

# collective bargaining

Issue 3/2020 | March

This newsletter presents up-to-date information on collective bargaining developments across Europe since February 2008. It aims to facilitate information exchange between trade unions and to support the work of the ETUC's collective bargaining committee.



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## European sources

### **OECD: Supporting people and companies to deal with the COVID-19 virus**

*March 23, 2020*

The OECD released a new web portal in response to the COVID-19 virus outbreak, “Tackling the coronavirus – Contributing to a global effort”, that provides useful policy analysis and lists short-term policy solutions to cushion the impact of the crisis. One of the policy papers published considers the options for an immediate employment and social policy response, including measures to support employment and wages.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **ETUC: Trade unions and the coronavirus**

*March 21, 2020*

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) launched a special website tracking the responses of its national affiliates to the COVID-19 crisis. In addition to collective agreements concluded in order to protect workers across the EU, the website contains the ETUC’s briefing note providing an overview of national crisis-related measures covering issues such as short-time work, collective/individual redundancies, sick pay and social protection, and the protection of non-standard workers and the self-employed.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **COVID-19: State aid actions**

*March 19, 2020*

The European Commission adopted a Temporary Framework to enable Member States to use the full flexibility foreseen under state aid rules to support the economy in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak. The aim is to ensure that businesses have the liquidity to keep operating, or to put a temporary freeze on their activities, if need be, and that support for businesses in one Member State does not undermine the European single market.

Read on: [in English ...](#) Read on: [in English \(2\) ...](#) Read the Communication: [in English ...](#)

### **EU employment rules cover interim workers**

*March 19, 2020*

The European Court of Justice found that workers aren't exempt from regulations on permanent employment contracts just because they have agreed to multiple temporary contracts.

Read on: [in English ...](#) Read the press release: [in English ...](#)

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## **Austria**

### **COVID-19: Support to independent workers and employment**

*March 15, 2020*

The government announced that €4 billion would be directed to support independent workers, maintain employment, and help businesses avoid insolvency in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial €4 billion "corona crisis fund" will cover items such as bridge loans and credit guarantees. Help with shortening staff working hours and deferring taxes will also be provided.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **COVID-19: Short-time working arrangements**

*March 14, 2020*

The government and the social partners reached an agreement on short-time working arrangements, underpinned by a budget of €400 million. This measure, which is designed to last for three months will provide financial assistance for those placed on short-time working and for workers who are laid off temporarily.

Read on: [in German ...](#) See also: [in German ...](#)

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## **Belgium**

### **COVID-19: Temporary unemployment for white collar workers**

*March 22, 2020*

Under normal circumstances, the conditions for temporary unemployment for white collar workers are stricter than for blue collar workers. Due to the corona crisis, however, an adaptation of the collective bargaining agreement number 147 of March 18, 2020 was implemented. This makes it easier for companies that do not have a collective bargaining agreement to apply for support as a company in difficulty.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **COVID-19: Conditions for temporary unemployment relaxed**

*March 20, 2020*

A uniform and simplified procedure has been put in place until 30 June for temporary unemployment applications, in order to better preserve jobs amid the restrictions on business resulting from efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **Care workers protest against understaffing**

*March 11, 2020*

Care workers from different unions picketed outside one nursing home on March 10, 2020. They protested against a lack of supplies but mainly the lack of a sufficient number of staff members. The company, active in many European countries, was accused of putting profit over proper care.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

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## **Bulgaria**

### **COVID-19: Government support covers 60% of salaries**

*March 18, 2020*

The government announced an emergency package of €2.3 billion. It includes two measures to help businesses that face financial difficulties due to the coronavirus outbreak: one is focused on supporting employment, the other on creating buffers for firms that may be unable to pay their loans. Companies can benefit from government support for 60% of the salaries paid to employees so far.

Read on: [in English ...](#)   Read on: [in English \(2\) ...](#)

### **COVID-19: State of emergency measures**

*March 17, 2020*

The parliament's legal committee approved a bill on the state of emergency measures to limit the spread and overcome the consequences of the COVID-19 epidemic. The Labour Code changes will allow employers to force employees to take their paid leave during the state of emergency. When a company's operations are suspended by government order, employees have to be paid no less than 50% of their net wages, but no less than 75% of the minimum wage.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

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## **Croatia**

### **COVID-19: Government requested to pay minimum wages for 253,000 workers**

*March 28, 2020*

The Labour and Pensions Minister announced that 43,000 employers sought assistance as part of the government's first set of measures to alleviate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the economy, asking the state to pay the minimum wage for 253,000 employees.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **COVID-19: Deferral of tax payments and social contributions**

*March 17, 2020*

The government adopted a financial package of €3.9 billion to support the domestic economy suffering from the spread of the coronavirus disease. The measures include deferral of payment of income and profit tax, and of social, and health and pension contributions by three months, with an option to be prolonged for a

further three months. According to the government, the main purpose of the measures is to defer public contributions for taxpayers who are in difficulty.

Read on: [in English ...](#) Read on: [in English \(2\) ...](#)

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## Cyprus

### **COVID-19: Economic aid package of €1.25 billion**

*March 27, 2020*

The government decided to introduce a new economic aid package to support businesses and workers for one month, thereby increasing its total economic assistance to €1.25 billion to allay the impact of COVID-19. The Finance Minister said it was important for the package to pass through parliamentary procedures by the end of the week, so that 280,000 workers and 60,000 businesses receive money in their bank accounts by the end of the month.

Read on: [in English ...](#) Read on: [in English \(2\) ....](#)

### **COVID-19: Measures to support jobs, workers and vulnerable groups**

*March 15, 2020*

The Labour Minister announced measures to support jobs, workers and vulnerable groups. The measures include granting leave to workers in the private sector who have to stay home to take care of their children, unemployment pay for workers of companies which have to suspend operations or suffer a 25% reduction in turnover due to coronavirus protection measures, sickness benefits, and remuneration for those who teach in the afternoon school of the Ministry of Education.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

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## Czechia

### **COVID-19: Suspension of minimum social and health taxes for the self-employed**

*March 25, 2020*

To counter the economic impacts of the coronavirus, self-employed workers are free from paying minimum social and health taxes for six months, after the parliament approved a bill to suspend these payments. Other measures were also announced to support employers and employees.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **COVID-19: Unions demand higher sickness benefits**

*March 20, 2020*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic many employees cannot work. Employees who have been quarantined receive sickness benefits, which account for 60% of their daily earnings, based on an average. Trade unions are striving to increase them, so far without a concrete result.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **Collective bargaining agreement reached after petition**

*March 5, 2020*

Trade unions in the company Mora Moravia celebrated their success after a petition signed by three quarters of the 600 workers led to a speedy conclusion of negotiations. Following the handover of the petition, a top

manager of the Gorenje Group and a representative of the Chinese owner agreed on a total wage increase of around 5.5%.

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## Denmark

### **COVID-19: Emergency package to support self-employed**

*March, 23 2020*

Together with all parties of the parliament, the government has passed a bail-out package to support the Danish economy in the extraordinary situation caused by COVID-19. The package includes a major temporary compensation scheme for the self-employed who are not directly covered by the tripartite agreement on wage compensation. The government and the rest of the parties will make sure that self-employed people experiencing a significant drop in turnover get compensation.

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### **COVID-19: State to pay 75% of salaries**

*March 15, 2020*

The government has entered into a tripartite agreement with the social partners on a package to support companies struggling with drastic measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus that would cover 75% of employees' salaries if they promised not to cut staff. Under the three-month aid period that will last until June 9, the state is offering to pay 75% of employees' salaries with a maximum of 23,000 DKK (€3,082) per month, while the companies pay the remaining 25%. Employees will be obliged to take five days of mandatory vacation or time off from work.

Read on: [in English ...](#)   Read on: [in Danish ...](#)

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## Estonia

### **COVID-19: Employers demand foreign labour**

*March 26, 2020*

The Employers' Confederation and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry support the demand made by farmers to the government to admit foreign agricultural workers to ensure Estonian food production. Unions believe the jobs should be offered to Estonians first.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **COVID-19: State covers 70% of salaries**

*March 20, 2020*

The government is to introduce a package of economic measures of €2 billion aimed at mitigating the effects of the coronavirus. The state will also temporarily halt contributions to the second pillar pension fund. In order to prevent layoffs at businesses that are undergoing difficulties, the unemployment insurance fund will cover 70% of workers' incomes for two months.

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## Finland



## **COVID-19: Social partners' proposal to the government**

*March 20, 2020*

The social partners have jointly submitted a proposal to the government to reduce the cost of employment, improve the flexibility of labour legislation and improve social security for workers who have become unemployed or been laid off. Their proposal includes a temporary reduction of employers' pension contributions, postponement of payment of earnings-related insurance contributions, a temporary increase of labour law flexibility, and improvement of income security for the unemployed.

Read on: [in English ...](#) Read on: [in English \(2\) ...](#)

## **COVID-19: Support package to prop up economy**

*March 20, 2020*

The government has announced a support package worth some €15 billion to support businesses and individuals as the economy enters a downturn. The broad range of measures aim to assist people and businesses suffering from the financial downturn due to the coronavirus pandemic. As part of the package the notice period for temporary lay-offs will be shortened from fourteen to five days, saving firms salary costs as they cut back. Workers laid off can claim unemployment compensation, provided they are a member of an unemployment fund. The waiting period before people can claim unemployment benefits will be eliminated, and freelancers will be allowed to claim unemployment benefits without shutting down their businesses.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

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## **France**

### **COVID-19: Partial activity with 70% pay**

*March 27, 2020*

In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on French economic activity, specific measures for employees and companies have been taken to deal with the current situation. An emergency act was enacted to allow the government to take exceptional temporary measures by means of ordinances. If there is a significant decrease in a company's activity due to the COVID-19, the company may be eligible to apply for partial activity, allowing them to temporarily reduce working time or suspend the employment contracts of their employees. Employees on partial activity will receive a specific allowance of 70% of the gross remuneration, paid by the employer, but covered by the state up to the limit of 4.5 times the minimum wage.

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### **COVID-19: European Commission approves state aid schemes**

*March 21, 2020*

The European Commission has approved three French state aid schemes to support the economy in the context of the coronavirus outbreak. Two schemes enable the public investment bank Bpifrance to provide state guarantees on commercial loans and credit lines, respectively, for enterprises with up to 5,000 employees. Another scheme provides state guarantees to banks on portfolios of new loans for all types of companies. This is direct aid to the companies that will enable banks to quickly provide liquidity to any company that needs it.

Read on: [in English ...](#) Read the Communication: [in English ...](#)

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## **Germany**

### **COVID-19: Short-time working conditions relaxed**

March 27, 2020

The government announced the Short-time Working Allowance Amendment which will make it more easy for employers to obtain a short-time allowance after they have implemented short-time work. The arrangements entered into force retroactively on 1 March. Once short-time working measures apply to 10% of the workforce (rather than the previous figure of 30%), companies can apply to the authorities for financial assistance, after consulting their works council. Employees working short-time receive compensation from the Federal Employment Agency.

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### **COVID-19: Unions demand higher short-time work allowances**

March 25, 2020

At a meeting between the trade union confederation, employers and the government where all agreed to share the responsibility in fighting COVID-19, the unions said that employers were not taking the situation seriously. IG Metall (the metalworkers' union) demands that employees receive wage subsidies in addition to short-time work benefits. IG BAU (construction workers' trade union) started a petition to call for an increase on of the short-time work allowances from 60% and 67% to 90%.

Read on: [in English ...](#) Read on: [in English \(2\) ...](#)

### **New agreement in the catering industry**

March 3, 2020

The Gewerkschaft Nahrung-Genuss-Gaststätten (NGG, Food, Tobacco, Hotel and Allied Workers Union ) and the Bundesverband der Systemgastronomie (Employers Association for the systems-based food catering sector) concluded a collective agreement with a significant increase of wages. Within four years, the lowest wage group will be raised to €12 per hour and all other wages will increase by 27.7%. The agreement covers about 120,000 employees in companies such as McDonald's, Starbucks, Burger King and Kentucky Fried Chicken.

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## **Greece**

### **COVID-19: Emergency package of €10 billion**

March 19, 2020

The government will inject €10 billion to support the economy during the coronavirus outbreak. As well as an earlier package of measures worth €3.8 billion, the government will spend another €3 billion from its own budget and an equal amount from EU structural funds to support private companies hurt by the crisis.

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## **Hungary**

### **COVID-19: Measures to support small enterprises and families with children**

March 27, 2020

In view of the coronavirus crisis, the Ministry of Finance announced measures to support 80,000 small enterprises and 60,000 families with small children. The measures include a moratorium on loan repayments, and the suspension and restriction of tax and other debt collection proceedings. Tax payments

for small businesses will be waived for four months. For families with children, the payment of maternity leave and childcare benefits that are due to expire will be extended.

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## Iceland

### **COVID-19: Government support for short-time work**

*March 27, 2020*

The government announced measures to support workers through the COVID-19 outbreak and encourage employers to reduce workers' hours rather than firing them. If full-time employees are given part-time hours during the crisis, the government offers them an unemployment benefit equivalent to their lost hours. On the day the registration opened, the Labour Department received 9,670 applications for the short-time work support.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **COVID-19: Layoffs at Blue Lagoon resort**

*March 27, 2020*

A total of 164 employees were laid off at the Blue Lagoon resort. The resort has been closed due to a ban on public gatherings of more than 20 people. After the layoffs, 600 employees remain, some of whom will work short-time in the coming months.

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## Ireland

### **Government announces National Covid-19 Income Support Scheme**

*March 24, 2020*

The new income support scheme includes a temporary wage subsidy to companies of 70% of the net wage up to a maximum weekly tax-free amount of €410 per week (€38,000 net per year) and up to €350 for an annual net wage between €38,000 and €76,000. Employees are expected to receive 100% of their normal wages for the time of the wage subsidy: 70% are covered by the state and 30% by the employer.

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## Italy

### **COVID-19: Union says bank staff may strike**

*March 24, 2020*

Banking staff who are working without adequate protection against the coronavirus epidemic may be forced to go on strike to ensure their safety, the head of the sector's main union FABI said. Faced with the outbreak of the new coronavirus, Italian banks have closed hundreds of branches and cut opening hours. But Italy's elderly population, especially in the south, is heavily dependent on help from tellers, and unions fear a surge in branch visits because of pension payments.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **COVID-19: Metalworkers want more businesses closed**

*March 23, 2020*

Three metalworkers unions in the Lombardy region, FIOM, FIM and UILM, said they would strike to protect the health of their members, because a government decree temporarily shutting many businesses due to the coronavirus contains too many loopholes and exceptions. The unions declared in a statement that the list of companies that can continue working has been extended and allows for too many exemptions. The unions announced a one-day strike.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **COVID-19: Warehouse workers on strike**

*March 17, 2020*

Workers at Amazon's Piacenza warehouse went on strike saying that the company isn't adhering to government rules on the containment of the coronavirus. The workers are protesting against the company's reaction to two of their co-workers testing positive for coronavirus. Amazon said it is following local guidelines and implementing extra safety precautions.

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### **COVID-19: Rescue plan of €25 billion**

*March 16, 2020*

The Italian government unveiled a rescue plan worth €25 billion to shield families and businesses from the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic. As part of the "Italy Cure" rescue plan, €10 billion will be allocated "to support employment and workers". Self-employed or seasonal workers can apply for a special payout of €600 in March and employees can claim time under quarantine as sick leave.

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## **Latvia**

### **COVID-19: Collective lay-off applications for 1,660 workers**

*March 23, 2020*

Due to the spread of COVID-19, ten companies have submitted collective lay-off notifications to the State Employment Agency (NVA), informing the agency of a planned lay-off of 1,660 workers. Lay-off notifications have been received from the transport, storage, accommodation and catering sectors, as well as wholesale and retail trade industries. Companies working in water supply, and sewer processing and waste processing industries have also reported plans for lay-offs.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **COVID-19: Union rejects lay-offs**

*March 16, 2020*

The Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (LBAS) calls on companies not to lay off large numbers of employees. LBAS says that companies should consult trade unions before making any decisions regarding firing, unpaid leave or short-time work.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

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## **Liechtenstein**

### **COVID-19: Short-time work: self-employed have to wait**

March 18, 2020

The government announced the rules for short-time work compensation to help the companies who register short-time work. Several million euros will be made available to companies that have to register short-time work. The self-employed will not get support from this regulation but will soon receive help.

Read on: [in German ...](#)

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## Lithuania

### **COVID-19: Support for short-time work**

March 18, 2020

The government approved changes to the law concerning state support during the emergency situation and the quarantine period. During idle time caused by an emergency situation or quarantine, employees must be paid at least the minimum wage set by the government (€607 gross for full-time employees). If company activities are restricted, the state subsidises 90% of the employee's wage (up to the minimum wage). If company activities are not restricted, the state subsidy is 60% of the employee's wage.

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## Luxembourg

### **COVID-19: The temporarily unemployed to fill crucial vacancies**

March 26, 2020

Supermarkets and logistics firms in need of extra hands call for workers side-lined by the coronavirus crisis to fill crucial transportation and grocery vacancies. For this goal the national Chamber of Commerce's House of Entrepreneurship launched the JobSwitch online employment platform.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **First women's 'strike'**

March 7, 2020

Women will march during a symbolic strike on Women's Day to protest the ongoing existence of inequalities between men and women, especially in the domain of care, both paid and unpaid.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

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## Malta

### **COVID-19: Rescue package of €1.8 billion**

March 18, 2020

A rescue package worth €1.8 billion has been unveiled to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the economy. The package includes a payment to companies of €350 per employee on quarantine leave, an additional two months leave for a parent who has to stay at home to take care of the children as a result of school closures, and a benefit of one day's wage per week per employee for a company registering 25% less sales. This amounts to around €147 per month per employee. A business that was asked to close as part of the COVID-19 measures will get two days of benefit per week per employee.

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## Netherlands

### **COVID-19: Government pays up to 90% of wage bill**

*March 17, 2020*

The government announced a series of unprecedented economic measures. The measures are designed to protect people's jobs and livelihoods and to minimise the impact on self-employed persons, small and medium-sized enterprises and major companies. The measures will ensure that companies are able to pay their employees' wages, grant a bridging arrangement for self-employed and relief companies through relaxed tax provisions, allowances and supplemental lines of credit. A company that expects to lose at least 20% of its revenue may apply for an allowance that will enable it to pay its employees' wages for three months, up to a maximum of 90% of the company's wage bill.

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### **COVID-19: Migrant workers fear dismissals**

*March 20, 2020*

Trade union confederation FNV draws attention to the unrest among migrant workers. Social distancing, an important measure to fight the coronavirus, is often difficult for them to perform living in often overcrowded hostels. Many also fear being dismissed which would mean losing their homes.

Read on: [in Dutch ...](#)

### **Reporting requirement for posted employees**

*March 6, 2020*

From March 1, foreign companies posting employees must report this to the authorities because from this date on they are covered by the legal rules applicable in the Netherlands regarding minimum wage, vacation days, working conditions and rest time. If a generally binding collective agreement is in force, they are also entitled to the rights in this collective agreement.

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## Norway

### **COVID-19: 100,000 temporary layoffs**

*March 22, 2020*

More than 100,000 people have been temporarily laid off in Norway because of the coronavirus crisis. Emergency legislation has allowed businesses to dismiss their staff with just two days' notice. Employees can be temporarily laid off from their job. The employer is then temporarily exempt from pay obligations, but the employment relationship continues, and it is assumed that the work stoppage is only temporary.

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## Poland

### **COVID-19: Social partners protest against attack on social dialogue**

*March 30, 2020*

Employer's organisations and trade unions protested against what they called an attack by the authorities on the independence of the country's Social Dialogue Council and the autonomy of social partner organisations, under the guise of measures to combat COVID-19. According to eight employers' and trade union organisations, new legislation adopted by the parliament contains a provision authorising the prime minister to dismiss members of the Social Dialogue Council during the period of the state of epidemiological emergency.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

### **COVID-19: Protection package for enterprises**

*March 27, 2020*

The Ministry of Development announced a special bill introducing a protection package for enterprises due to the increased incidence of COVID-19. The new regulation should support businesses and minimise the effects of the epidemic by, among other things, introducing debt relief and postponement of the payment of taxes and social security contributions, protecting employees and supporting the labour market, including measures to support companies forced to suspend their business operations. In the case of short-time work, employees will be entitled to benefits from the Guaranteed Employee Benefits Fund of up to 100% of the unemployment benefit.

Read on: [in English ...](#)   Read on: [in English \(2\) ...](#)

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## **Portugal**

### **COVID-19: Simplified lay-off**

*March 27, 2020*

Companies that are forced to close due to the state of national emergency will be able to access the simplified "lay-off" procedure. Companies that have been closed by administrative or legislative decision have access to the extraordinary employment support mechanism. According to the Minister of State, Economy and Digital Transition, the ordinance recently published that created the measure should be reviewed in order to simplify and clarify it. He added that it implies the suspension of the contract or the reduction of working hours. A general lay-off regime is already provided for in the Labour Code.

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### **COVID-19: Call-centre workers strike**

*March 26, 2020*

Call-centre workers are on strike because they are still doing non-essential work that should have been stopped. Call centres are among the workplaces most vulnerable to the spread of infection. Workers are at least 50 to a room, crammed onto shared tables with shared equipment and little space in between one another.

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### **COVID-19: Emergency package of €9.2 billion**

*March 18, 2020*

The government announced a €9.2 billion package to support workers and provide liquidity for companies affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The package is worth 4.3% of GDP, and €5.2 billion is assigned to fiscal measures such as flexible payment schedules for tax payments and social contributions and a reduction of social security contributions.

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## Romania

### **COVID-19: Measures regarding employees**

*March 23, 2020*

Several measures have been implemented in order to minimise the economic impact of the COVID-19 virus. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection issued a series of recommendations in order to make labour relations more flexible. The measures include the right to parental leave for one of a child's parents in the case of the temporary closure of schools, in which case the parent receives an allowance of 75% of their wage. An employee who is in forced quarantine will also receive an allowance of 75% of the wage. If an employment contract is suspended at the initiative of the employer, the employer should pay an allowance of 75% of the wage.

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## Serbia

### **COVID-19: Loans and subsidies to businesses and support for wages**

*March 30, 2020*

The government plans to offer about €5 billion in loans and subsidies to businesses to help them cope with the economic impact of the coronavirus. The state will also make a one-off payment of €100 to every citizen older than 18, or around five million people. The state would use €700 million to pay minimum wages of 30,367 dinars (€258) and allow tax delays for micro and small enterprises.

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### **COVID-19: Electronics manufacturer lays off 150 employees**

*March 26, 2020*

Finnish electronics and wiring systems manufacturer PKC Group has laid off 150 employees of its factory in Smederevo due to the supply problems caused by the coronavirus crisis. The 150 employees have been working part-time at the factory and were hired through an employment agency.

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## Slovakia

### **COVID-19: State pays part of salaries**

*March 31, 2020*

The government has presented its first economy aid plan how to help employers, the self-employed and companies to cope with the impact of the pandemic. The state will pay 80% of the employee's salary in companies that have had to close due to the COVID-19 virus. The state will contribute €180 per employee for companies whose revenues dropped by more than 2%, up to €540 per employee for companies with a more than 80% drop in revenues.

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## Slovenia

### **COVID-19: Double salary for doctors and nurses**



March 24, 2020

The government announced that they will provide €2 billion, equivalent to 4% of GDP, to help the economy and its citizens overcome the impact of the coronavirus outbreak. Many companies have had to stop production because of a lack of components or as part of measures to try to slow the coronavirus outbreak. Until the end of May, the state will pay a basic income to the self-employed whose business has been affected. Hourly wages of professionals, such as doctors and nurses working to fight the epidemic, will be increased by up to 200%, while the salaries of government officials will be reduced by 30% while the outbreak continues.

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### **COVID-19: Employers propose measures to mitigate lockdown**

March 23, 2020

Employer representatives proposed to the government measures to mitigate the impact of the lockdown that has been imposed to contain the coronavirus epidemic, including full coverage of sick leave in relation to the virus, partial pay compensation for workers who currently do not have work, and financial injections for companies.

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## Spain

### **COVID-19: Employers can unilaterally suspend contracts and reduce working time**

March 25, 2020

The government has approved a package of employment-related measures to cope with the economic and social impact of COVID-19. This package includes measures that employers can impose unilaterally, such as temporary suspension of contracts and reduction of working time by between 10% and 70%. Employees would be entitled to unemployment benefits to (partially) compensate the decrease of salary.

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### **COVID-19: Emergency package of €200 billion**

March 18, 2020

The government announced a €200 billion package to help companies and protect workers and other vulnerable groups affected by the coronavirus crisis. The €200 billion come in addition to the €14 billion announced earlier and represent nearly 20% of Spain's annual economic output. Workers will be entitled to unemployment benefits even if they have not paid enough in social security contributions. Those who become unemployed or lose their regular income will be able to postpone their monthly mortgage payments as well as their utility bills.

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### **COVID-19: 100,000 workers face layoffs**

March 17, 2020

More than 100,000 Spanish workers face losing their jobs as the economic damage of the coronavirus pandemic worsens, unions said. Large companies have sent tens of thousands of workers home under temporary layoff orders.

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## Sweden

### **COVID-19: Emergency package of €28 billion**

*March 16, 2020*

The government unveiled a series of economic measures worth up to SEK 300 billion (€28 billion) to protect companies and workers from the fallout of the new coronavirus. The measures include amended rules for temporary lay-offs, under which the government would shoulder a bigger share of the pay for staff made temporarily redundant.

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### **COVID-19: Sick pay from the first day**

*March 11, 2020*

The government is temporarily changing the first unpaid day of sick leave in response to the coronavirus. The decision means that workers will get sickness benefits from the moment they have to be absent from work due to illness, and the state rather than employers will foot the bill for the cost of the first day. Swedish law normally guarantees sick pay from the second day of illness, but concerns had been raised that employees would turn up at work despite feeling ill in order not to lose out on the first day's salary.

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## Switzerland

### **COVID-19: Work at construction sites stops**

*March 19, 2020*

Following a trade union campaign, the cantonal authorities decided to stop work at construction sites in Geneva and Vaud. There will be exemptions on a case-by-case basis, but also fines if necessary. Workers will receive partial unemployment benefits.

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### **COVID-19: Emergency package of €30 billion**

*March 20, 2020*

The government announced an additional CHF 32 billion (€30 billion) for the labour market, including tourism, culture and sports. This package is in addition to the CHF 10 (€ 9.5 billion) billion announced earlier to cushion the expected downturn caused by the virus. These measures are intended to safeguard jobs, guarantee wages and support the self-employed. The right to compensation in the event of a reduction in work will be extended to temporary workers and for people in an apprenticeship. Parents who have had to interrupt their work to care for their children after schools closed can claim compensation.

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## Turkey

### **COVID-19: Support for low-income families and low-paid workers**

*March 25, 2020*

The government announced an employment support scheme for all businesses and sectors to minimise the coronavirus outbreak's negative impact on the economy. The scheme is part of the government's larger Economic Stability Shield Package of TL 100 billion (€13.67 billion). Cash support to the tune of TL 1,000 (€137) will be given to low-income families and the lowest pensions will be raised to TL 1,500 (€205). For

people working for minimum wage, a total of TL 7 billion (€ 960 million) in cash will be provided. Health workers will receive the highest bonuses, while another 32,000 new health workers will be hired.

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## United Kingdom

### **COVID-19: Government pays 80% of salaries**

*March 21, 2020*

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the government would help to pay wages of companies as part of a programme of support for working, self-employed and unemployed people, as well as businesses. The government will cover 80% of the salary of workers who would otherwise be laid off to a total amount of £2,500 (€ 2,832) a month.

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### **COVID-19: Support for self-employed and vulnerable people**

*March 11, 2020*

The Chancellor of the Exchequer set out a £12 billion (€ 13.6 billion) action plan in response to the economic impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The package includes measures to support public services, individuals and businesses that may be affected by the outbreak. Measures will be taken to support the self-employed, those earning below the Lower Earnings Limit of £118 (€ 134) per week and a new £500 million (€ 567 million) Hardship Fund will directly support vulnerable people.

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