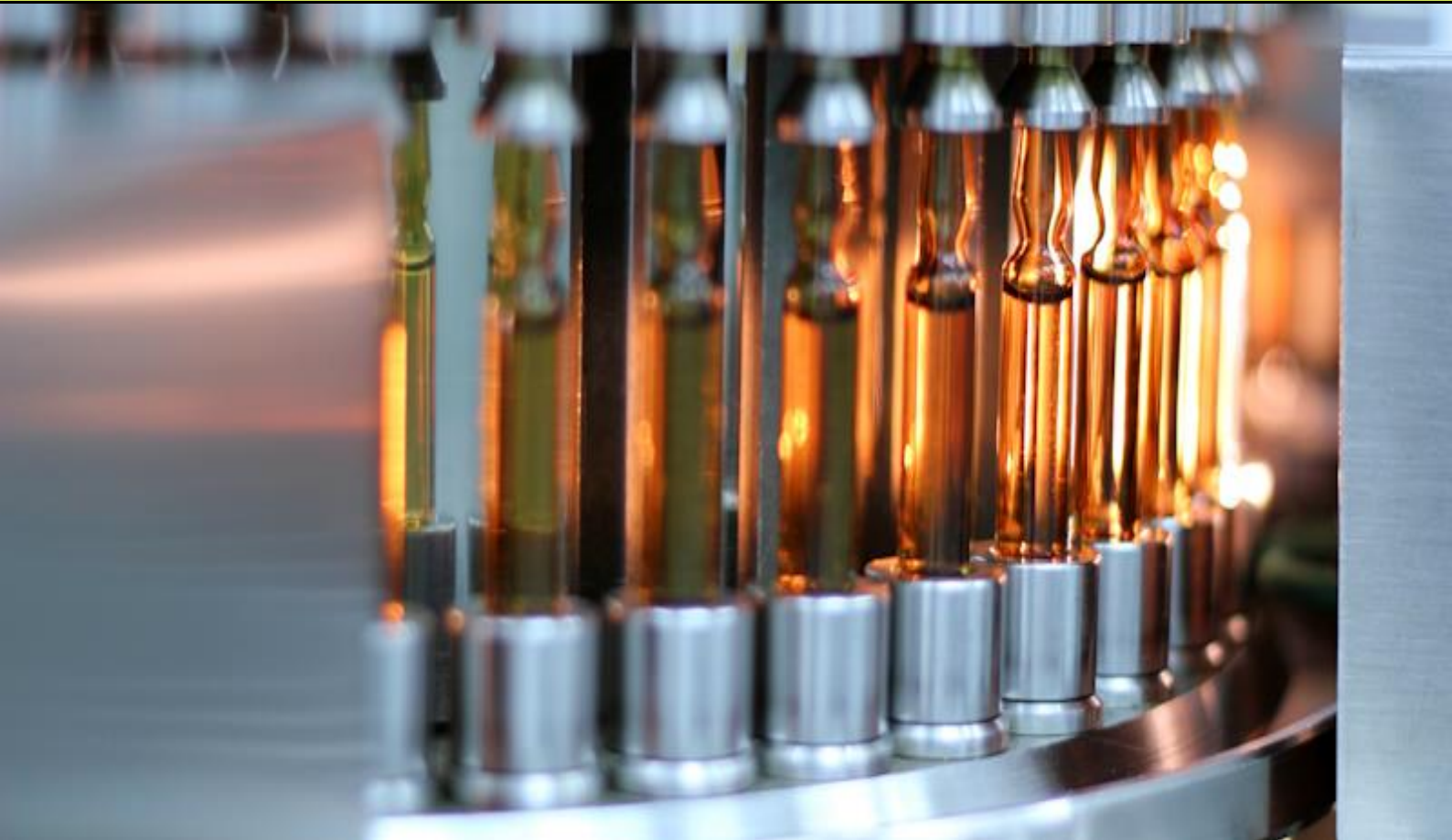


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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Latest updates on current status | Nordic-Baltic region
19.03.2020



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1. DENMARK

Containment restrictions

- travelling and movement
- conducting of business
- export

TRAVELING

The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has advised against all unnecessary trips abroad. The Danish borders have been closed since Sunday 15.3. Citizens of countries other than Denmark can only enter if they have a valid reason. This includes people who live or work in Denmark as well as people who deliver goods to / from Denmark or provide services in Denmark. It will however, still be possible to transport food, medicine and necessary means for industry production and it is emphasized that closing the boarders does not prevent import or export of goods. Normal business trips are not a valid reason.

BUSINESS CLOSURE

The latest measures were announced at a press conference by the Danish Prime Minister on March 17 in the evening. Restaurants and cafés are closed from March 18 and may only offer takeaway. Shopping centers, hairdressers, dentists and other shops that are in close contact with each other are closed. Supermarkets, pharmacies, post office and other everyday businesses remain open. Sports facilities and fitness center are closed. Meetings of more than 10 people are from March 13 prohibited - both in closed rooms and outdoors.

Business support

- government measures to support economy
- tax holidays
- incentives
- support programmes and funds

STATE-WAGE COMPENSATION

On March 15 the Danish government together with the Danish labor market parties (unions and employer associations) have agreed on a fixed-term compensation scheme to companies that suffer from lack of work to counter impending layoffs in the private sector. Employers who would have to lay off more than 30% of their workforce or more than 50 employees due to a lack of work or other corona-related consequences can receive a state salary compensation for a maximum of three months if, in return, they commit to not terminating any employees and instead send the employees home during the period while continuing to pay full salary.

The following state salary compensation is planned:

- For full-time employees up to 75% of the salary, max. however, DKK 23,000 a month.
- For hourly-paid employees up to 90%, max. however, DKK 26,000 a month.

Employees are not allowed to work during the period for which compensation is requested. In addition, 5 days of vacation or time of in lieu for overtime work or 5 days without salary are deducted for each employee. The regulation is to apply for the period from March 9, 2020 to

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June 9, 2020. Starting week 13, it should be possible to apply for salary compensation via the online portal www.virk.dk.

REIMBURSEMENT OF THE DAILY SICKNESS BENEFIT FOR COVID-19 INFECTED

If an employee suffers from COVID-19 or is therefore in medically or officially ordered quarantine, the employer can receive reimbursement of the daily sickness benefits from the first day of illness. However, the claim is limited to the maximum daily sickness benefit rate, currently approximately 14,300 DKK. The employer pays the difference to the normal salary.

Fixed-term compensation scheme:

On March 18, 2020, further measures to support small and medium-sized companies to secure jobs were introduced by the the Danish Parliament, however these measures are not yet adopted. These measures include, that the government wants to support companies with less than 10 employees with up to 75% of the loss per month, if it is to loose 30 % of its revenue, max. however, DKK 23.000 a month. Furthermore, the government wants to support particularly hard-hit businesses with up to 80% of their regular monthly expenses for e.g. rent. However, the detailed requirements for this have not been specified yet. The regulation is to apply until June 9, 2020.

Compensation for fixed costs:

On March 18, 2020, the Danish government announced further measures to support small and medium-sized companies, which have not yet been adopted by the parliament. This includes: Fixed cost compensation for companies with fewer than 10 employees who have lost more than 30% of its revenue. The compensation can amount to up to 75% of the fixed costs, up to a maximum of DKK 23,000. In addition, the government wants to support particularly hard hit companies with up to 80% of their normal monthly costs, e.g. Rental fee. However, no further details have yet been released. The regulation should apply until June 9, 2020.

Other government measures to support the economy include:

- Temporary suspension of the wage tax period by 4 months.
- Temporary suspension of the VAT payment deadline.
- State guarantees for existing or new entrepreneur loans from Danish banks.
- Compensation for organizers.

On March 19th the government presented 8 additional measures to support businesses:

- Compensation for self-employed
- Compensation for fixed costs
- Extended access to export credits
- Extended possibilities for loans with a state guarantee
- Public purchases that support companies
- State guarantee for the travel guarantee fund
- Expanded options for claiming unemployment benefit and sickness benefit
- Extended loan options for students.

Tomorrow's update will have details on these initiatives.

Working

- home office
- flexible working hours
- short-time work

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REMOTE WORK FOR PUBLIC SECTOR

The government has ordered all public employees to work from home, except when it is necessary to perform critical functions such as health care personnel, police, etc. Schools, kindergartens and public leisure facilities are closed.

REMOTE WORK FOR PRIVATE SECTOR

Private employers were advised to enable working from home as much as possible. The final decision rests with the employer, who is however obliged to ensure health and safety at work, and in particular to ensure that the applicable hygiene regulations are observed.

CHILDCARE

The employee must take care of his children himself and therefore ensure the best possible service from home. As far as the legal situation - in practice this will be difficult for a number of employees. In this case it is recommended to seek practical solutions.

SHORT TIME WORK

Short time work is only possible within the framework of collective agreements and only applies to workers. Short-time work can only be established with consent from both unions and employer organisation, but can come into force immediately after an agreement is reached. Short-time workers will then partly receive unemployment benefits from their unions (A-kasse).

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2. ESTONIA

Containment restrictions

- travelling and movement
- conducting of business
- export

From 17 March, there is a temporary restriction on border crossing for foreign nationals, excluding:

- International cargo (also food and medical supplies transport), as well as persons providing essential services (**such as fuel transport**); in such cases there is no requirement to follow the isolation rules;
- Foreigner nationals who hold an Estonian residence permit or right of residence, or have family members in Estonia;
- Foreigners with diplomatic immunity and privileges, persons serving in military units of NATO countries, service personnel and their family members;

Foreigner nationals are only allowed to transit Estonia on their way home if they do not show symptoms of COVID-19. If allowed to enter the country for transit, the person does not have to follow the isolation rules.

Estonian citizens and residents, among them holders of an alien's passport, can enter Estonia but need to self-isolate.

Isolation of persons returning from foreign countries: all persons returning from any foreign country are required to be isolated for 14 consecutive days.

Current exceptions to the movement restriction apply for residents of the twin city of Valga-Valka and for travelers with certain functions (providers of vital services, freight transport). Commuting for work purposes is allowed to people who permanently reside in Estonia but work in Finland. People who live in Estonia according to the Population Register but work in Finland can enter Estonia without a 14-day quarantine requirement if they do not have symptoms of the disease. Commuting between Estonia and Finland, and returning to Estonia, without a quarantine requirement is allowed only once in every seven days.

There are no restrictions on exiting the country.

There is no restriction on the movement of goods, including purchasing, selling, transporting inside the country, importing and exporting.

Cash payments are not prohibited (however, it is recommended to opt for other payment options).

Restrictions on the movement of people in the territory of Estonia apply only for movement between the mainland and the islands of Saaremaa, Hiiumaa, Vormsi, Ruhnu, Kihnu, Muhu and Manija.

Until 1 May, all museums and cinemas will remain closed. All concerts, conferences and sports competitions are prohibited. All sports halls, sports clubs, gyms, spas, swimming pools, water centres, day centres, and children's play rooms must remain closed. Hotels and other accommodation providers must close also their gyms, swimming pools, saunas and spas. The restriction does not apply to the provision of social and health care services such as food aid, social welfare services, medical and rehabilitation services.

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From 18 March, in the interests of public order, the right to the retail sale of alcoholic beverages throughout the state from 10:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. is suspended until the cessation of the emergency situation.

Business support

- government measures to support economy
- tax holidays
- incentives
- support programmes and funds

In order to alleviate the financial situation of companies, the Estonian Tax and Customs Board has decided to suspend the calculation of interest on corporate tax debts during the emergency situation; interest relief is applied retroactively from 1 March to 1 May. Businesses must continue filing timely and correct tax returns; a company in difficulty must reschedule the payment of tax arrears in the e-environment of the Tax and Customs Board.

The government has decided to support the Estonian working people and economy in the emergency situation with two (2) billion euros. The package of measures, which accounts for almost 7% of GDP, includes the following:

- Labour market service provided by the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund to support in case of reduced earnings - in the amount of EUR 250 million, under the following conditions:
 1. the benefit is available to any qualifying employer for a period of two months from March to May 2020,
 2. the allowance is paid on a monthly basis up to a maximum of EUR 1 000 (gross amount) per employee in need,
 3. the allowance shall be paid, as a general rule, at 70% of the gross salary of the employee during the previous 12 months, plus a gross amount of at least EUR 150 paid by the employer to the employee. The Estonian Unemployment
- Insurance Fund and the employer shall pay all taxes on wages and allowances.
- From March to May, the state shall compensate an employee's first three sickness days with regard to all sick leave certificates;
- Rural businesses can apply to the Rural Development Foundation for a guarantee (up to EUR 50 million), a working loan (up to EUR 100 million) or land capital (up to EUR 50 million);
- For self-employed workers, an advance social tax aid measure will be introduced;
- Contributions into the funded pension 2nd pillar will temporarily be suspended;
- Direct costs of cultural and sports events which were scheduled for March-April and cancelled due to COVID-19 shall be compensated in part

Working

- home office
- flexible working hours
- short-time work

Workplaces must use disinfectants, employees arriving from abroad are required to stay home for two weeks and monitor their health. The suggested solution is to enable the employee to work remotely from home. If this is not possible, both sides must reach an alternative agreement.

Employment law does not permit compulsory leave, but the employer and employee can agree mutually that the employee will stay at home for two weeks. If the employee is unable to work because the employer does not arrange work, the employer is required to pay the average salary according to § 35 of the employment law.

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Both parties must reach a mutual agreement in the case of unpaid leave. If an agreement is reached, the employee may be placed on unpaid leave. If the employee does not agree to unpaid leave, while the employer does not permit the employee to enter the premises, § 35 of the Employment Act applies.

Employer and employee can agree on a change of the conditions of the work contract. For example they can agree that while the employee is at home and doesn't work he will be paid a lower salary than agreed in the work contract. However, the employer can't do it unilaterally, but only in agreement with the employee.

In addition to the above options (remote work, unpaid leave, application of the § 35 and § 37 of the Employment Act) it is possible to agree to use mandated annual leave.

The spread of Coronavirus is one of the circumstances that allow the employer to reduce the workload and the salary of the employee for three months unilaterally according to § 37 of the Employment Act, if paying the agreed salary is an unreasonably heavy burden for the employer. It is permitted to reduce the salary to the minimum wage as determined by the Government of Estonia (584 Euros per month or 3.48 Euros per hour).

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3. FINLAND

Containment restrictions

- travelling and movement
- conducting of business
- export

Finland has announced it is closing its borders and suspending travel to Finland starting 19 March 2020 at midnight and until 13 April 2020. **This applies to everyone except Finnish citizens and foreigners with permanent residence in Finland.**

- Border crossing places in Northern Finland to Sweden and Norway will remain open for cargo traffic, returning passengers, work-related and other necessary crossings. Russia has closed its border with Finland as of 23:00 on 17 March 2020. The VR passenger rail service between Finland and Russia is suspended;
- Helsinki-Vantaa, Mariehamn and Turku airports are open for freight and return traffic, other airports will be closed to international traffic;
- According to the Finnish Border Guard, an assessment of the necessity of crossing the border is made at the border for each person individually, based e.g. on the reason of the person crossing the border. For example, certificates of employment are not required at the border;
- EU-citizens and those residing in another EU-country with a permanent residence permit are allowed to return to their home country via Finland, taking into account the person's state of health
- Employees returning Finland from abroad are subject to a 14-day quarantine period;
- Although commuting across borders is not hindered, foreign labor force access to Finland will become significantly more difficult by reductions in air and sea traffic;
- Public gatherings are limited to no more than ten persons. It is recommended to avoid spending unnecessary time in public places. Police begin to oversee public gatherings, as far as their resources allow.

Business support

- government measures to support economy
- tax holidays
- incentives
- support programmes and funds

Companies may receive an extension to tax return's filing deadline, or a relief for late-filing penalties, required that company presents a justified reason for the request (to which coronavirus counts currently). The request should be made to Tax Administration preferably until original filing date, or immediately thereafter.

NOTE: With regards of VAT, extensions for filing deadline cannot be granted, but a relief for late-filing penalties can be applied. Tax Administration has also declared its' readiness to agree on payment schedules for taxes due, also requiring timely reaction of the tax payer.

Finnish trade unions and employers agreed measures to support the labour market and promote temporary changes in legislation to shore up the weakening economy. The proposed package includes measures such as shortening the duration of lay-off talks and a reduction in employers' pension contributions by a total of 910 million euros this year. The package needs to be approved by the centre-left government.

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By law discussions about proposed lay-offs have to last at least 14 days. Under the agreement struck on Wednesday this period would be reduced to five days.

The reduction in employers' pension contributions would be taken from the buffer of the occupational pension scheme, currently at around 7 billion euros, and employers' contributions would be increased between 2022 and 2025 to rebuild the buffer.

Working

- home office
- flexible working hours
- short-time work

Remote work for public sector: public-sector employers will instruct public-sector employees to work from home if their duties make it possible to do so.

Remote work for private sector: Organizing remote work is not obligatory, but highly recommended for every private-sector company.

The Government issued a decree under the Emergency Powers Act to allow employers to respond to personnel shortage caused by the virus epidemic in critical functions of society. The arrangements concern working hours and annual holidays as well as notice periods in case of employee resignation.

The Decree may be applied to personnel working in health care and social services, rescue services, emergency response centres and police services. However, extension of the notice period does not apply to employees of police services.

The arrangements mean in practice the following:

- The employer is allowed to suspend or postpone the employee's leave;
- The employer could deviate from the obligation to obtain the employee's consent to work overtime, and from the provisions on rest periods;
- The employer could extend the notice period that employees are required to comply with to four months if a shortage of labour due to the virus outbreak is imminent.

If the employer resorted to these derogations, they would be required to pay special attention to employee health and safety. The derogations are intended to be temporary.

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4. LATVIA

Containment restrictions

- travelling and movement
- conducting of business
- export

On 14 March 2020 the Government of Latvia amended the measures taken as per the Cabinet of Ministers decree No. 103 of 12 March 2020, which declared State of Emergency in Latvia until 14 April 2020.

RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVELING/MOVEMENT

- As of 17 March all international transit of passengers through airports and ports, by bus and rail, except for the travel of passengers by State aircraft and military transport are suspended. The Minister of Transport may make exceptions concerning international travel of passengers upon receiving an appropriate request.
- As of 17 March the movement of passengers and vehicles through border crossing points at airports and ports, on road and railway lines at the external border of the European Union, as well as through the border crossing points intended for local border traffic, with the exception of the carriage of goods are prohibited. The Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Transport can make exceptions concerning the movement of persons and vehicles.

THERE IS NO RESTRICTION ON THE MOVEMENT OF GOODS (IMPORT AND EXPORT).

- Latvian nationals and permanent residents can enter the country at all times and foreign nationals may leave any time by a personal car or a specially organised public transport.
- Foreign diplomats accredited to work in Latvia as well as individuals in Latvia for humanitarian reasons and for purposes in Latvia's national interests are permitted to enter and leave the Republic of Latvia at the designated border crossing points.

There are isolation requirements for all persons returning from foreign countries for 14 days.

Business support:

- government measures to support economy
- tax holidays
- incentives
- support programmes and funds

During the session of the Cabinet of ministers, which is taking place **today (19.03.2020)** a law "On measures to prevent the state emergency and its consequences regarding the spread of Covid-19" is being discussed. Currently there is no information about the exact wording of the law, but according to the webpage of the Cabinet of Ministers, following aspects are included in the draft:

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State aid for the companies that are on downtime directly due to the COVID-19. Such aid will result in paying the salaries of the affected workers in an amount of 75%, with a maximum limit of EUR 700 per one employee. The company receiving support during such downtime would have to pay the taxes for the sums paid by the government as the salary for employees, but the payment of applicable taxes could be either split into multiple payments or postponed for a period of up to 3 (three) years;

An option of increasing the reserve capital of the Altum State Development Agency in order to allow the companies, suffering from the effects of COVID-10 crisis to use financial support mechanisms provided by Altum;

Guarantees for the affected small, medium and large companies (up to 50% and 5 mil. EUR for each company) with a maximum term of 2 years for the existing liabilities of the company;

Loans for affected small, medium and large enterprises with a maximum amount of 1 mil. EUR (for each company) and a maximum term of 3 years;

As of now (16.00, 19.03.2020) the outcome of the session of the Cabinet of Ministers is still unknown.

According to the information currently available, the government intends that companies will be able to submit a motivated request, which also evidences how COVID-19 has negatively affected the commercial activity carried out by the company (decreased turnover, disrupted supply chain, disrupted export of products, etc.), and to ask the State Revenue Service (SRS) to:

- Split the payment of taxes in several installments (instead of paying all at once);
or
- Postpone the payment of taxes for a time period of up to 3 (three) years.

If the SRS would decide that the request is justified, the SRS would also refrain from calculating the late payment penalty. In any case, in order to apply for the above-mentioned help, active action from the company would be expected and each case would be decided individually, taking into account the factual circumstances.

The Cabinet of Ministers has also supported the plan to provide various financial instruments to companies affected by COVID-19, which could be:

- Credit guarantee issued by the government (not exceeding 5 million and would not exceed term of 10 years);
- Loans to companies affected by COVID-19 for the purpose of mitigating / minimizing the consequences of COVID-19 (would not exceed 1 million per company for a maximum of 3 years).

Employment: In case an employee has contracted the virus or must stay in quarantine due to being in close contact with another family member with the virus or a contact person, the doctor will issue a sick-leave certificate B, which will be paid for by the state in accordance with the applicable regulations.

Working

- home office
- flexible working hours
- short-time work

As from 19 March only customers with prior booking will be served in SEB branches other banks are working in the usual regime.

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There is isolation requirements for all persons returning from foreign countries for 14 days. This is an obligation for all both public and private sector.

Public sector: State and municipal institutions are working remotly, e.g. State Revenue Service, The Register of Eneterpises and Land register. After consulting chairpersons of regional courts, chairperson of the Supreme court is entitled to take necessary actions in order to suspend or otherwise limit any in-person court hearings.

Private sector: There are no special requiraments to organise work from home, but companies that are able to do so, are doing work remotly from home to the extent that is possible.

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5. LITHUANIA

Containment restrictions

- travelling and movement
- conducting of business
- export

FOREIGNERS ARE BANNED TO ARRIVE IN THE COUNTRY, EXCLUDING:

- drivers and crew members in commercial and/or international cargo operations; foreigners who have the right to reside in Lithuania (ie non-EU citizens with a temporary or permanent residence permit and EU citizens with a certificate confirming the right to reside in Lithuania temporarily or permanently). Please note that visa holders do not have the right to reside in Lithuania and may, therefore, be refused entry;
- foreigners with diplomatic immunity and privileges, persons serving in military units of NATO countries, service personnel and their family members;
- until 19 March 2020 12:00 AM transit through the territory of Lithuania of persons returning to their country of residence without the necessary stop was permitted; Citizens of Lithuania are prohibited from leaving Lithuania unless they return to their place of residence, place of work;
- Isolation of persons returning from foreign countries: all persons returning from any foreign country are required to be isolated for 14 days.

There is no restriction on the movement of goods, including purchasing, selling, transporting inside the country, importing and exporting.

Cash payments are not prohibited (however, it is recommended to opt for other payment options). Restrictions on the movement of people in the territory of Lithuania do not apply.

Business support

- government measures to support economy
- tax holidays
- incentives
- support programmes and funds

TAX NEWS FOR BUSINESSES

The State Tax Inspectorate (STI) and State Social Insurance Fund Board (Sodra) has announced several measures to ease the tax burden for businesses in light of COVID-19 crisis.

- taxpayers are allowed to switch the calculation method of corporate income tax (CIT) from the retrospective method (advance CIT for Q1 and Q2 of 2020 is calculated according to previous year results) to forecast method (CIT for Q1 and Q2 of 2020 is calculated according to the financial results estimation) until March 30th. If the businesses that had profit last year are not expecting positive financial results in 2020, we recommend to switch to forecast method and avoid unnecessary payment of CIT.
- deadline for advance CIT reporting and payment (advance CIT for Q1 and Q2 of 2020) extended to March 30th instead of March 16th.

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- The STI will soon announce the list of taxpayers that are expected to have a negative impact in relation to the COVID-19 restrictions and will be by default entitled to the following tax reliefs:
 1. STI, Sodra and Lithuanian Customs will not initiate the execution of declared taxes / social insurance contributions (except customs duties) in case on non-payment of tax;
 2. Unpaid tax or social insurance contributions amounts will not be subject to late payment interest.
- Moreover, businesses will be available to conclude an interest free simplified tax loan agreement with the STI / Sodra and make the tax payments according to the agreed schedule. The application form for the tax loan agreement is currently being implemented and should be available online soon. One application form will be applicable both for STI and Sodra related payments and will be submitted through STI online system.
- Entities that have outstanding tax liabilities may apply for tax loan agreement and can expect the same conditions: no late payment interest calculated from March 16 and interest free tax loan agreement simplified procedure.

IMPORTANT: the above listed rules will be applicable until the state of emergency is cancelled.

TAX NEWS FOR INDIVIDUALS

The State Tax Inspectorate (STI) has announced that individual Personal Income Tax (PIT) reporting and payment deadline is postponed to July 1, 2020 (instead of May 1, 2020). So the individuals in Lithuania should not worry about the individual PIT reporting in face of COVID-19 caused challenges.

Also, individuals have time until July 1, 2020 to decide on donating a part of taxes (1,2 % of total payable PIT amount) to organizations (including HOSPITALS).

STATE SUBSIDIES FOR DOWNTIME PAYMENTS DURING LOCK-DOWN APPROVED BY THE LITHUANIAN PARLIAMENT

On 17 March the Lithuanian lawmakers urgently approved economic measures proposed by the Lithuanian Government to help businesses and employees mitigate the negative consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.

Employers, who closed down their businesses due to the lock-down, will receive two-sized subsidies which will be paid by the state during the lock-down period for up to 3 months. The employers on the other hand, have to keep their employees employed for another 3 months after subsidy payments are finished.

Businesses that did not have to stop their activities due to lock-down, but were affected in other ways, can expect a subsidy of 60 percent of their employee' s salaries. The remaining amount will have to be paid by the employers. Approx. 300 Mio. euros will be made available from the state budget.

The second subsidy will be available to businesses that had to completely shut down their activities due to the Government's decree and would cover 90 percent of the payroll costs. The government is still calculating how much state funds will be required.

In both cases, state subsidies would not exceed the minimum monthly salary in Lithuania, now standing at 607 euros gross.

Working

- home office
- flexible working hours
- short-time work

ADOPTED AMENDMENTS OF THE LITHUANIAN LABOUR CODE GUARANTEE MINIMUM WAGE DURING DOWNTIME AND ALLOW ADDITIONAL SAFETY MEASURES

The Lithuanian president approved yesterday the legislative package aimed to fight the negative consequences of the coronavirus. Today, new amendments of the Lithuanian labour code entered into force.

According to the new amendments, employers may declare downtime for an employee or a group of employees if a state of emergency or quarantine is declared by the Lithuanian Government and the employer cannot provide the employees with work according to the employment agreement.

Whenever downtime is announced during a declared state of emergency or quarantine:

- the employee cannot be required to come to the workplace;
- the employee is entitled to receive a salary that is not lower than the minimum monthly wage approved by the Lithuanian Government (currently 607 EUR gross), if full working time is established in the employment agreement. Furthermore, the employer is entitled to receive a compensation for a part of payroll costs incurred during the announced downtime.
- the employer may declare a partial downtime, reducing the number of weekly number days (reducing at least two working days) or the number of daily working hours (reducing at least three working hours). In case of partial downtime, normal salary is paid during working time and a reduced rate is paid proportionally during downtime, according to the procedure described above.

Another amendment of the Labour Code allows in case of a declared state of emergency or quarantine to suspend an employee from work without having to pay a salary. This is only allowed if the health condition of such employee endangers the health of others and if this employee refuses to work from home. The decision of the employer to dismiss the employee has to meet strict form requirements.

Also, the registration for the state grants will be available since 5 April at the Employment Services Under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania. Downtime can be announced retroactively, from the start of the quarantine, i.e. from 00:00 on Monday.

Remote work for public sector: state and municipal institutions, offices, state and municipal enterprises must organize work and service clients remotely, except when it is necessary to perform relevant functions at the workplace.

Remote work for private sector: It is not obligatory for private sector companies to organise remote work; however, it is recommended to do so. Therefore, we recommend to evaluate the possibility of remote work immediately and, if possible, organise it.

Announcing quarantine does not mean that employees in affected businesses may not come to the workplace automatically. Companies have to resolve these matters themselves and inform their employees accordingly. In case there are no possibilities to work from home or there is no work due to objective reasons, the employer can announce a downtime/inactivity period in the workplace. In case an employee has to take care of a child going to a kindergarten, pre-school or primary school, the employee is entitled to the sickness benefit for up to 14 calendar days amounting to 65.94 percent of gross salary. A draft law on compensation for "partial work" is currently under consideration.

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6. SWEDEN

Containment restrictions

- The Public Health Authority still urges people with symptoms, even mild ones, to avoid social contacts so not to infect others. This applies both in working life and in private life.
- Especially people over 70 years are encouraged to limit the contact with other people for as long as possible for some time to come.
- Prohibition of public gatherings and public events with more than 500 people are still accurate and the decision was made on March 11.
- All Sweden's upper secondary schools, colleges and universities are urged to keep closed and switch to distance education, was announced on March 17.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs still advises Swedish citizens against unnecessary travel to all countries in the world. The recommendation is valid until April 14, after which a new assessment will be made.
- The government stops travel to Sweden from countries outside the EU as from March 19 and 30 days onwards. For Swedish citizens and other persons residing in Sweden, but who are abroad, are however able to return home. The entry ban does also not apply to people who have particularly important reasons for traveling to Sweden, e.g. diplomats and persons in need of international protection.

Business support

Temporary deferral with payment of tax, which will enter into force on April 7. This deferral option concerns the payment of employer contributions, deducted tax and value added tax, which are reported monthly or quarterly. The opportunity is valid for 3 months for each tax during January - September 2020, and the deferral period may be set out for a maximum of 1 year.

Working

Employers who have the opportunity to let employees work from home should consider recommending this. The recommendation applies especially in the Stockholm region, where the spread of infection is currently most prevalent. **As of 19 March this recommendation applies to all of Sweden (even if the situation at the moment is worse in the Stockholm region).**

As of March 16 employers can order a short-time leave where employees' working hours are reduced by up to 60 percent while they retain 90 percent of their salary.

As from March 16, and for at least two months, no sick pay (day 2-14 of sickness) is not to be paid by the employer, this is instead to be paid by the government.

The qualifying day for sick pay will be discontinued between 11 March and 31 May and is to be paid by the employer instead. Thus, the employee is entitled to sick pay from the first day of sickness.

The requirement for medical certificate from the eighth day of the sick period shall be repealed. Hence, the employee can stay away from work without a medical certificate issued by a doctor.

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