



COVID-19 WATCH
ETUC BRIEFING NOTE
ON MEASURES
UNDERTAKEN IN THE
SECOND WAVE OF THE
PANDEMIC
TO PRESERVE JOBS AND
INCOMES
15 JANUARY 2021

Measures undertaken in the second wave of the pandemic to preserve jobs and incomes

This briefing note was originally produced on date November 27th 2020 and has been updated on December 4th 2020 and January 15th 2021. The latest update takes account of developments in Hungary, Italy, Germany, Bulgaria, France, and Croatia.

Novelties in the measures undertaken in the second wave of the pandemic

The measures undertaken by governments across Europe in this second wave of the pandemic are influenced by two particular circumstances.

The first one **is the way in which Governments have faced the first phase of the pandemic last spring**. In many instances, governments that had undertaken substantial measures during the first wave are more likely to prolong/renew them and/or revise them to better tailor them to the evolving situation. This is the case for Denmark, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Finland and Sweden amongst others. Similarly, governments that hadn't undertaken extensive measures are now keener to adopt restrictions, as in the case of Hungary. Also, the manner in which these measures have been adopted reflect the style of the first wave. In many countries social partners are consulted, whereas in others governmental decisions are made unilaterally (Hungary, Czech Republic). As outlined below, the impact of such a participative approach, or lack thereof, is reflected in the scope and the intensity of employment and income protection/maintenance measures, with different degrees of satisfaction from the trade union side.

A second circumstance that influences the measures in the second wave of the pandemic is the **reaction to the spread of the contagion**. In some countries, quasi-total or partial lockdowns are implemented, with consequent wide-spread protective measures that apply across sectors and employment conditions (Italy, Spain, Belgium, Austria). In some of these countries, the occupations covered by the measures have not been restricted, but rather they were provided to any employer proving that the contagion has affected their economic performance and consequently jobs (whereas in the first wave this circumstance was limited to a certain number of sectors specifically hit by the crisis). In other countries, such as Sweden and Hungary, where only some economic activities have been restricted, specific measures are applied only to certain sectors (restaurants and tourism in Hungary, for example).

In many member states, the measures implemented aim at limiting job losses and providing income protection/support.



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As compared to the first wave, the measures in the second wave have some innovative aspects in the conditions for employers to benefit from financial support. In Germany, Denmark and France incentives are provided so as to have unemployed and/or staff in short time work participate in training schemes. In Italy and Denmark, companies benefitting from redundancy funds are now prohibited from making individual or collective dismissals for economic reasons, unless collective agreements stipulate accordingly. At the same time, other countries (Austria) have removed the obligation to participate in training to have access to the short time working scheme.

Type of measures

Attempts to limit job losses are made through different types of financial support for companies. They usually consist in extraordinary state-funded redundancy allowances and suspension of employers' social contribution obligations. It is noted that in almost all member states further measures supporting self-employed owning small companies and additional sectors are included in the lockdown.

Most of the countries that have been analysed foresee that short-time work schemes are extended until January 2021, yet the possibility of extending them for a longer period is under discussion in almost all cases.

Overview of the measures undertaken across Europe aimed at employment protection and contrasting job losses

Short time work schemes are still in place in many countries such as Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Belgium, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Spain, Italy, Luxemburg, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden. In some countries (Belgium, Denmark, and Slovenia) the scheme can be extended to workers caring for a child who cannot attend school.

In a number of member states **temporary state-funded redundancy support** is provided to employees in companies whose activities have been affected by the crisis (Italy, Spain, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Germany). Access to these funds is often conditional to workers' protection against dismissals for a certain period of time (Italy, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Spain).

Exemption from /suspension/deferral of payment of social security contributions represent recurrent measures to support companies and self-employed workers as well as for and job maintenance.

Derogations to rules applied to fixed-term and temporary contracts are possible in some countries (Italy, Germany), and applicable only to some categories of workers and under specific conditions.



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Modifications of the entitlement to sick-pay benefits have been made in Sweden to prevent potential infected workers from going to work. In Belgium, the coverage has been increased from 60% of gross salary to 70%.

Overview of measures undertaken to protect workers' income

In most member states workers' wage/income protection during the second wave of the pandemic is ensured by the provision of **various temporary unemployment benefits**. Additional measures are also foreseen to provide **safety-nets** for those excluded from the labour market.

Minimum income protection schemes (both ordinary and extraordinary), such as in Italy and Spain, are expected to have a particularly high impact on atypical workers and people with low employment intensity, such as people with disabilities.

Unemployment benefits are foreseen for **people who have exhausted other benefits** (for example 200,000 beneficiaries in Spain). A similar program has been established in Cyprus and Denmark. The scheme in Cyprus is initially foreseen until December 2020, whereas the Danish one is intended for persons who lose their entitlement to unemployment benefits between November 2020 and November 2021.

Unemployment benefits for **those who have terminated their fixed-term contracts** are foreseen as general rule in Spain, Italy and Germany, among other countries. However, during the second wave of the pandemic, many countries have stopped subsidies to support workers with a fixed-term contract whose working relation comes to an end.

A **bonus payment** for unemployed people has been launched in Austria on top of the unemployment scheme. The amount is proportional to the number of days in unemployment.

Overview of measures undertaken with respect to specific categories of workers

Specific actions are also undertaken to support specific categories of workers, such as atypical and self-employed workers or workers in sectors particularly hit by the new lockdown measures.

Seasonal workers and workers in specific sectors affected by the new lockdowns may benefit from specific allowances. This is the case for workers in the performing arts in Denmark, Italy, Spain, and Bulgaria; and for workers in the tourism and restaurant sectors in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary and Austria.

Self-employed ceasing their activity due to Covid19 are provided financial support in several member states (Spain, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Finland).



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Self-employed workers receive occasional allowances and/or financial support in case of occasional work. In Finland, self-employed workers have been granted access to unemployment benefits even if they have not ceased their activity. This help is provided to those whose income is less than 1,089.67 EUR as a result of the crisis. In Cyprus, the emergency measures to protect employees have been extended to the self-employed (the monthly compensation amount ranges from EUR 300 to EUR 900).

In Croatia, measures have been made available to protect some self-employed workers. However, the conditions for qualifying for this help is very restrictive and only for a limited number of sectors, therefore leaving many self-employed workers and other non-standard workers unprotected.

In Germany, marginal part-time workers (also known as “mini-jobbers”) are not entitled to any Corona-specific benefit. The trade union movement calls on the government to put an end to these forms of employment where no social and unemployment insurance is provided.

However, in Germany, temporary agency workers have been granted access to short-work schemes.

When it comes to self-employed workers in Germany, there is a limitation in the effective access to short-time work, since a prerequisite for benefit for this allowance is the former contribution into the unemployment insurance and only a very small part of self-employed persons opt into the unemployment insurance. This is due to different reasons, but mostly because the conditions for their insurance differ and are less advantageous than for dependent workers. DGB advocates for a reform of the unemployment insurance so that more self-employed voluntarily opt into it.

In Hungary only self-employed workers from a selected group of sectors (entertainment industry and the beauty industry) have granted the right for receiving economic support.

Final considerations

The need to support workers in times of this lasting pandemic is clearly felt by trade unions, which ask for the prolongation of the extraordinary measures already beyond the foreseen limit of January 2020.

However, in the evaluation of the measures undertaken, the duration is not the only concern.

The effectiveness of job and income protection measures seem to vary on the basis of the pre-crisis capacity of the social protection systems to provide protection and support to workers at risk of job/income loss due to the closure of the activities and/or occurred contagion. Whereas some social protection systems (for example the Belgian, Finish, Danish, and Swedish ones)



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are showing a higher capacity to absorb these circumstances. Others (such as the Hungarian, for example) seem to leave workers more uncovered and unprotected. Such circumstances highlight the important role of social protection systems in absorbing shocks and downturns of the economy. The funding and the design of these systems had already proved to be inadequate in normal times.

There are still some categories of workers that do not fall into any short time/income protection effective measures: German Mini-jobbers; and workers in some sectors such as the arts/performing arts (the latter receiving some support from schemes other than the regular employment related social security). Poor measures for self-employed workers are also observed, especially if income replacement can only rely on extraordinary and one-off bonuses (Italy, Hungary) that do not effectively top-up decent income guarantees provided by the social protection system. Platform workers, generally considered as atypical and/or self-employed workers, also have very limited protection.

The situation for domestic workers remains a concern, only specific measures are referred to them in very few cases (Spain). Also a concern are migrant workers, often undeclared, who represent a huge rate of seasonal workers in the agricultural sector.

Care-related challenges during lockdown of schools and care services is still addressed in very few countries, with limited measures, with few exceptions (Belgium, Czech Republic, Slovenia Germany and Denmark). With lockdown measures being tightened in Germany i.a. through school and kindergarten closures at the beginning of 2021, the federal government jointly with the education authorities in the states on 5 January finally recognized an incompatibility of work (at home or outside) and parental home schooling at the same time. Subsequently, the parental sick-leave has been prolonged for 20 additional working days (10 per each parent or 20 for single-parent households). In case of school/kindergarten/creches closure, parents can now benefit from a total of 40 working days of parental sick-leave p.a. (20 days per parent).

The highest difficulties are once again experienced by those who haven't accrued sufficient social protection benefits in the course of their careers and that were inadequately protected even before the Covid19 crisis. The scarce funding and poor design of social protection systems is increasing inequalities. The inequality gap is also increasing between those covered by collective negotiations and social protection schemes – usual the standard workers – and the atypical ones, including self-employed workers.

The situation in the mid-term calls for the prolongation of the emergency measures at national level and the re-financing of the SURE, as instruments to prevent further and longer economic downturns and to reduce inequalities among different categories of workers.

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	EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME PROTECTION MEASURES					BENEFICIARIES A specific focus on non-standard workers						
Country	EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION - CONTRASTING JOB LOSSES	SHORT TIME WORK SCHEMES	UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS	Temporary health protection benefits	OTHER MEASURES	ALL WORKERS both permanent and atypical	fixed-term / temporary contract	atypical workers	artists / sport workers	people who have exhausted other benefits	self-employed workers - cessation of activity	domestic workers

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<p>SPAIN CCOO and UGT</p>	<p>Most of the measures that were already in place have been prolonged.</p>	<p>In April, 3.3 million workers were protected by short-work schemes, this was the maximum number of workers were covered by such a scheme. Currently, with data as of October, the scheme still supports 599,350 people (of whom 323,123 are women). These people maintain their employment, their social security and their right to unemployment benefits. This fourth extension of the short-work schemes will be in effect until January 31, 2021. However, as of October 1, the companies that can benefit from this support are limited to those belonging to sectors with a high rate of coverage by short-work schemes and a low rate of recovery of activity.</p> <p>Complementarily, a</p>	<p>Various temporary unemployment benefits have been implemented for all groups of workers, sometimes with specific benefits for atypical workers.</p>	<p>A temporary disability benefit due to Covid19 benefits 486,000 beneficiaries.</p>	<p>A Minimum Income Benefit is expected to have a particularly high impact on atypical workers and people with low employment intensity.</p>	<p>Temporary unemployment benefits due to suspension of activity in companies had 3.4 million beneficiaries during the first wave of the pandemic. There are currently 398,000 beneficiaries.</p> <p>Other unemployment benefits for both permanent and discontinuous workers have 32,870 current beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Until 21 July, a subsidy to protect persons affected by the end of a temporary contract was implemented and it run until 21 July.</p> <p>This program made it possible for workers whose fix-term contract had finished during the confined state of the first wave of the pandemic to be granted to this subsidy. A total of 8,000 beneficiaries benefited from this scheme.</p>	<p>Other unemployment benefits for both permanent and discontinuous workers have been made available, reaching 32,870 beneficiaries.</p> <p>Some of the measures aimed at supporting self-employed workers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Exceptional consideration as a situation assimilated to an accident at work during the periods of isolation or contagion. * Extraordinary benefit for cessation of activity. * Extraordinary measures regarding contributions in relation to the procedures for the suspension of contracts and reduction of working hours due 	<p>An exceptional unemployment benefit has been created for technical and auxiliary personnel in the cultural sector. This subsidy is available to workers who have temporarily provided their services as technical or auxiliary personnel in the cultural sector (2,000 beneficiaries have been estimated). This measure have been extended until January 2021.</p>	<p>A special unemployment benefit has been approved for persons whose benefits have come to an end between March 14, 2020 and June 30, 2020 and who are not entitled to any other benefits (it is estimated that 200,000 beneficiaries will benefit from this scheme).</p>	<p>An extraordinary benefit for cessation of activity due to Covid19 has been made available for self-employed workers (1.5 million beneficiaries are estimated to benefit from this scheme)</p>	<p>A subsidy had been put in place to protect domestic workers and it run until July 21. It protected 50,000 beneficiaries.</p>
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	<p>new mechanism of short-time work schemes is regulated for companies with impediments or limitations to activity due to the health containment measures adopted as from 1 October 2020.</p>						<p>to force majeure related to covid-19. * Moratorium on social security contributions. * Deferment of payment of Social Security debts. Attempts, through social dialogue, are being made to give greater coverage to platform workers (some platform workers have already been able to benefit from the measures put in place for self-employed workers). * Extraordinary severance benefit for seasonal workers. * Support for contracts of a permanent and discontinuous nature in the tourism, commerce and hotel and catering sectors linked to tourist activity.</p>			
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<p>AUSTRIA</p>	<p>The confinement measures have been relaxed as compared to those implemented during the first wave of the pandemic. All stores are open, yet cultural institutions, restaurants and hotels remain closed. Kindergartens and schools for children until the age of 14 are open, whereas for older pupils and students distance learning is in place.</p>	<p>The following changes have been implemented to the short time working scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The minimum working time to accrue access to the scheme has been lowered from 30% to 0% as of November. * A 100 Euro tip replacement has been made available for waiters and waitresses. * The previous obligation to undertake training during the short time working scheme has been removed. 	<p>The following bonus payments for unemployed people during the period from October to December have been made available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 150 euros additional if one is 15 days or more unemployed * 300 euros for 30 days or more * 450 euros for 45 days or more <p>The ÖGB has however requested a better coverage which makes it possible for unemployed people to get a replacement of 70% of the salary.</p>										
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<p>CYPRUS</p>	<p>Special scheme for hotel units and tourist accommodation. The scheme provides wage compensation for up to 90% or 97% of the employees of the mentioned sector, under the prerequisite that workers are not made redundant until March 21st.</p> <p>Wage compensation of 50% for workers of sectors affected by the pandemic (expiring in December 2020), under the prerequisite that workers are not made redundant.</p> <p>Wage compensation of 97% for workers of sectors severely affected by the pandemic of 50% (expiring in March 2021), under the prerequisite that workers are not made redundant.</p>		<p>A wage compensation is provided for workers who are absent from work due to health reasons as a precaution to Covid-19 or lockdown for those professions which do not allow telework.</p>				<p>A special support is foreseen for workers of very small companies (up to three employees).</p>		<p>A special unemployment benefit of EUR 500 per months for workers who have exhausted their unemployment has been made available until December 2020.</p>		<p>Prolongation of emergency measures to protect employees and self-employed. For the self-employed, the compensation amount ranges from EUR 300 to EUR 900 for a four-week period.</p>	
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<p>ITALY UIL +CISL</p>	<p>The "Redundancy Fund" has been prolonged to January 2021 and it is possible that it may be extended to March 2021. It would thus cover a total of 36 weeks for beneficiaries since the beginning of the pandemic.</p> <p>Measures of the updated decree mentioned above will vary in relation to the regional restrictions applied in the country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redundancy funds (see specifics in cell G5). - For those who do not activate the redundancy fund, an exemption from social security contributions is granted for a maximum of 4 weeks. - A temporal suspension from payment of social security 	<p>Unemployment benefits via the Redundancy Fund.</p> <p>Allowances for workers and employees with temporary and flexible contracts.</p> <p>Allowances for some types of self-employed workers.</p> <p>Allowances for some categories of workers.</p>	<p>The "Emergency Income" schemes has been extended to the months of November and December.</p>	<p>6 weeks of redundancy funds paid by state social protection funds to be used between mid Nov 2020 and 31 Jan 2021 are made available to for employers affected by new restrictions or those already authorised in the past.</p>	<p>Some derogations concerning fixed-term contracts have been extended from spring 2020. Covid-19 legislation provides that fixed-term contracts can be extended or renewed until December 31, 2020 for a maximum period of 12 months and only once (this is subject to the ceiling provided for by law of 24 months of total duration for a fixed-term contract for the same employer and the employee).</p>	<p>1,000 euro allowances have been approved for some types of workers with discontinuous and fragmented careers (seasonal workers; temporary agency workers; workers in the tourism and spa sectors; workers with fixed-terms contracts in the tourism and spa sectors; workers with jobs on call). This measure has been extended until November 2020.</p> <p>A non-refundable contribution for active VAT holders in the sectors particularly affected by the new measures in the relation to a specific turnover conditions has been established. The total resources allocated to this measure amount</p>	<p>A 1,000 EUR allowances for workers in the entertainment industry has been approved (extended until November 2020).</p> <p>800 EUR allowances have been approved for "sports collaborators" whose activities have ceased, reduced or been suspended.</p>	<p>Allowances have been approved for some types of self-employed workers (those with occasional self-employment contracts and workers in charge of home sales).</p>
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<p>contributions for employers affected by the new restrictive measures and for some sectors (agriculture, fishing, aquaculture sectors, beer and wine production, farmers).</p> <p>To benefit from this scheme, collective and individual dismissals are banned until January 2021 (and possibly until March 2021). There are however some exemptions to this ban, such as the permanent cessation of company's activity; the termination of employment relationship as a result of a collective agreement signed by the most representative organisations at national level; and</p>							<p>to 50 million euros for 2020.</p>				
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<p>FINLAND SAK</p>	<p>There has been no substantial changes to the short-work schemes with respect to measures set out as a response to the first wave of the crisis.</p> <p>By the end of September, the number of people temporary laid off was 73,600; amounting to an increase of 60,000 workers in one year.</p> <p>Definitive redundancies have been made for 56,700 workers, representing an increase of 48,400 from September 2019, yet the number decreased by 4,200 from August.</p>	<p>The already-existing lay-off scheme of limited duration has been extended until the end of the year. Under this scheme, when temporary laid-off, the employee is entitled to the unemployment benefit. The procedure to grant access to this scheme has been simplified and the qualifying period has been shortened.</p>	<p><i>income integration for SEW in derogation to normal rules until end of 2020.</i></p>									<p>Self-employed have been granted access to unemployment benefits without the need to close their business. The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (KELA) can pay self-employed persons an allowance if their full-time employment in their business has ended, or if their income from self-employment, because of the epidemic, is less than EUR 1,089.67 per month.</p>	
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<p>GERMANY DGB</p>	<p>The rules on short time work set out to face the first wave of the crisis have been prolonged.</p> <p>There is possibility of combining short time work schemes with training opportunities. The scheme consists of providing incentives to companies facilitating training to its staff via the re-fund of 50%-100% social security contributions if the employee takes part in training during short time work.</p>		<p>With the exception of "marginal part time workers" and the subcategory of short time workers (mostly seasonal), all forms of non-standard workers have a compulsory health insurance and as such access to sickness benefits as a general rule. "Marginal part time workers" also have a compulsory health insurance, but this is not provided through the working relationship but in the context of family health insurances or additional social benefits. This scheme gives them access to sickness benefits provided by the employer for a maximum of 6 weeks. Once</p>	<p>With lockdown measures being tightened i.a. through school and kindergarten closures at the beginning of 2021, the federal government jointly with the education authorities in the states recognized an incompatibility of work (at home or outside) and parental home schooling at the same time. Subsequently, the parental sick-leave has been prolonged for 20 additional working days (10 per each parent or 20 for single-parent households). In case of school/kindergarten/creches closure, parents can now benefit from a total of 40 working days of parental sick-leave p.a. (20 days per parent).</p>	<p>Workers with temporary contracts do not need a specific program to be protected in the context of the pandemic. They have normal access to the short-time-work scheme. In case the contract ends during this period, they become unemployed and they are protected by unemployment benefits.</p> <p>An exception has been set out for scientific and artistic personnel in universities and scientific institutions who are in their period of qualification (e.g. PhD). For these cases, the maximum period for temporary employment can</p>	<p>Temporary agency workers have access to short-time-work benefits. This was a temporary measure which was originally adopted for the period March 2020 to December 2020. It has been prolonged until December 2021, if the company introduces short-time work by March 2021.</p> <p>Until now, ca. 200.000 have benefitted from the regulation. This said, DGB has followed the development of the situation of 162.216 temporary agency workers who became unemployed during this period and who have been placed directly in unemployment, without been protected by</p>			<p>Three measures for self-employed workers have been approved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support for the fixed costs of the activity (loans, rent, machinery, etc.), called "bridging aid" by the federal state. Only 123,000 entrepreneurs submitted an application, for around € 1.5 billion of the € 25 billion made available. The reason is, that many self-employed people don't have (many) fixed costs. With the new lockdown phase established as from November 2020 a new scheme was announced encompassing not only self-employed workers but also companies, businesses, associations and institutions affected by the
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			<p>expired, they usually don't have access to further sick pay by the health insurance.</p> <p>Seasonal migrant workers have generally no access to any kind of social benefits in Germany and have a high risk of contracting the virus due to poor housing conditions.</p>		<p>be extended for another 12 months (providing that they were signed between March 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021).</p> <p>The already existing possibility of short term work with no compulsory social security, which has been established mostly for seasonal workers has been extended to 115 annual working days. This regulation expired in October 2020 and it has not been prolonged as of yet. The extension of this scheme is expected to be requested by agriculture employers.</p>	<p>short-time-work.</p> <p>Marginal part time workers (also known as minijobbers) are the most affected workers during the pandemic. They are not integrated into the unemployment insurance and they do not have access to short-time-work schemes. At the end of April, 250,000 exclusively marginally employed people had already lost their jobs. Compared to the previous year, from April to June 2020 there was a monthly decline in the overall marginally paid employees (exclusively and as a second job) of around half a million per month. DGB is asking for a complete</p>		<p>temporary closings. The reimbursement amount is 75% of the corresponding sales for the same month last year for companies with up to 50 employees, with which the company's fixed costs are aggregated.</p> <p>2. In relation to living-costs, self-employed workers can apply for basic social benefits "Hartz IV" without any prior assets-testing. Costs for rent are completely covered. As a result of the corona pandemic and the simplified access regulations, the number of self-employed who benefited from the Hartz IV scheme rose by 73,000 and the number of employees (including short-time workers) by 94,000 over the</p>
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						conversion of marginal part time work with compulsory social security.			course of the year (data up to September 2020). 3. In some federal states, more allowances have been introduced-
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<p>HUNGARY SZEK/KKDSZ</p>	<p>Specific measures for support employment have been approved but only for workers in the hotel and restaurants sectors. The state will reimburse hotels 80 % 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. Employers will get a 30-day exemption from having to pay social contributions for staff in restaurants and recreational facilities. Also, the state will cover 50 percent of these employees' salaries on the condition that they keep their jobs and continue receiving their salaries.</p>												
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<p>SWEDEN TCO</p>	<p>In Sweden, several measures to support jobs and companies implemented at the beginning of the crisis have been extended. These measures include short-term layoffs, deferrals of tax payments, adjustment support and sales support to individual traders.</p>	<p>On 21 September, the government proposed that the increased salary compensation levels should remain until 2022.</p>	<p>To cushion the impact of the corona pandemic on the finances of individuals, companies and society, the government and the social partners have agreed on temporary changes in rules and compensation levels of unemployment insurance funds. The rules are temporary and apply until 2022.</p>	<p>The first day of sickness is usually not covered by the health insurance. To avoid that people go to work even if they fell sick for economic reasons, the government has temporarily suspended this deduction. Individuals who stay home because they are sick are now compensated also for the first day of sickness. The suspension of deductibles is also encompassing self-employed workers, under certain conditions.</p> <p>The first 14 days, employers compensate their sick employees through a sick pay that amount to 80 percent of</p>							<p>The measures taken are general, they encompass all different kinds of employments, as well as those who are self-employed.</p>	
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			<p>the salary. This sick pay is regulated through collective agreements. To reduce the cost for employers the government has taken over this cost. The measures have been extended to the end of 2020, and there is an ongoing debate about the need to extend these measures further into 2021.</p>							
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<p>BELGIUM ACV-CSC</p>			<p>On 6 November 2020, the federal government decided to reintroduce the simplified temporary unemployment procedure for all employers and employees (blue and white collar workers) from October 2020 to March 2021.</p> <p>Consequently, from October 2020 onwards, all temporary unemployment, due to coronavirus, can again be considered as temporary unemployment due to force majeure. It is irrelevant whether the employer is recognised as an exceptionally hard-hit company or belongs to an exceptionally hard-hit sector.</p> <p>A major recent</p>	<p>These rules on sickness benefit coincide with coronary unemployment, thus also extending the increased benefit until 31 March 2020. Sickness benefits normally amount to 60% of the gross salary. After pressure being exerted by the trade unions, the sickness benefit has been increased to 70% for sick days from 1 March to 31 December and further extended till 31 March 2021. This increase does not apply to periods of illness that started before 1 March 2020, nor to sick days covered by guaranteed salary.</p>	<p>Temporary unemployment due to the care of a child: from October 2020 to December 2020, workers in the private sectors can also claim unemployment benefits when looking after underage or dependent disabled children who cannot attend the day-care centre, health facility or school.</p>			<p>Self-employed workers are granted a monthly payment amounting to a maximum of EUR 1,291.69 (EUR 1,614.10 euros for self-employed workers with family responsibilities).</p> <p>In the light of the second wave and with the closure of the hospitality sector, the government announced that allowances will be doubled (EUR 2,583.38 per month for self-employed person, EUR 3,228.20 for a self-employed workers with family responsibilities).</p>				
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change brought about on September 1st, relates to what can be considered force majeure. Before, the interpretation was flexible, but now it only applies to the sectors and employers who have been particularly hard hit by the crisis.

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<p>SLOVENIA ZSSS</p>	<p>The tripartite national social dialogue body has negotiated key COVID-19 legislation concerning the mitigation of the impact of the pandemic in the labour market. Six packages of measures have been discussed so far, the last two relating to the second wave of the pandemic.</p>	<p>On October 24th the Slovenian social partners and the government reached an agreement over the fifth extension of the measures implemented since the outburst of the first wave of the pandemic for the extension and upgrading of the measures.</p> <p>The short-work scheme is established as 80 % of average monthly gross wage from the last three months at work - the amount granted should not be below the minimum wage.</p> <p>Besides the short-work schemes, a set of schemes to support loss of income due to quarantine of workers envisage different compensations according to the causes for the isolation</p>			<p>On October 24th the Slovenian government adopted a package of economic measures to support public health and social services. One of the measures of this package also included a compensation for loss of income for workers looking after children in quarantine.</p>							
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		<p>[Quarantine ordered due to arrival from the high-risk area (red countries); Quarantine ordered on suspicion of the contact with an infected person outside the workplace; Quarantine ordered due to the contact with an infected person during worktime; employee to whom the employer orders self-isolation for preventive reasons, among other].</p>								
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<p>CZECH REPUBLIC CMKOS</p>	<p>Compensating measures in the Czech republic have remained relatively the same as during the first wave of the COVID-19 epidemic. The Czech trade unions complained about lack of transparency by the Czech government in the implementation of these measures, which has also made it difficult to collect reliable data when it comes to their impact.</p>	<p>More permanent reform of a short time work scheme legislation is currently being discussed. The potential beneficiaries of the temporary program is estimated to be up to 1,4 million workers.</p> <p>In the Czech Republic, schemes to protect workers' income are being implemented, employees' wages are initially paid from the state budget in companies affected by the economic impact of the containment measures. A total of 486,484 employees have received this support so far. These schemes have reduced the current unemployment rate on the Czech labour market by at least 2 to 3 percentage points.</p>	<p>A program for support related to partial employment (named "kurzarbeit") is being prepared, this aim at responding to emergencies in the labour market and to allow companies to receive state funds up to 70% of the level of wages of workers endangered by potential redundancies.</p>					<p>No long-term reforms addressing the qualifying conditions for non-standard and platform workers are currently planned.</p>			<p>Several temporary support schemes have been introduced for protecting self-employed workers. The measure range from child-care leave support, suspension of tax payments and social security contributions, government-supported loans to a variety of direct financial contributions both generally attainable and specialised for the most affected areas of business.</p> <p>In addition, there are other programs to support affected entrepreneurs, for example rent rebates, social security waivers, support for the self-employed (self-employed persons who are unable to carry out their activities due to covid - 500 CZK</p>	
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daily allowance), which also indirectly reduce unemployment. However it is difficult to get accurate information of the extent of its implementation.

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<p>FRANCE FCDT and FO</p>	<p>Long-term partial activity (APLD) is a scheme aimed at ensuring that jobs are maintained in companies faced with a reduction in sustainable activity and that is not likely to compromise their sustainability. It is therefore not intended to respond to cyclical or one-off drops in activity (for example, for the duration of a confinement period). Moreover, the APLD must be the subject of a collective agreement (company, establishment, group or branch). This agreement must, in principle, be a majority agreement. In all cases, it must include a preamble dealing with the diagnosis of the economic situation and business prospects.</p>	<p>Partial activity: The objective of this scheme is to avoid redundancies and to preserve the jobs and skills of employees. This system allows employers to reduce or eliminate employees' working hours, subject to obtaining prior authorization from the administration. The activity can be total or partial.</p> <p>The partial activity may be used by companies that experience a decline in activity related to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the economic situation ; - difficulties in the supply of raw materials or energy; - a disaster or bad weather of an exceptional nature; - the transformation, restructuring or modernization of the company; - any other 											
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<p>The benefit of the partial activity scheme on the basis of an APLD agreement is granted for a maximum of 24 months, consecutive or not, over a period of 36 months. Aid is granted by the administration for 6 months, renewable 3 times. The hourly reduction in the case of APLD may not, in principle, exceed 40% of the legal duration per employee on average over the duration of the agreement. The rate of compensation paid to the employee is 70% of the gross salary. For employees placed in APLD as of November 1, 2020, the hourly rate of the allowance paid to the employer corresponds to 60% of the</p>	<p>exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>The partial activity during the period of the Covid-19 crisis falls within the framework of circumstances of an exceptional nature.</p> <p>Until December 31, 2020, the partial activity indemnity paid by the employer to the employee is set at 70% of the gross salary serving as a basis for the vacation pay according to the rule of salary maintenance.</p> <p>As of January 1, 2021, the compensation paid to the employee is revised downwards. It is set at 60% of the gross salary serving as the basis for vacation pay under the salary maintenance rule, up to a limit of 4.5 times the hourly minimum wage ;</p>											
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<p>previous gross salary (70% for some sectors classified as “protected”).</p> <p>The existence of commitments in terms of employment and training is a condition for the APLD agreement to be validated and the unilateral document taken in application of an approved branch agreement. Unless otherwise stipulated in the agreement, the commitments in terms of job maintenance cover all jobs in the establishment or company.</p> <p>The AP and APLD may be activated at the same time, in the same company, but for different employees or for the same employees over different periods.</p>	<p>70% of the gross salary to employees within vulnerable sectors identified by decree including the following sectors: aviation; catering; hospitality; sport; culture.</p> <p>The employer now received an allocation calculated on the basis of 60% of the gross wage, within the limit of 4,5xSMIC, with a floor of 8,03€ per hour. From 1st of February 2021 it shrank to 36% of the gross wage, still within the limit of 4,5xSMIC, with a floor of 7,23€ per hour (employers within certain sectors affected by specific legislation or regulation within the context of the sanitary crisis would still receive an allocation with a rate of 70%).</p> <p>Duration of the authorization to use partial activity</p>											
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	<p>Prior to March 1, 2020, the partial business license could be granted for a maximum period of 6 months (and renewed under conditions). Since March 1, 2020, authorisation for partial employment is granted for a maximum period of 12 months, renewable subject to the employer's entering into specific commitments¹⁰. As from January 1, 2021, the maximum duration of the authorisation will be reduced to 3 months, renewable for up to 6 months, consecutive or not, over a period of reference of 12 consecutive months, except in case of disasters or bad weather.</p> <p>Training and employment commitments</p>										
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	<p>The use of training actions during periods of partial activity promotes the employability of employees and strengthens the skills of companies. The employer is invited to offer employees one or more training courses during off-hours.</p> <p>The State covers 100% of teaching costs with no hourly ceiling. Compensation for employees undergoing training during partial activity: In principle, for employees undergoing training during the period of partial activity (in particular within the framework of the training plan), the hourly compensation is 100% of the previous net remuneration. However, for training courses for</p>										
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	<p>which the employer has given its agreement as of March 29, 2020, the allowance for persons undergoing training has been reduced, and aligned with the ordinary compensation, i.e. 70% of the gross remuneration, until December 31, 2020 (60% from January 1st, 2021)</p>									
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<p>On 27 October 2020, an agreement was concluded, between the parties of the Danish parliament, to extend the existing relief packages to sectors such as event organisers, self-employed, freelancers, [including arts support schemes for artists with combination incomes and those whose activities are seasonal (including compensation for suppliers to companies affected by the ban on opening and restrictions of opening hours and suppliers to private parties and social events with at least 50 participants held outside of private homes)], the guarantee scheme in the Travel Guarantee Fund</p>	<p>Tripartite Agreement on a New, Temporary Work-sharing Scheme in the Private Sector Labour Market</p> <p>The Government and the social partners have agreed in the Gradual Phase-Out of the Temporary Job Retention Scheme to consider a new temporary work-sharing scheme to complement the existing one.</p> <p>The Government and the social partners have entered into a tripartite agreement on a new, temporary work-sharing scheme in the private sector labour market, whose purpose is to prevent layoffs.</p> <p>Considering the extraordinary situation with</p>	<p>In April, it was agreed to suspend the 225-hour rule for three months so that the 12-month period during which a person had to work for 225 hours in ordinary and unsubsidised employment in order to obtain benefits was postponed for three months.</p>	<p>The sickness benefits have been extended for three groups of recipients of sickness benefits in order to prevent that they have to undergo a work availability assessment: 1) persons for whom the ordinary sickness benefit entitlement period of 22 weeks will lapse, (2) persons whose sickness benefit period has been extended but will now expire again and (3) persons who have received sickness benefits instead of resource program benefits during a work availability assessment due to a fatal, severe illness but whose sickness benefits will expire.</p>	<p>Tripartite agreement on a temporary scheme providing maternity benefits for parents whose children are set home from school due to COVID-19</p> <p>The scheme covers parents of children (up to 13) who, due to a specific COVID-19 infection case at their school or day-care institution, are sent home from school as close contacts of infected children, as recommended by the health authorities, without necessarily showing symptoms of COVID-19, as well as parents with children who have been tested positive for COVID-19.</p> <p>Unemployment benefits for a total of 10 working days per child are awarded during the life of the scheme.</p> <p>Also, in June and in October, new agreements about up-skilling and re-skilling were concluded.</p> <p>According to the agreement, low skilled unemployed can receive 110 percent of the unemployment benefit, if they choose to start on a vocational training in sectors with good employment</p>	<p>People who are not insured get access to complementary unemployment benefits under the new, temporary scheme.</p>	<p>Persons who lose their entitlement to unemployment benefit between 1 November 2020 and 1 November 2021 will have their entitlement to unemployment benefit extended by two months. The extension will take place automatically and the entitlement to unemployment benefit can only be extended once.</p>	<p>On 15 June 2020, a broad agreement was concluded which gave self-employed persons entitlement to unemployment benefit during a temporary closure of their business between 9 July 2020 and 8 September 2020 if their company has been prohibited from operating due to COVID-19. Self-employed persons were only entitled to close down once during the period stated in subsection 6. In September of 2020, the scheme was extended until 31 October 2020.</p>
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for package tour providers, cultural institutions, arts businesses, cultural institutions and municipal institutions with an operational grant from the Ministry of Culture.

On 27 October 2020, an agreement was concluded between the parties of the Danish parliament on a number of extensions of the existing relief packages to companies in the private sector which are affected either by the economic crisis, with particular attention to those companies that due to the contention measures are subjected to closures and limitations of their normal activity.

COVID-19, the social partners agree to establish the scheme by law, which will supersede already signed collective bargaining agreements in certain, defined areas. Just like the implementation of the current work-sharing schemes, the implementation of the new, temporary work-sharing scheme must be objectively justified. This will be a complementary scheme, which will operate in parallel with the existing work-sharing scheme.

The new, temporary work-sharing scheme will be rolled out as quickly as possible and will apply until 31 December 2020, with an option for already signed work-sharing agreements to extend into 2021,

opportunities.

Similarly, people with an outdated vocational training can start a new “adult” apprenticeship. On 28 May, the Government and the social partners concluded an agreement that redirects an excess amount from the Employers’ Reimbursement System (AUB) of DKK 5.4bn to companies. This is intended to pave the way for more apprenticeships in a time when there are markedly fewer apprenticeships and traineeships.

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	<p>with a maximum duration of 4 months.</p> <p>The short-time working schemes provide for better opportunities for training for the workers.</p> <p>Companies that want to take advantage of the scheme shall inform and consult their employees in accordance with the rules applicable to cooperation agreements, corresponding agreements or the Danish Information and Consultation of Employees Act.</p>								
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<p>BULGARIA</p>		<p>The Bulgarian government submitted a draft for a loan agreement between the EU and Bulgaria to the Bulgarian National Assembly which enacts the use of SURE SURE resources for compensations regulated in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decree No. 55 of the Council of Ministers (effective from March to June) - Decree No. 151 of the Council of Ministers - first stage (effective from July to September) - Decree No. 151 of the Council of Ministers - second stage (effective from October to September) 					<p>Self-employed are excluded from the groups that were/will be assisted under these decrees. Which means that self-employed are not covered under the SURE.</p> <p>In Bulgaria, self-employed workers are not covered by the national measures deployed under the SURE, but they have been offered an interest-free loan of 4500 BGN total</p> <p>Financial support for selfemployed workers have been made possible under Decision № 429 of the Council of Ministers of 26 June 2020 - 290 BGN, which includes all social security</p>	
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								<p>payments. Decision No 429 includes self-employed from 2 main sectors - transport and tourism. This measure is not part of the above mentioned decrees, this being the reason why they are not integrated in the SURE scheme.</p> <p>Some measures for the self-employed in the culture were also made available, yet the largest part of the budget was used for projects under which the artist can only benefit if applying to said project.</p>
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