 10 percent of sales in 2019.

- Slovak ministry of culture prepared a subsidy scheme for entrepreneurs from cultural sectors. They are able to ask for special grants for their projects.

#### **Loans/guarantees /Payment suspension such as**

- **state guarantees on loans, export guarantees**
  - Financial aid for micro-companies and small and medium-sized enterprises is provided in the form of loan guarantees or credit interest payments. The aid is distributed by the Export-Import Bank and the Slovak Guarantee and Development Bank.
- **rescheduling loan payments with state intervention**
  - Debtors are able to postpone their payments. Maximum deferral is 9 months.

#### **Labour market and social policy measures such as**

- **subsidy for wages (employees)**
  - The state will provide: (i) Reimbursement of employee's wage up to a maximum of 80% of average earnings, under condition that the employer cannot assign work to the employee because of an obstacle on the part of the employer (ii) Flat rate contribution depending on drop in revenues/sales - companies with more than 20/40/60/80% drop in revenues will receive EUR 180/300/420/540 contribution, respectively, per each employee
- **subsidy for wages (self-employed)**
  - Self-employed persons are able to ask for small subsidies for months without any income.
- **government to assume part/entire cost of sick leave**
  - Compared to the normal sickness benefit, which is paid during the temporary inability to work to the employee only from the 11th day, the pandemic cost of sick leave is paid from the first day. This means that if the employee has been confirmed as unable for work due to the ordered quarantine or isolation, she/he no longer asks the employer for income compensation but contacts his doctor. He will confirm the sick leave on the prescribed form due to quarantine or isolation and send it to the Sociálna poisťovňa (Social Insurance Agency), which will pay the amount of 55 percent of the daily assessment base.
- **extra allowance for workers taking care for sick relatives or taking care of children**
  - Parent may receive pandemic allowance for workers taking care for children for the entire duration of the general state of emergency if there is closure of schools or social services facilities based on a decision of the competent authority. The amount of this allowance is 55 percent of the daily assessment base.
- **extra parental leave**
  - Women who should start working after the end of their parental leave but need to stay at home due to closed kindergartens receive an allowance to care for a family member in an extraordinary situation.

#### **Regulatory changes such as**

- **moratorium on insolvency**
  - Over indebted entrepreneurs are able to ask for special court protection against the actions of creditors during the general state of emergency.
- **relaxation of various regulations**
  - There are plenty of postponed administrative obligations, especially those where visiting the office is necessary; e.g.: postponement of notification obligations about the use of the cash register until the end of the month following the end of the pandemic period.

#### **Other measures**

- Slovak ministry of economy adopted the amendment of law called "Podnikateľské kilečko". It consists of 114 small steps to improve business environment in Slovakia, i.e.:



- increase of the limit for the account application of expenditures on consumed fuels to tax expenditures,
- increase of the threshold for the mandatory audit of financial statements,
- simplification of energy audits,
- cancellation of the mandatory audit for companies, which are increasing the registered capital from its own resources,
- cancellation or reduction of several fines,
- abolition of certain obligations of travel agencies,
- second chance to fix irregularities found by the control of the Slovak Trade Inspection,
- making communication with the Sociálna Poisťovňa (Social Insurance Agency) easier
- less frequent probes of health risk at the workplace
- cancellation of the obligation to have a visible copy of the cash receipt from the eCash at each point of sale,
- narrowing and simplifying the obligation of publishers to send printed copies to libraries.
- The Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization in cooperation with the Ministry of finance also adopted few improvements especially in the digital agenda, i.e. making entry to the Business Register of the Slovak republic online.

## Spain

Date: 20 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions in place to face the COVID-19 second wave

On 25 October the Spanish government re-introduced the state of emergency for the whole country during six months (until 9 May 2021).

The main difference with the one adopted in March is that the regional governments are in charge of implementing the restrictive decisions they deem necessary and fit better to fight COVID in their respective territories, because the epidemiological situation differs from one region to another, being Navarra, Basque Country, Catalonia and Aragon the most hit by the resurgence of the pandemic.

The Health Ministry also established a set of common criteria to be used by regions when deciding and implementing those measures. It mainly defines a four-level system based on several indicators to determine the risk level in municipalities with over 5,000 inhabitants.

Most of the regions have imposed:

- Curfews and perimeter lockdowns at regional and/or municipal level. This is the case for the most hit regions: Cataluña, Aragón, Asturias, Navarra, La Rioja, Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y León and País Vasco. On the contrary, Islas Canarias (Canarian Islands) is open due to the low level of COVID impact so far.
- Limitations to social gathering (max 5 or 6 persons).
- Restrictions/lockdowns of the Horeca sector and non-essential activities.

### 2. Main socio-economic measures taken from July to November 2020

On 3 July 2020, a Royal-Decree Law was adopted introducing additional incentives in form of extension of the financial support mechanisms to guarantee not only the liquidity but also the solvency of those companies of strategic character. Among other initiatives, a specific Strategic Companies Solvency Support Fund was introduced in August 2020 amounting 10 billion euros.

On 30 September, the Spanish social partners and the Government reached an agreement to extend the short time working schemes (ERTE) until 31 January 2021. It also allows for exemptions in social contributions which could go up to 100% for companies with less of 50 workers (90% for companies above 50 employees).

On 27 October, the Spanish Government presented its draft budgetary plan foreseeing a significant expansion of public social spending which would be financed by an increase of the fiscal pressure on companies.

On 3 November, a new action plan was approved to support the cultural sector. It includes measures to protect employment and additional subsidies for technical staff of the scenic arts, among others.

On 17 November, a new Royal Decree-Law with new measures to support business liquidity and solvency of both companies and self-employed:

- Extension of the deadline to ask for State guaranteed loans (by the National Promotional Bank – Instituto de Crédito Oficial)
- Extension of the payment dates of those loans, provided that several requirements are met.
- Alleviation of the financial burdens for companies and self-employed
- Extension of the measures taken to prevent bankruptcies
- Reduction of VAT only for masks and for sanitary protective equipment
- Extension of fiscal incentives for some sectors, including the automotive sector.

## Sweden

Date: 04 November 2020

### 3. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

Sweden has opted to go for a mix of recommendations and regulations. Authorities and the government have opted to first and foremost to issue recommendations. Since the trust in authorities is high in Sweden, we see high compliance with issued recommendations. Thus, recommendations can result in the same impact as regulations on businesses.

- **Regime on confinement**
  - Authorities recommend that people who can should work from home and try to avoid using public transport.
- **No curfew**
- **Regime on telework**
  - Recommended but not mandatory
- **Industries allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - No restrictions.
  - In some regions, museums have closed due to regional recommendations.
- **Services allowed to function and under which conditions**
  - No restrictions but recommendations have been issued for public transport for example to avoid crowding.
  - Retailers and services (such as hair saloons) remain open.
- **Restrictions for hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés**
  - Restaurants can remain open but the maximum number of people at one table is 8. Special rules apply for the hospitality sector on movement of people in a restaurant / bar, at least one meter of space between parties etc.
- **Restrictions for public events**
  - Public gatherings can have a maximum of 50 participants.
  - Sports and culture gatherings can have a maximum of 300 participants provided that certain rules are followed.
- **Regime for commerce**
  - No binding regulations but recommendations are in place to refrain from staying in indoor environments such as shops, malls, museums, libraries, bathhouses and gyms. Necessary visits to, for example, grocery stores and pharmacies can be made. This recommendation has led to significantly less traffic in establishments mentioned.
- **Regime for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, universities**
  - Certain rules apply but schools, kindergartens and universities remain open. Remote learning is advised but not compulsory for senior school children and universities.
- **Restrictions to travel (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)**
  - No travel restrictions but recommendation is not to do non-essential travel to certain countries. Only EU-countries with a recommendation for non-essential travel are Estonia, Latvia and Ireland.
- **Obligations regarding masks and social distancing**
  - Social distancing is strongly advised.
  - No rules on face masks in general (except for health care workers etc.)
- **Situation regarding testing**



- Testing is widely available throughout the country.
- No compulsory and/or mass testing.
- **Situation regarding tracing**
  - Normal rules apply.
- **No obligations regarding quarantine**

#### **4. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government**

As of 9 November 2020, a few new support measures have been introduced in Sweden following the second wave and more may be announced. Furthermore, some spring-measures are still active.

##### **Tax related measures such as**

- **Deferral of Tax payments (Corporate income tax, social contributions, etc)**
  - Possible to deferral tax payments up to one year, prolonged to 2021
- **Temporary reduction in VAT- rate**
  - Some temporary reductions in social taxes for self-employed,

##### **Subsidies such as**

- **direct company state aid**
  - Support for companies (and self-employed) with a 50 % decrease in turn over. Prolonged to turnover for October 2020. Application possible from January 2021. A maximum of SEK 30 million in support will be provided per business.
- **Turnover-based support to sole traders for a further three months**
  - On 5 November, the Government decided on a new turnover-based support for sole traders. This support concerns turnover reduction in March–July 2020.
    - This support is proposed to be extended to include turnover reductions in August–October 2020 as the basis for support.
    - To qualify for support, net turnover during the support period must have decreased by more than 50 percent compared with net turnover during the corresponding period in 2019.
    - If the loss of turnover exceeds 50 percent, the sole trader may receive compensation for 70 percent of their loss of turnover, or a maximum of SEK 72 000 per business, for the new support period.
    - This support can be sought by sole traders whose turnover exceeded SEK 200 000 in 2019.

##### **Loans/guarantees/payment suspension such as**

- **state guarantees on loans.**
  - Possible to apply until December 31, 2020.
- **export guarantees.**
  - Possible to apply until December 31, 2020.

##### **Labour market and social policy measures such as**

- **short time working schemes** extended by up to seven months
  - Short-term furlough may currently be granted for a maximum of nine consecutive months.

- This time limit is proposed to be temporarily removed until 30 June 2021.
- In practice, this means that short-term furlough granted in 2020 can be extended by up to a further seven months, or until 30 June 2021 at the latest.
- In January, February and March, the subsidy rate will be 75 percent, which is the same rate as this year.
- In April, May and June, the subsidy rate will be 50 percent. For December 2020, the subsidy rate is 75 percent, according to current rules.

The Government will also propose that the administrative appropriation to the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth be strengthened by a total of SEK 450 million.

- **government to assume part/entire cost of sick leave.**
  - Some possibilities still in place until year end
- **extended easing of unemployment insurance for business operators**
  - The Government will propose that the temporary changes to unemployment insurance for business operators be extended to also apply in 2021.
  - This means that business operators who make their business dormant in 2021 will also be exempted from the rule that at least five years must pass before a new dormancy period can begin.
  - In June 2020, the Government also adopted a legislative amendment that enabled business operators to undertake certain limited measures in their business and still receive unemployment benefit. This temporary rule will also be extended to apply in 2021.
- **help for apprentices.**
  - Extra possibilities to wage support for “introductory work schemes aiming at long term unemployed.
- **extra allowance for workers taking care for sick relatives or taking care of children**
  - Some changes in allowances regarding people in high risk groups being absent from work. No qualifying day for sick leave payments (until year end)

## Switzerland

Date: 09 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

Since June 2020, Switzerland has been in a special situation under the terms of the Federal Epidemics Act. The cantons again have a greater say in matters than during the extraordinary situation previously deemed to exist. They also take cantonal measures if case numbers in their territory increase or threaten to increase. For this reason, there are some measures that apply across the country and others that vary from canton to canton.

On 25 September 2020, the Federal Covid-19 Act was passed by the Swiss parliament. It creates a legal basis allowing the Federal Council to maintain the measures resolved by emergency decree that are still necessary to manage the Covid-19 epidemic. Also, the emergency ordinance on COVID-19 credits shall be incorporated into ordinary law.

As a reaction to the increased infection rate, the Federal government reintroduced stricter national measures on 18 October 2020. It wants to avoid by all means a second lock down. Therefore, all businesses remain open as long as they observe the stricter measures. Five cantons<sup>3</sup>, however, have imposed partial lockdowns.

The following measures apply nationally (see also [FAQs](#) on new measures):

- People arriving in Switzerland from countries and areas with an increased risk of infection must go into quarantine upon entering Switzerland. A [list](#) is being updated by the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) every two weeks and informs about the countries concerned. However, border regions can be exempt from quarantine measures.
- It is mandatory to wear a mask in all publicly accessible establishments and inside spaces. This includes shops, banks, cinemas and restaurants. Moreover, it is compulsory to wear a mask outside such establishments and facilities, such as shops, venues, restaurants and bars, or at farmers' and Christmas markets. In public places, e.g. busy pedestrian zones and wherever the required distance cannot be maintained, the wearing of a mask is required as well. Moreover, masks are mandatory in schools from upper secondary level upwards as well as in the workplace (unless the distance between workspaces can be maintained, e.g. in individual offices, or if there are safety reasons for not wearing a mask). Masks are also mandatory on planes and public transport, including waiting and access areas such as platforms and railway stations, for example.
- Employers are required to observe the recommendations of the FOPH for employees to work from home. For employees who cannot work from home the Employment Act applies. Employers are obliged to take measures to safeguard the health of their employees. It is however no longer necessary for employers to have formal sets of precautionary measures, unless their business, or parts of it, are generally accessible to the public.
- Higher education institutions have to switch to distance learning. Classroom teaching is still permitted at compulsory school level and at upper secondary schools (baccalaureate and vocational schools).
- In restaurants, bars and clubs, food and drink may only be consumed when seated, both indoors and out. No more than four people are allowed to sit at a table in restaurants and bars, with the exception of families with children. All bars and restaurants must close between 11pm and 6am.
- A maximum of 10 people can take part in private events among friends and family (which do not take place in publicly accessible places, for example at home). Food and drink may only

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<sup>3</sup> The Cantons of Geneva, Jura, Neuchâtel, Vaud and Valais.

be consumed while seated. Anyone not sitting on their seat must wear a mask. Furthermore, the general rules on hygiene and social distancing must be observed and contact details recorded.

- Spontaneous gatherings of more than 15 persons are not permitted in public spaces. This includes town squares, paths and parks.
  - Events with more than 50 people will no longer be permitted. This concerns all sport, cultural and other events. The exceptions to this rule are parliamentary and communal assemblies. It is still permitted to hold political demonstrations and collect signatures for referendums and initiatives – as long as the necessary precautionary measures are taken.
  - Recreational sport and cultural activities are only permitted indoors for up to 15 people if a sufficient distance can be maintained and if masks are worn. A mask does not have to be worn if sufficient space between participants can be maintained at all times, such as in tennis halls or large rooms. Outdoors it is only necessary to ensure that people keep their distance. Contact sports are prohibited. These rules do not apply to children under the age of 16.
  - With regard to professional sport and cultural activities, practice and training sessions, competitive events, rehearsals and performances are permitted. Due to the fact that a particularly large number of droplets are released while singing, performances by amateur choirs are prohibited, although professional choirs may continue to practice.
  - Discos and nightclubs are closed, and the holding of dance events is prohibited.
- **Tracing.** Mid-June 2020, the [SwissCovid App](#) was made available for download. It allows contact tracing to identify people who have been in close contact with persons who have been infected with the coronavirus, thereby helping to interrupt chains of infection. On 3 November 2020, 1'880'000 SwissCovid apps were active.
  - **Testing.** On 2 November 2020, rapid tests have been introduced. The analysis for Sars-CoV-2 antigen by means of such rapid tests may be carried out in doctor's offices, laboratories, pharmacies, hospitals and in test centres operated by the canton or on its behalf.
  - The arrangements relating to compulsory **basic health and accident insurance** have also been impacted:
    - Costs of inpatient treatment as well as costs of outpatient services provided remotely are covered during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the acceleration of the infection rate, the costs of immunological analyses for Sars-CoV-2 antigens in persons who meet the criteria of the Federal Office of Public Health for suspicion, sampling and reporting will also be covered by the Confederation from 2 November 2020 onwards.
    - There is also an information procedure to insurers and cantons (rehabilitation and payment collection/reminder) in place.

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

The above-mentioned Federal Covid-19 Act contains the economic measures developed below. Its adoption enabled to incorporate the COVID-19 Joint and Several Guarantee Ordinance into ordinary law.

### Tax related measures such as

- **Deferral of Tax payments (Corporate income tax, social contributions, etc)**
  - Companies can extend the payment period for taxes, social contributions, for customs duties, for special excise duties and for incentive taxes. Therefore, default interest has been lowered to 0.0% for those federal payments until 31 December 2020.
- **Deferral of VAT payments**
  - Companies can extend the payment period for VAT. Therefore, default interest has been lowered to 0.0% until 31 December 2020.
- **Deferral of Fines/Interest on late tax payments**
  - Companies can extend the payment period for taxes, social contributions, for customs duties, for special excise duties and for incentive taxes. Therefore, default interest has been lowered to 0.0% for those federal payments until 31 December 2020.
- **Updated Bilateral Tax Treaties on Permanent Establishment of worker**
  - Tax treaties were not updated. However, to provide legal certainty with respect to the interpretation of current treaties, Swiss authorities have concluded statements of mutual understanding with several neighbouring countries (GER, FRA & ITA), stating that extraordinary measures due to the COVID-19 should not lead to any changes in the taxation of cross-border workers.»

### Subsidies such as

- **sectoral state aid (grants)**
  - For the **air transport sector** see below under Loans/guarantees /Payment suspension
  - **Culture:** The COVID-19 act and the decree for the cultural sector provide the following assistance:
    - a) Loss compensation for cultural enterprises to compensate for financial losses in connection with events, projects and restrictions of the cultural business. The compensation is limited to 80% of the financial loss. Missed profit is not compensated. The Cantons are responsible for the administrative procedures;
    - b) contributions to transformation projects for cultural enterprises. The contribution is limited to 60% of the project cost and a **maximum of 300'000 Swiss francs**.

In order to support cultural enterprises, the Federal Office of Culture (FOC) may conclude service agreements with one or more cantons for a **maximum total of CHF 100 million for 2021**. As a condition for the funding of a project by the Confederation, the cantons must undertake to pay the same amount.

- c) Support for cultural associations in the amateur sector to compensate for financial losses in connection with events. The request must be supported by a recognised umbrella organisation. The aid may **not exceed 10'000 Swiss francs**.

On the basis of performance agreements, the Confederation shall provide the umbrella organisations with the financial resources required for compensation, up to a maximum of **10 million Swiss francs for 2021**.

- d) Non-refundable cash payments to cultural workers to cover the direct costs of living, if they cannot cover these themselves (emergency aid). They are paid by the association Suisseculture Sociale. For this purpose, the association is funded with a maximum of **20 million Swiss francs for 2021**.

- **Media:** The following measures are taken in the media sector:
  - a) The Confederation bears the full costs for the daily delivery of subscribed daily and weekly regional and local by Swiss Post to the extent of the tariffs applicable on 1 June 2020.
  - b) The Confederation contributes **27 centimes per copy** to the cost of daily delivery by Swiss Post of subscribed daily and weekly newspapers of national and national press.
  - c) Up to a **cost ceiling of 10 million Swiss francs**, the Confederation bears the subscription costs for the basic text services of the Keystone-SDA news agency in relation to the rights of use for electronic media to the extent of the tariffs applicable on 1 June 2020.

Those measures are valid until a special media law, providing for measures in favour of the media, enters into force.

- **direct company state aid**
  - According to the COVID-19 Act, the Confederation may, at the request of one or more cantons, provide financial support to companies which, by the nature of their economic activity, are particularly affected by the consequences of Covid-19, in particular companies in the value chain of the events industry, showmen, service providers in the travel industry and tourist businesses, provided that the cantons contribute half of the financing. A case of hardship exists if annual turnover is less than 60 percent of the multi-year average. The overall asset and capital situation must be considered.
  - As a condition, companies must have been profitable or viable before the outbreak of Covid-19 and not having already received other financial support from the government.
  - These grants do not include short-time working allowances, compensation for loss of employment and loans granted under the Covid-19 Solidarity Guarantee Ordinance of 25 March 2020.
  - In the sense of a hardship provision, the Cantons may pay A-fund perdu contributions to the enterprises concerned. The cantons approve and pay out the amount, the Confederation then pays 50%.
  - This provision as well as the possibility to issue refundable loans and guarantees are stipulated in the upcoming "Ordinance on hardship measures for undertakings in connection with the Covid 19 epidemic". The ordinance shall enter into force on 12 December 2020.
- **delayed tourist tax payments**
  - This falls under the competence of the communes. Therefore, we have about 2'000 different regulations.

#### **Loans/guarantees /Payment suspension such as**

- **additional loans (e.g. through state lenders such as German KfW)**
  - **On federal level.** In general, federal law does not foresee the possibility for additional loans and no such institution as the German KfW does exist. This would fall under the competence of the cantons.
- **state guarantees on loans**
  - **In general:**
    - Between 26 March and 31 July 2020 Companies affected by the COVID-19 crisis were able to apply for bridging credits guaranteed by the federal government to ensure their liquidity. By 31 July 2020, 136'456 companies have received COVID-19 credits with a total amount of **16'908.2 Mio. Swiss francs**.<sup>4</sup> The emergency ordinance allowing to roll out the programme was only valid until 25 September 2020. However, as it will take many more years for the credits to be repaid, a federal law is needed for dealing

<sup>4</sup> Please find further information, on how the Swiss COVID-19 bridging credits for companies scheme works, [HERE](#).

with the credits and sureties, the Federal Council submitted a proposal for a COVID 19 Joint and Several Guarantee Act to parliament in September.

- Currently, there are no additional loan schemes foreseen. However, on a sectoral level, the Confederation has acted on behalf of the air transport sector:
  - **Air transport sector**
    - In June 2020, the Swiss Parliament approved guarantee credits of **1.275 billion Swiss francs** to secure by 85% loans to Swiss and Edelweiss airlines.
    - The bank loans are conditional, such as a location guarantee and a dividend ban, and must be repaid with interest. However, the payment of the Swiss loans to the two Lufthansa subsidiaries Swiss and Edelweiss was also made conditional on the parent company Lufthansa being supported by the German state. Only after the decision of the German State to support Lufthansa Group with 9 billion € and the approval of the deal by the Lufthansa stakeholders in August 2020, could the loans be paid.
    - The Swiss government also petitioned **600 million Swiss francs** to support aviation-related businesses at the national airports. However, the current Civil Aviation Act does not allow the Confederation to support aviation-related businesses. Therefore, the Civil Aviation Act is currently being revised. Payments to aviation-related businesses will only be made once the bill has been approved by Parliament (probably in December 2020).
  - **Sports:** The COVID-19 act provides the following assistance.
    - The Confederation supports the clubs in the professional leagues of the Swiss Football and Ice Hockey Federation with interest-free loans within the framework of the approved credits. These are repayable within a maximum of 10 years. The borrowers provide collateral recognised by the Confederation in the amount of 25 percent. The loans may not exceed 25 percent of the operating expenses in the 2018/2019 season.
    - If the borrower is unable to repay the loan within three years, cuts in the wage structure of up to 20 percent need to be made; wage cuts already made in connection with the Covid 19 epidemic will be considered.
    - A similar regulation by ordinance may be adopted for other professional and semi-professional leagues (basketball, handball, floorball, volleyball). It shall consider any previous assistance provided by the Confederation.
- **export guarantees**
  - The Swiss Export Risk Insurance ([SERV](#)) applies also during the Corona crisis. SERV insures export goods against political risks and delcredere risk. Due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Council has approved a temporary amendment to the SERV Ordinance. This has been done so that SERV can support Swiss exporters quickly and easily with its insurance offer and thereby enhance their competitiveness and aid liquidity.
  - Under the original ordinance (SERV-V), SERV was only able to apply increased cover ratios for counter guarantees and working capital insurance in the case of a justified application. This justified application is no longer required, and the following now applies:
    - The maximum cover ratio for working capital insurance is 95 per cent.
    - The maximum cover ratio for counter guarantees is 100 per cent.
    - SERV was previously only able to cover export transactions with a Swiss content of less than 50% of the SERV-covered part of the order value if it could be substantiated that the insurance is in line with the objectives and principles of SERV's business policy. Providing this proof entails a good deal of time and effort on the part of SERV's clients, which is why the Federal Council has decided to simplify the process:
    - Export transactions with a Swiss content of at least 20 per cent of the total order value will now be insurable without additional evidence.
    - Export transactions with a Swiss content of less than 20 per cent of the order value can be insured if it has been substantiated that the insurance is in line with the objectives and principles of SERV's business policy.
    - The measures enter into force on 1 September 2020 and apply until 31 December 2022.

See also [Q & A](#) on insurance cover for business disruptions due to COVID-19.



- **state-backed loans**
  - See above for companies and the air industry. Otherwise no.
- **moratorium on repaying reimbursables grants**
  - Waiver of repayment of federal loans in favour of tourism/hotel sector. The Confederation has waived repayment of the remainder of the additional loan to the Swiss Society for Hotel Credit SGH, which expired at the end of 2019. As a cooperative under public law, SGH implements the promotion of the accommodation industry for the federal government. As a result of the waiver, the SGH has an **additional 5.5 million Swiss francs** available for loans to retroactively finance investments of accommodation establishments which they have financed from cash flow over the past two years.

#### Labour market and social policy measures such as

- **Extension of compensation for loss of earnings for self-employed persons**
  - Because of the reintroduction of stricter national measures on 18 October 2020, certain cases of compensation for loss of earnings have been extended retroactively beyond 16 September 2020 – the initially set date to end them.
  - The extension concerns quarantined persons and parents whose children cannot be looked after by third parties, as well as self-employed persons who had to close their business or whose events were prohibited.

Other measures have not been extended. The Swiss parliament will discuss the extension of those measures at the upcoming session in December.

The following measures currently apply:

Right to compensation for loss of earnings	Beneficiary	Explanation	Duration
Third-party care for children younger than 12 years old and disabled children not older than 20 years cannot be ensured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees</li> <li>• Self-employed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure valid since 17 March 2020</li> <li>• Since 16 April 2020 extension to specialised institutions (disabled children)</li> </ul>	30 June 2021 (COVID-19 Act)
During quarantine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees</li> <li>• Self-employed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure valid since 17 March 2020</li> <li>• Coverage only if home office is not possible</li> </ul>	30 June 2021 (COVID-19 Act)
Quarantine after arrival from countries and areas with an increased risk of infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No coverage, except if the country or area were added to the list after the departure date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In force since 6 July 2020</li> </ul>	30 June 2021 (COVID-19 Act)
Closure of a private or public institution by order of the federal or cantonal authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executives employed in their own company</li> <li>• Self-employed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure valid since 17 March 2020</li> <li>• Extension to executives employed in their own company as of 17 September 2020</li> </ul>	30 June 2021 (COVID-19 Act)
In case of ban on events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executives employed in their own company</li> <li>• Self-employed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure valid since 17 March 2020</li> <li>• Extension to executives employed in their own company as of 17 September 2020</li> </ul>	30 June 2021 (COVID-19 Act)
Hardship clause: Ban on events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executives employed in their own company and active in the event sector with an OASI<sup>5</sup>-liable income of at least CHF 10'000 and at most CHF 90'000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure was in force between 1 June 2020 and 16 September 2020 by resolution of the Federal council of 1 July 2020</li> </ul>	16 September 2020 <b>Entitlement ended</b> Extension may be introduced retroactively by decision of the parliament in December 2020
Hardship clause: Self-employed that are indirectly affected by the measures against COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-employed with an OASI -liable income of at least CHF 10'000 and at most CHF 90'000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure was in force between 16 April 2020 and 16 May 2020</li> <li>• Measure was extended from 1 July 2020 until 16 September 2020</li> </ul>	16 September 2020 <b>Entitlement ended</b> Extension may be introduced retroactively by decision of the

<sup>5</sup> More information on OASI (Old-age and survivors's insurance) and other social insurances can be found [here](#)

			parliament in December 2020
Coverage of executives employed in their own company in the event of company closure or ban on events at cantonal or federal level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executives employed in their own company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resolution of the Parliament of 25 September 2020 under the Covid-19 Act</li> <li>The benefits will be paid retroactively from 17 September 2020</li> </ul>	30 June 2021 (COVID-19 Act)
Loss of wages or income and decrease in sales of more than 55% due to measures against COVID-19 (applies to all measures against COVID-19, including e.g. travel agencies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-employed with an OASI -liable income of at least CHF 10'000</li> <li>Executives employed in their own company and active in the event sector with an OASI -liable income of at least CHF 10'000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resolution of the Parliament of 25 September 2020 under the Covid-19 Act</li> <li>The benefits will be paid retroactively from 17 September 2020</li> </ul>	30 June 2021 (COVID-19 Act)

#### • Corona-regime for short time work compensation<sup>6</sup>

- **Purpose:** In Switzerland, unemployment insurance (UI) covers employers affected by short time working for a proportion of their salary costs for a certain period. The aim is to prevent redundancies being announced as a result of unavoidable, short-term work stoppages. In contrast to unemployment benefits, **the benefits are paid to the employer**.

#### ○ How it works

An employer can make a claim for any employee who has completed compulsory education and not yet reached OASI retirement age. Employees must also be in an ongoing employment relationship (i.e. non-terminated). Employers must apply for short time working. The short time working compensation is paid to the employer after the waiting period. It amounts to 80% of the loss of earnings attributable to the reduction in working hours. Short time working compensation covers also the employer contributions for OASI/DI/IC/UI<sup>7</sup>.

#### ○ COVID-19 measures:

- To fight the economic impact of the pandemic more effectively, the Swiss government had extended short time working compensation to employees:
  - in an employer-like position (with a monthly **lump sum of CHF 3'320.00** in case of 100% work loss until end of May 2020)
  - in an apprenticeship (until end of May 2020)
  - with health risks such as high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases, cancer and immune diseases. They are entitled if the employer did everything reasonably possible (i.e. telework) to keep the employee in the work process but due to operational circumstances the necessary precautionary measures cannot be implemented (until end of June 2020)
  - in a fixed term contract (until end of August 2020)
  - in a temporary work contract (until end of August 2020)
- On 28 October 2020 short time work has been extended to employees on call, if they are in an ongoing employment relationship since at least six months (retroactively applicable as of 1 September 2020).
- The Federal government has extended the maximum period for which short time working compensation can be applied from twelve to eighteen months. The special Corona-regime for short time work compensation has been extended until 31 December 2021. Those are
  - a simplified procedure for pre-declaration
  - a summary procedure for the billing
  - the reduction of the usual grace period of 2-3 days to one day.

<sup>6</sup> Further information on the short time working compensation scheme (in English) can be found on [www.work.swiss](http://www.work.swiss).

<sup>7</sup> OASI: Old-age and survivors' insurance; DI: Disability insurance; IC: Income compensation insurance; UI: Unemployment insurance.

- **Additional financing of the unemployment insurance**
  - By mid-September, Parliament approved a change of the Unemployment Insurance Act allowing additional funding of the unemployment insurance in the amount of 14.2 billion Swiss francs. The money is needed to avoid over-indebtedness of the unemployment insurance fund which is financing the short time compensations.
- **Financing of health costs**
  - The government covers costs of testing for patients with symptoms. However, persons who have to undergo a test when coming back from a country on the COVID-19-list, have to pay the cost themselves. If they have been on an official trip, their employer has to cover the costs involved.
  - Other health costs due to a COVID-19 infection are covered by the health insurance.
- **extending social benefits to self-employed**
  - In Switzerland, self-employed are subject to the Swiss social security system. They have to contribute to OASI/DI/IC/UI<sup>8</sup>. By consequence, self-employed benefit from social system if their inability to work is covered by one of the insurance schemes in the same way an employee is.
- **help for apprentices**
  - short time work is no longer applicable to apprentices. Companies shall continue to employ apprentices also during the crisis.
- **help for students**
  - Many students have lost their part-time employment due to the pandemic.
  - There are no subsidies from the Confederation available. However, (cantonal) universities have grant schemes for students in need. They have increased their assistance for students who have a reduced income due to the Corona crisis.
  - The (federal) polytechnical School of Zurich (ETH) has established an interest-free loan scheme for students in need.
- **extra allowance for workers taking care for sick relatives or taking care of children**
  - There is no extra allowance under COVID-19 provisions for workers taking care of sick relatives or children. The Swiss labour law provides with time to care for sick relatives and children under the sick leave provisions. The extent of payed leave depends on the individual work contract and the duration of the work contract.
- **greater flexibility in laying off workers**
  - No, because of the extended short time provisions.

#### **Regulatory changes such as**

- **moratorium on insolvency**
  - A special insolvency regime has expired by end of June 2020

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<sup>8</sup> OASI: Old-age and survivors' insurance; DI: Disability insurance; IC: Income compensation insurance; UI: Unemployment insurance.

## Turkey

Date: 26 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

The Government of Turkey announced the following measures to combat COVID-19 in Turkey, which will go into effect at 20:00 on Friday, November 20, 2020, in all provinces, until further notice:

- Individuals age 65 and over are only allowed outside during the hours of 10:00-13:00.
- Individuals age 20 and below are only allowed outside during the hours of 13:00-16:00.

For individuals not affected by the age-specific curfews listed above, until further notice, there will be a partial curfew on weekends. This curfew allows individuals to be outside during the hours of 10:00-20:00. This curfew extends into Monday mornings and below are the curfew restrictions by day:

- Saturdays and Sundays: curfew in effect from Saturday at 20:00 to Sunday at 10:00
  - Sundays and Mondays: curfew in effect from Sunday at 20:00 to Monday at 05:00.
- Production, manufacturing, supply chains, and health workers are exempt from this weekend curfew.

All education and training activities for public schools will continue via distance education through 31 December. Dining establishments such as restaurants, patisseries, cafes, and cafeterias will no longer be open for in-person dining; however, they will offer specific services at different times: Delivery or in-restaurant pickup service: between 10:00 and 20:00. Delivery only: after 20:00 establishments will only be available to provide delivery. Shopping malls, supermarkets, barbers, and hairdressers will only be open for service during the hours of 10:00-20:00. Movie theaters, soccer fields, coffee houses, tea gardens, internet/electronic game halls, and billiard halls are suspended.

### **Exceptions to the Weekend Curfew include:**

#### Workplace, businesses and institutions

- Public and private health institutions and organizations, pharmacies, veterinary clinics, and animal hospitals
- Public institutions and organizations and enterprises required for the maintenance of compulsory public services (Airports, ports, border gates, customs, highways, nursing homes, elderly nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, Emergency Call Centers, etc)

#### Companies engaged in domestic and international transportation and logistics

- Animal shelters, animal farms and animal care centers
- Vegetable and fruit wholesale markets
- Fuel stations and tire repair centers: those that may remain open during curfews will be determined by the Governors of each province. NOTE: At this time, we do not have information on which stations and centers will remain open.

#### Persons

- Those assigned to ensure public order and security (including private security officers)
- Those who maintain or repair infrastructure systems for electricity, water, natural gas, telecommunications, and other utilities.
- Technical service employees provided they document that they are out to provide service.
- Those with a mandatory health appointment
- Veterinarians
- Those with special needs, and their parents/guardian/accompanying persons.
- Those who go out to meet the compulsory needs of their pets, provided that it is limited to the front of their residence.
- Drivers and officers of urban public transportation vehicles, including taxis.
- A reminder that local and provincial Turkish authorities may impose restrictions at any time and violators may be subject to fines.

## 2. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

On 18 March Ankara unveiled a TRY100bn (\$15.4bn) economic package comprising tax breaks and deferrals, as well as credit guarantees and delays in loan repayments.

- WHT and social security contribution payments for more than 2 million taxpayers have been deferred for 6 months.
- Income tax filing and payments for 1.9 million citizens were postponed.
- Right of easement payments and rent payments to public authorities have been postponed.
- State-owned banks announced loans with reduced interest rates and postponed payments.
- 450 billion TL additional credit support was provided to companies.
- 20 billion TL cash salary support was provided.
- Banks postponed loan repayments of companies and individuals.
- 7 billion TL minimum wage support was provided
- Teleworking is encouraged and supported for both public sector and private sector.
- Lowest retired pension was increased to 1,500 TL.
- Additional 3 billion TL support was provided to municipalities.
- Companies' receivable insurance coverage was increased to 125 million TL
- 32,000 healthcare personnel will be recruited.
- Aid at the amount of 1,000 TL was given to more than 2 million citizens.
- All healthcare employees received performance salaries at highest level for 3 months, and a fund at 4.5 billion TL was allocated for such payments.

The Turkish Ministry of Finance announced the following measures in relation to **tax obligations**:

- Payments in April, May and June related to withholding tax returns, VAT returns and Social Security Premiums and service documents will be postponed for six months for companies operating in certain industries (e.g. retail, iron steel, automotive, logistics and transportation, cinema and theatre, accommodation, food and beverages, textile and garment and event organization).
- VAT rate for education services was decreased from 8% to 1% until 30.06.2021.
- WHT rate on rent payments to individuals was decreased from 20% to 10% 31.12.2020.
- VAT rate for some services were decreased to 8% and 1% until 31.12.2021
- Limitations for distribution of 2019's profit was extended until 30.12.2020.
- Rediscount and advance interest rates were decreased to 9 % and 10 % respectively.
- Introduction of accommodation tax was deferred until January 2021.

### **Employment<sup>9</sup>**

- (18 March) The government unveiled measures to support labor markets, including a doubling of the part-time compensatory work scheme to four months.
- (27 October) Part-time compensatory work scheme was extended until 31.12.2020.
- Short-time work practice was designed for three months (from the beginning of March 2020 to the end of June) but with Presidency Decrees; it has been extended four times, the last one is until the end of 2020. The President is also mandated to extend the practice until the end of June 2021. More than 3.5 million employees and 480 thousand enterprises have benefited from short-time benefits with a total payment of app. 2.2 billion Euros. This support equals to more than 25 billion Turkish Liras (2.7 billion Euros) contribution for employers. Also, with a joint letter signed by TİSK, TÜRK-İŞ and HAK-İŞ, we demanded compensation for inadvertent payments relating to short-time work and fortunately this was accepted by the General Council of the Parliament. This will contribute around 3 billion Turkish Liras (330 million Euros) to employers.
- Also, with unpaid leave scheme, termination of employment contracts is temporarily banned apart from termination for just cause and some other exceptions such as the ending of a fixed-term contract and the closure of workplaces. In this regard, the government introduced an unpaid leave scheme, where the employer can send employees to unpaid leave and can get

<sup>9</sup>Government of Turkey, Presidential Decision numbered 2284, Presidential Decision numbered 2285 & 2286, Communiqué numbered 2020/5, Communiqué numbered 2020/6, Notice of General Directorate of Customs numbered 53291166, Communiqué numbered 2020/6.

an unpaid leave allowance from Unemployment Insurance Fund. We must say this option is not commonly used, because mainly short-time work is practiced in the companies. Just like short-time work practice, unpaid leave scheme was designed for three months, (from mid April 2020 to the mid July) but with Presidency Decrees; it has been extended until the end of the year and can be extended until the end of June 2021. More than 2 million employees have benefited from unpaid leave support with a total payment of app. 630 million Euros.

- Contributions for employment of men aged between 18-29 and women aged above 18 with vocational education certificate, also for additional employments are foreseen.

On 14 May, the Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations (TİSK), Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TÜRK-İŞ) and HAK-İŞ Confederation jointly signed a joint declaration recognising the Government's effort to protect employment and support businesses through the short term work allowance scheme and requested the following:

- An extension of the short term work allowance (equal to 60% of the minimum wage) until the end of 2020;
- The possibility for workers to benefit of the allowance without additional legal requirements, such as the health and insurance premium conditions.
- The provision of incentives for employers that autonomously pay the difference between normal wages and the short time working allowance.
- The provision of income tax exemption to these wage difference payments.
- The provision of additional incentives to companies that maintain collective agreements in force and that keep and improve their employment levels.

On 26 August, the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey issued a circular order allowing flexible and remote working in public institutions.

### **Economic Stimulus Measures**

- (17 March) Turkish Central Bank cut its key interest rates by 100 basis points. The bank said it would also provide banks with as much liquidity as they need through intraday and standing overnight facilities.
- Turkey launched a 21-point stimulus package (Economic Stability Shield) worth USD 15.4 billion to tackle the coronavirus pandemic, including:
  - A three-month deferral of loan payments by companies and will offer additional financial support to affected businesses
  - Accommodation tax was cancelled until November
  - Social security premiums will be deferred by six months for retail, iron and steel industries, shopping malls, automotive, entertainment and hospitality sectors, food and beverage businesses, textiles as well as event organization sectors
  - Stock financing assistance to importers who are affected by the global pandemic.
- The CBRT convened an emergency meeting on 24 March, 2 days ahead of its scheduled regular meeting, and slashed its benchmark 1-week repo rate by 1pp to 9.75%. The move takes Turkish real yields deeper into negative territory (annual inflation rate at 12.37%), which may disadvantage investors but may help domestic liquidity.
- The CBRT also instituted a host of emergency measures including 91-day repo auctions at a 150bps discount to the benchmark rate, a 500bps cut in FX reserve requirements that it hopes will free up \$5.1bn for Turkish banks, and repayment delays for rediscount credit (FX loans to exporters) for up to 3 months that could postpone repayments of up to \$7.6bn.



## United Kingdom

Date: 26 November 2020

### 1. Restrictions put in place in response to the 2nd wave of Covid

#### General measures

##### UK Christmas plan (23 to 27 December)

- you can form an exclusive 'Christmas bubble' composed of people from no more than three households
- you can only be in one Christmas bubble.
- you cannot change your Christmas bubble.
- you can travel between tiers and UK nations for the purposes of meeting your Christmas bubble.
- you can only meet your Christmas bubble in private homes or in your garden, places of worship, or public outdoor spaces.
- you can continue to meet people who are not in your Christmas bubble outside your home according to the rules in the tier where you are staying.
- you cannot meet someone in a private dwelling who is not part of your household or Christmas bubble.

##### England (from 2 December)

England will revert to a regional tiered approach – applying the toughest measures where coronavirus is most prevalent.

In contrast to the previous system, restrictions in each tier will be toughened in efforts to try and control the virus. Examples of how the tiers will be stricter include:

- Tier 1: the government will reinforce the importance of working from home wherever possible
- Tier 2: pubs and bars must close unless they are serving substantial meals, along with accompanying drinks
- Tier 3: all hospitality settings will close apart from delivery, takeaway and drive-through; hotels and other accommodation providers must close, and indoor entertainment venues must also close.

Crucially for businesses operating across multiple sites, restrictions under each tier will now come under a uniform set of rules – the government will not negotiate additional measures with each region as it did previously.

##### England (from 5 November – 2 December)

- You must not leave or be outside of your home unless where permitted by law. This includes but is not limited to:
  - You can leave home for work purposes, or to provide voluntary or charitable services, where you cannot do this from home.
    - To help contain the virus, everyone who can work effectively from home should do so.
  - You can leave home to buy things at shops which are permitted to open. For instance to buy food or medicine, or to collect any items - including food or drink - ordered through click-and-collect or as a takeaway, to obtain or deposit money (e.g. from a bank or post office), or to access critical public services (see section below).
  - You may also leave home to fulfil legal obligations.
  - You may leave home to carry out activities related to buying, selling, letting, or renting a residential property.
  - You can leave home for education. This includes schools, universities, or formal education provision.
    - Schools and colleges should be continuing to offer before and after school or college activities/clubs for their pupils
  - You can leave home to exercise outdoors or visit an outdoor public place.



- You can leave home to meet outdoors with one other person, who is not in your support bubble. If doing so, you can be accompanied by a child under 5 or a disabled person who requires continuous care.
- You must not meet socially indoors with family or friends unless they are part of your household or support bubble.
  - A support bubble is where a household with one adult joins with another household. Households in that support bubble can still visit each other, stay overnight in each other's households, and visit outdoor public places together.
- If you live in England, you must stay at home and avoid travel in the UK or overseas, unless for work, education, or other legally permitted reasons. If you need to travel you should look to reduce the number of journeys if possible.

### ***Business closures (5 November – 2 December)***

- To reduce social contact, the regulations require some businesses to close and impose restrictions on how some businesses provide goods and services. These include:
  - non-essential retail, such as clothing and homeware stores, vehicle showrooms (other than for rental), betting shops, tailors, tobacco and vape shops, electronic goods and mobile phone shops, and market stalls selling non-essential goods.
  - non-essential retail, such as clothing and homeware stores, vehicle showrooms.
  - hospitality venues such as cafes, restaurants, pubs, except for providing food and drink for takeaway (before 10pm; and not including alcohol), click-and-collect, drive-through or delivery
  - accommodation such as hotels, hostels, and campsites.
  - leisure and sports facilities such as leisure centres and gyms.
  - entertainment venues such as theatres, concert halls, cinemas.
  - personal care facilities such as hair, beauty, tanning and nail salons.
  - community centres and halls must close except for a limited number of exempt activities as set out below Libraries can also remain open to provide access to IT and digital services - for example for people who do not have it at home - and for click-and-collect
  - places of worship, apart from for the purposes of independent prayer, for funerals or funeral commemorative events, to broadcast an act of worship, to provide essential voluntary services or urgent public support services, for registered childcare, and to host permitted gatherings.
- Most public services will continue, and you will be able to leave home to visit them.

### **Testing and Vaccines (England)**

- The NHS COVID-19 app, now available to download for free in England and Wales for contact tracing.
- targeted asymptomatic testing of NHS and social care staff and care home residents.
- anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can quickly be tested to find out if they have the virus.
- Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs) are for all students who do not currently have symptoms of Coronavirus and have not received a positive test for Covid-19 within 10 days.
- The UK government has ordered 340 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines from several manufacturers.
- The UK government has pre-ordered 100 million doses of the Oxford vaccine.

### **Scotland (present – 11 December)**

#### **Tiered system – Key differences between levels**

#### **Level 0**

- Indoor meetings allowed – maximum eight people from three households
- Fifteen people from five households can meet outdoors

#### **Level 1**

- Restrictions on indoor meetings between households vary
- In some areas, people can meet in each other's homes in groups of up to six people, from a maximum of two households

#### **Level 2**

- No indoor meeting with other households



- Six people from two households can meet outdoors and in hospitality settings
- Pubs, bars, and restaurants permitted to sell alcohol indoors only with a main meal – and only until 8pm

### Level 3

- Alcohol sales not permitted indoors or outdoors. Cafes, pubs and restaurants are allowed to open until 6pm to serve food and non-alcoholic drinks

### Level 4

- Non-essential shops, hospitality and gyms all being forced to close
- Some outdoor meeting still allowed
- Schools remain open

## Wales

### Current advice in Wales

- Stay out of each other's homes, except in very limited circumstances
- Limit the times you leave your home, and the distance you travel
- When you do **leave home**, please try and be restrained in how many different people you see. It is better to see the same one or two people regularly than to see lots of different people occasionally
- maintain **social distancing**, including outdoors
- meet people outdoors rather than indoors where possible, even in circumstances where the law allows you to meet indoors
- Work from home if you can
- Wash your hands regularly and follow **other advice on hygiene**
- Self-isolate if you show symptoms of coronavirus

### Laws

- Stay out of each other's homes, except in very limited circumstances
- Limit the times you leave your home, and the distance you travel
- When you do leave home, please try and be restrained in how many different people you see. It is better to see the same one or two people regularly than to see lots of different people occasionally
- maintain social distancing, including outdoors
- meet people outdoors rather than indoors where possible, even in circumstances where the law allows you to meet indoors
- Work from home if you can
- Wash your hands regularly and follow other advice on hygiene
- Self-isolate if you show symptoms of coronavirus

## Northern Ireland

- Households are not allowed to mix indoors in private homes. Certain exemptions apply
- Up to six people from no more than two households can meet up outdoors in a private garden, but you should maintain social distancing. Children aged 12 and under are not counted in this total.
- You can form one bubble with **one** other household.
- Up to 15 people can meet outdoors, but you should maintain social distancing by being at least two metres apart, as well as good hand and respiratory hygiene practices
- Up to 15 people can meet indoors, except in someone's home or in a static caravan or self-catering holiday home.
- You may not organise, operate or participate in an indoor or outdoor gathering which consists of more than 15 people.
- Where travel is necessary for work, education and other essential purposes, people are asked to walk, cycle or use private transport, shared only with members of their household where possible.
- The use of face coverings is mandatory on public transport, in taxis, private buses, coaches and on aircraft, in train and bus stations and in airports. This includes:
  - Individuals should work from home unless unable to do so.
  - The retail sector remains open at this time.
- Workers, builders, tradespeople and other professionals can continue to go into people's houses to carry out work such as repairs, installations and deliveries.

Restrictions as of 16 November 2020

- **Regime on confinement**
  - (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november>)
  - **National restrictions from 5th November – 2nd December.** Must not leave or be outside of your home unless for the following activities-
    - For work purposes or to provide voluntary or charitable services
    - For essential activities like buying food, medicine or to collect items via click and collect or as a takeaway, or to obtain money from bank or post office.
    - To fulfil legal obligations
    - Moving home- buying, selling, letting or renting a residential property
    - Education and childcare- formal provision i.e. schools or colleges or university
    - Meeting others and care- to visit those in your support bubble, provide informal childcare aged 13 or under, attend a support group. People can also exercise outdoors or visit outdoor public places.
    - Medical reasons, harm and compassionate visits- for any medical reason i.e. to get a CV-19 test, medical appointments and emergencies. Can also leave to visit someone who is dying or someone in a care home or to accompany them to a hospital appointment.
    - Events- You can leave home to attend a place of worship for individual prayer, a funeral or a related event for someone who has died, to visit a burial ground or a remembrance garden, or to attend a deathbed wedding.
- **No regime on curfew**
- **Regime on telework**
  - Where possible everyone to work from home. You may leave your home to go to work if you cannot work from home.
- **Services/ Industries allowed to function 5<sup>th</sup> Nov-2<sup>nd</sup> December**
  - Other businesses and venues are permitted to stay open, following COVID-19 Secure guidelines. This includes those providing essential goods, including:
    - Essential retail such as food shops, supermarkets, pharmacies, garden centres, hardware stores, building merchants and off-licences.
    - Petrol Stations, car repair and MOT services, bicycle shops, and taxi and vehicle hire businesses.
    - Banks, building societies, post offices, short-term loan providers and money transfer businesses
    - Funeral directors
    - Laundrettes and dry cleaners
    - Medical and dental services
    - Vets and pet shops
    - Agricultural supplies shops
    - Storage and distribution facilities
    - Car parks, public toilets, and motorway service areas.
    - Outdoor playgrounds
  - **Public Services permitted to stay open:**
    - the NHS and medical services like GPs and dentists. We are supporting the NHS to carry out urgent and non-urgent services safely, and it is vital anyone who thinks they need any kind of medical care comes forward and seeks help
    - Jobcentre Plus sites
    - Courts and probation services
    - Civil Registrations Offices
    - Passport and Visa Services
    - Services provided to victims
    - Waste or Recycling Centres
  - **Businesses and places that will be permitted to be open for a small number of exempt activities:**

- **education and training** (for schools to use sports, leisure and community facilities where that is part of their normal provision)
  - **childcare purposes and supervised activities for children** (in community centres and halls, and places of worship; and supervised activities for children in indoor sports and leisure facilities)
  - **hosting blood donation sessions and food banks** (in community centres and halls, places of worship, and libraries)
  - **to provide medical treatment**
  - **for elite sports persons to train and compete** (in indoor and outdoor sports facilities), and professional dancers and choreographers to work (in fitness and dance studios)
  - **for training and rehearsal without an audience** (in theatres and concert halls)
  - **for the purposes of professional film and TV filming** (in retail, entertainment, and leisure venues, as well as visitor attractions)
- **Businesses and venues which must close- 5<sup>th</sup> November – 2<sup>nd</sup> December**
- To reduce social contact, the regulations require some businesses to close and impose restrictions on how some businesses provide goods and services. These include:
- **Non-essential retail**, such as clothing and homeware stores, vehicle showrooms (other than for rental), betting shops, tailors, tobacco and vape shops, electronic goods and mobile phone shops, and market stalls selling non-essential goods. These venues can continue to be able to operate click-and-collect (where goods are pre-ordered and collected off the premises) and delivery services
  - **Hospitality venues such as cafes, restaurants, pubs, bars and social clubs**; with the exception of providing food and drink for takeaway (before 10pm; and not including alcohol), click-and-collect, drive-through or delivery
  - **Accommodation such as hotels, hostels, guest houses and campsites**. Except for specific circumstances, such as where these act as someone's main residence, where the person cannot return home, for homeless people, or where it is essential to stay there for work purposes
  - **Leisure and sports facilities** such as leisure centres and gyms, swimming pools, tennis and basketball courts, golf courses, fitness and dance studios, climbing walls, archery, driving, and shooting ranges
  - **Entertainment venues** such as theatres, concert halls, cinemas, museums and galleries, casinos, amusement arcades, bingo halls, bowling alleys, skating rinks, go-karting venues, soft play centres and areas, circuses, fairgrounds, funfairs, zoos and other animal attractions, water parks and theme parks. Indoor attractions at botanical gardens, heritage homes and landmarks must also close, though outdoor grounds of these premises can stay open
  - **Personal care facilities** such as hair, beauty, tanning and nail salons. Tattoo parlours, spas, massage parlours, body and skin piercing services must also close. It is also prohibited to provide these services in other peoples' homes
  - **Community centres and halls** must close except for a limited number of exempt activities as set out below Libraries can also remain open to provide access to IT and digital services - for example for people who do not have it at home - and for click-and-collect
  - **Places of worship, apart from for the purposes of independent prayer**, for funerals or funeral commemorative events, to broadcast an act of worship, to provide essential voluntary services or urgent public support services, for registered childcare, and to host permitted gatherings.
- **Restrictions to travel and obligations regarding quarantine** (within the country, to other EU countries, to third countries)
- In England stay at home and avoid travel in the UK or overseas, unless for work, education or [other legally permitted reasons](#). If you need to travel you should look to reduce the number of journeys if possible.
  - However, you can and should still travel for a number of reasons, including:
    - travelling to work where you cannot work from home

- travelling to education and for caring responsibilities
    - to visit those in your support bubble - or your [childcare bubble](#) for childcare
    - hospital, GP and other medical appointments or visits where you have had an accident or are concerned about your health
    - to buy goods or services from premises that are open, including essential retail
    - to spend time or exercise outdoors - this should be done locally wherever possible, but you can travel to do so if necessary (for example, to access an open space)
    - attending the care and exercise of a pet, or veterinary services
  - You cannot leave home for holidays or stays overnight away from your main home unless permitted by law. This means that holidays in the UK and abroad are not allowed. This includes staying in a second home or caravan, if you own one, or staying with anyone you do not live with or are in a support bubble with.
  - If you were already on holiday, you should return to your home as soon as practical and comply with the 'stay at home' requirements in your holiday accommodation in the meantime.
- **Private cars and other vehicles**
    - You may continue to rent a car or other vehicle as long as you are renting to travel for a [legally permitted reason](#).
    - People from a household or [support bubble](#) can travel together in a vehicle.
    - You should wear a face covering in an enclosed space where social distancing isn't possible and where you will come into contact with people outside your household or support bubble
  - **Car sharing**
    - If you are car sharing then you must not share the car with someone from outside your household or your [support bubble](#) unless your journey is undertaken for an [exempt reason](#). For example, if car sharing is reasonably necessary as part of your work.
  - **Travelling abroad**
    - Under the national restrictions, you cannot travel abroad unless for work, education or other [legally permitted reasons](#).
  - **Quarantine**
    - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk#national-restrictions-begin-in-england-from-5-november>
    - If country is not on the travel corridor list must self- isolate for 14 days. Also need to complete Passenger Locator Form.
  - **Face coverings**
    - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>
    - Must wear a face covering in the following indoor settings;
      - public transport (aeroplanes, trains, trams and buses)
      - taxis and private hire vehicles
      - transport hubs (airports, rail and tram stations and terminals, maritime ports and terminals, bus and coach stations and terminals)
      - shops and supermarkets (places which offer goods or services for retail sale or hire)
      - shopping centres (malls and indoor markets)
      - auction houses
      - premises providing hospitality (bars, pubs, restaurants, cafes), except when seated at a table to eat or drink (see [exemptions](#))
      - post offices, banks, building societies, high-street solicitors and accountants, credit unions, short-term loan providers, savings clubs and money service businesses
      - estate and lettings agents
      - theatres
      - premises providing personal care and beauty treatments (hair salons, barbers, nail salons, massage centres, tattoo and piercing parlours)
      - premises providing veterinary services
      - visitor attractions and entertainment venues (museums, galleries, cinemas, theatres, concert halls, cultural and heritage sites, aquariums, indoor zoos and visitor farms,

- bingo halls, amusement arcades, adventure activity centres, indoor sports stadiums, funfairs, theme parks, casinos, skating rinks, bowling alleys, indoor play areas including soft-play areas)
  - libraries and public reading rooms
  - places of worship
  - funeral service providers (funeral homes, crematoria and burial ground chapels)
  - community centres, youth centres and social clubs
  - exhibition halls and conference centres
  - public areas in hotels and hostels
  - storage and distribution facilities
- You are expected to wear a face covering before entering any of these settings and must keep it on until you leave unless there is a reasonable excuse for removing it. You should also wear a face covering in indoor places not listed here where social distancing may be difficult and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. Face coverings are needed in NHS settings, including hospitals and primary or community care settings, such as GP surgeries. They are also advised to be worn in care homes.
- **Social Distancing**
  - (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing#:~:text=SPACE%20%2D%20Stay%20%20metres%20apart,coverings%20or%20increasing%20ventilation%20indoors>)
  - Stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings or increasing ventilation indoors).
- **Situation regarding testing and tracing**

**NHS Track and Trace system set up with national App for both public and businesses**

  - The app runs on proven software developed by Apple and Google, designed so that nobody will know who or where you are. And you can delete your data, or the app, at any time. It has a number of features:
    - **Trace:** find out when you've been near other app users who have tested positive for coronavirus.
    - **Alert:** lets you know the level of coronavirus risk in your postcode district.
    - **Check-in:** get alerted if you've visited a venue where you may have come into contact with coronavirus, using a simple QR code scanner. No more form filling.
    - **Symptoms:** check if you have coronavirus symptoms and see if you need to order a test.
    - **Test:** helps you order a test if you need to.
    - **Isolate:** keep track of your self-isolation countdown and access relevant advice.

## Testing

- **Roll out of mass testing**
  - If you have symptoms can get a test from NHS
  - Widespread testing of key workers, care homes and NHS staff occurring
  - Mass testing trials occurring in cities across England utilising new lateral flow technology. [Liverpool city](#) was the first now programme has been rolled out to 66 Local Authorities across England.
  - Mass testing of university students to occur in time for Christmas period. A week of mass testing for students is proposed - running between [30 November and 6 December](#)
  - Two mega-labs to be set up in early 2021 to speed up testing- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-54953677>
  - Guidance for employers who want to offer workplace testing for asymptomatic employees- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-guidance-for-employers/annex-b-a-practical-guide-for-employers-who-want-to-offer-workplace-testing-for-asymptomatic-employees>



### 3. Support measures for companies and workers taken by the government

**Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (JRS)** accessible for all businesses. The details of the scheme include:

- The JRS was introduced to help employers who cannot maintain their current workforce because their operations are affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is being extended until 31 March 2021.
- 30 November 2020 is the last day employers can submit or change claims for periods ending on or before 31 October 2020.
- For claim periods running to January 2021, employees will receive 80% of their usual salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. The £2,500 cap is proportional to the hours not worked.
- The government will review the policy in January to decide whether economic circumstances are improving enough to ask employers to contribute more.

#### **Self-Employment Income Support Scheme**

- Two rounds of grants have been issued to those in self-employment.
- The first round of grants provided self-employed people who had been adversely affected by COVID-19 a taxable grant worth 80% of their average monthly profits over the last three years, in total worth up to £7,500, covering three months.
- The eligibility criteria for both grants required that individuals had trading profits of no more than £50,000, making up at least half of their total income.
- Anyone whose self-employed business has been adversely affected by COVID-19 since 14 July is eligible for the scheme, and records should be kept to show how the business has been impacted.
- There was no need to have applied for the first grant in order to be eligible for the second.
- On 24 September 2020, as part of the government's Winter Economic Plan, it was announced that the SEISS will be extended for an additional 6 months, from November 2020 to April 2021.
- The extension will be in the form of two taxable grants. The first grant will cover a three-month period from the start of November until the end of January. This initial grant will cover 40% of average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering 3 months' worth of profits, and capped at £3,750 in total. The second grant will cover a three-month period from the start of February until the end of April. The government will review the level of the second grant and set this in due course.
- The grant will be limited to self-employed individuals who are currently eligible for the SEISS and are actively continuing to trade but are facing reduced demand due to COVID-19.

#### **Kickstart scheme (applies in England, Scotland and Wales only)**

- An employment support scheme targeted at those aged 16-24 who have been claiming Universal Credit and are at risk of long-term unemployment.
- For each "kickstarter" placement, the government will cover the cost of the first six months of employee's wages, at 25 hours' work a week, at the applicable minimum wage. The government will also cover the associated employer National Insurance contributions and minimum automatic enrolment pension contributions.
- The first placements are likely to be available in November, and the scheme will run until December 2021.
- Applications must be for a minimum of 30 placements, but organisations that are unable to offer this number on their own can partner with each other to reach the minimum number.

#### **Apprentice Scheme (applies in England only)**

- From August 2020 to January 2021, any firm that hires a new apprentice aged 16-24 will receive £2,000, while any firm that hires a new apprentice aged 25 or over will receive £1,500.
- This payment will be in addition to the existing £1,000 incentive the government already provides for new 16-18-year-old apprentices.

#### **Traineeship Scheme (applies in England only)**

- Firms will receive £1,000 for each new traineeship placement that they create, with the government providing enough funding for around 30,000 new places.



### **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) refunds for smaller businesses**

- Businesses with fewer than 250 employees in their group on 28 February 2020 can obtain a refund from the Government for SSP paid for up to 2 weeks' absence due to COVID-19.
- This also covers absence due to self-isolating in line with public health advice (i.e. where an employee may not be sick or have symptoms of COVID-19 but has been advised to self-isolate and cannot work as a result) and, from 26 August 2020, where the employee has been notified by the NHS to self-isolate prior to surgery.
- Workers can claim SSP from the first day of absence due to COVID-19 (rather than from day four, which would otherwise be the case)
- Employers can claim repayment of relevant SSP through HMRC's online service.
- HMRC have published guidance here. Some of the key points covered are:
  - Companies that claim reimbursement must have a PAYE payroll scheme that was created and started on or before 28 February 2020.
  - The scheme covers individuals on all types of employment contracts (including full-time employees, part-time employees, employees on agency contracts, and employees on flexible or zero-hour contracts).
  - The 250 employees test is based on the total combined number of PAYE employees for connected companies.
  - Employers will need to keep a record of the following information until the third anniversary of the date on which they receive the relevant SSP reimbursement (i) the dates the employee was absent from work due to COVID-19; (ii) which of those dates were usual working days; (iii) whether they had COVID-19 symptoms, a member of their household had symptoms, or they were shielding; and (iv) their National Insurance Number.
- An isolation note will be satisfactory evidence of inability to work, where an employee is self-isolating, rather than requiring a fit note from a doctor.
- The notes can be obtained through the NHS website, NHS 111 online or the NHS App.
- The amount an employer can claim under this scheme must not, when combined with any other state aid claimed under the EU Commission State Aid Temporary Framework, cause it to breach the relevant limit (i.e. €800,000, or the applicable lower limit for agriculture or aquaculture and fisheries).

### **Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme for smaller businesses (for Businesses with turnover of up to £45m)**

- Under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) UK businesses with annual turnover of no more than £45m can borrow up to £5m interest-free for 12 months under a British Business Bank (BBB) scheme where the Government provides the lender with a guarantee for 80% of each loan (subject to a per-lender cap on claims) and covers the cost of the first 12 months of interest.
- Financing can be provided under CBILS for up to 6 years through term loans, overdrafts, invoice finance and asset finance.
- The £45m turnover threshold applies to group turnover, rather than at individual company turnover level.
- Access to CBILS is available through over 100 BBB accredited lenders. The number of providers of the CBILS continues to grow and new alternative finance lenders are being accredited under the scheme creating more choice and diversity of supply for smaller businesses.
- Businesses should speak to their existing bank lender(s) if they wish to access CBILS. On 3 April, the Government introduced certain structural enhancements to the Scheme guidelines which are expected to improve and accelerate its use by eligible SMEs. Further details on CBILS can be found here.
- The deadline for applying for this loan was originally set at 30 September 2020, however this has since been extended to 30 November 2020.

### **Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (for Businesses with turnover of more than £45m)**

- On 3 April 2020, the Chancellor announced that new scheme – the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS). Similar to the SME CBILS scheme this involves a government guarantee of 80% to enable banks to make loans of up to £25 million (CBILS was capped at £5 million) to businesses with an annual turnover of between £45 million and

£250 million. Firms with a turnover of more than £250 million can borrow up to £50 million from lenders.

- This is intended to give banks the confidence to lend to more businesses which are impacted by coronavirus but which they would not lend to without CLBILS. This Scheme is for businesses that were viable pre COVID-19, experiencing cashflow shortfalls and who would be able to trade out of difficulty with the additional funding. CLBILS loans will be through commercial banks and commercial rates of interest will be charged.
- The deadline for applying for this loan was originally set at 20 October 2020, however this has since been extended to 30 November 2020.

#### **COVID-19 Corporate Finance Facility (CCFF)**

- The CCFF has been created to provide funding to large businesses through the purchase of short-term corporate debt in the form of commercial paper. The Bank of England have published guidance on the facility including details of eligibility and how to apply.
- Funding is open to companies (1) making “a material contribution to the UK economy”; (2) able to demonstrate they were in sound financial health prior to the pandemic; and (3) with a short term or long term investment grade credit rating or otherwise able to demonstrate financial strength equivalent to investment grade.
- The scheme will operate for at least 12 months and for as long as steps are needed to relieve cash flow pressures. Businesses seeking to make an application should discuss their eligibility with their bank.
- The CCFF launched on 23 March 2020 and Bank of England data released on 2 April 2020 showed that £1.9 billion of commercial paper has been purchased under this facility already and according to a HM Treasury release on 3 April 2020 a further £1.6 billion has been committed.

#### **£750m coronavirus fund for frontline charities**

- The UK government has announced £750m of funding for frontline charities across the UK – including hospices and those supporting domestic abuse victims. £60m of this will be provided to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- £360 million will be directly allocated by government departments to charities providing key services and supporting vulnerable people during the crisis – including hospices and domestic abuse victims. £370m will go to small and medium-sized charities, including through a grant to the National Lottery Community Fund for those in England.

#### **Support for SMEs focused on research and development**

- On 20 April, as part of its wider package of support for innovative firms hit by the COVID-19 outbreak, the government announced £750m of targeted support for small and medium sized businesses focusing on research and development.
- Innovate UK, the national innovation agency, will accelerate up to £200 million of grant and loan payments for its 2,500 existing Innovate UK customers on an opt-in basis.
- An extra £550 million will also be made available to increase support for existing customers and £175,000 of support will be offered to around 1,200 firms not currently in receipt of Innovate UK funding.

#### **Future Fund for high-growth companies**

- On 20 April, the government announced the Future Fund, a £500m loan scheme aimed at ensuring that high-growth companies in the UK receive the investment they need to continue during the crisis. Delivered in partnership with the British Business Bank, it launched in May.
- The fund was comprised initially of £250 million from government combined with equal match funding from private investors, though in June, the government confirmed that given the high number of applications it would be expanding its financial commitment to the fund.
- The scheme, It provides UK-based companies with between £125,000 and £5m from government, with private investors then matching the government’s commitment.
- Loans issued will automatically convert into equity on the company’s next qualifying funding round, or at the end of the loan if they are not repaid.
- The scheme is open to unlisted UK registered companies that have previously raised at least £250,000 in equity investment from third party investors in the last five years.
- The deadline for applying for this loan was originally set at 30 September 2020, however this has since been extended to 30 November 2020.

### **Bounce Back loan scheme for small businesses**

- On 27 April, the government announced a fast-track finance scheme for small businesses, allowing firms to apply for Bounce Back loans worth up to 25% of turnover, with a maximum payment of £50,000, and access the cash within days.
- The government will provide lenders with a 100% guarantee for the loan and pay any fees and interest for the first 12 months. No repayments will be due during the first 12 months.
- The government has said that it will work with lenders to agree 'a low standardised level of interest' for the remaining period of the loan.
- The government has said that for most firms, loans should arrive within 24 hours of approval. Loans can be applied through a short, standardised online application.
- On 24 September the Chancellor announced, as part of the UK's Winter Economic Plan, that the deadline for applying for a Bounce Back Loan would be extended from 04 November 2020 to 30 November 2020 and that businesses that borrowed until the scheme would be given additional flexibility in repaying their loans under the 'Pay as you Grow' scheme. See Slide 11 for further details.

### **Start-ups**

UK has loans but venture backed startups can't get them - Support for businesses through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme supports SMEs with access to loans, overdrafts, invoice finance and asset finance of up to £5 million and for up to 6 years.

- Business Interruption Payment to cover the first 12 months of interest payments and any lender-levied fees, so smaller businesses will benefit from no upfront costs and lower initial repayments.
- Lenders with a guarantee of 80% on each loan (subject to pre-lender cap on claims) to give lenders further confidence in continuing to provide finance to SMEs.

A £1.25 billion plan to support start-ups was put in place on 20 April. It is divided into two funds:

- The Future Fund for high-growth companies affected by the crisis, made up of public and private financing (see opposite).
- A £750 million fund of grants and loans for R&D-oriented SMEs. (previously detailed)

## **ANNEX – JOB SUPPORT SCHEME**

*Due to the extension of the JRS, the introduction of the Job Support Scheme has now been delayed.*

### **Job Support Scheme (JSS) (For businesses that are open)**

- To keep employees in viable roles attached to the workforce, the government introduced a new Job Support Scheme, running for 6 months, from 01 November 2020.
- Employees will need to work a minimum of 20% of their usual hours. For every hour not worked the employer will pay 5% of the employee's usual pay with the government paying 61.67%, capped at £1,541.75 per month.
- Employees using the scheme will receive at least 73% of their pay, where the government contribution has not been capped.
- The employer will be reimbursed in arrears for the government contribution. The employee must not be on a redundancy notice or be put on notice of redundancy during the period within which their employer is claiming the grant for that employee.
- The scheme is open to all employers with a UK bank account and a UK PAYE scheme. All SMEs will be eligible; large businesses will be required to demonstrate that their business has been adversely affected by COVID-19, and the government expects that large employers will not be making capital distributions (such as dividends), while using the scheme.
- There is no requirement to have participated in the Job Retention Scheme in order to receive Job Support Scheme funding, and employers who receive Job Support Scheme funding remain eligible for the Job Retention Bonus.

### **Job Support Scheme (For businesses that are closed)**

- Announced on the 22 October, this element of the scheme, labelled as "JSS Closed" will also run for 6 months, from 01 November 2020.
- It will provide employees with two thirds of their normal pay, up to a maximum of £2,083.33 per month, where a business is legally required to close due to either local or national restrictions.