

## Overview on national measures taken by governments to react to the economic consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak

*This is an overview of measures based on input from members and research by BusinessEurope. This is a living document that will be regularly updated on the dedicated Extranet. It is an informal collection of inputs from members and should be used for internal purposes and for information only. As the situation unfolds rapidly we cannot guarantee that all information received and displayed in the document is entirely up-to-date at any given point in time.*

**Contact** For questions, updates and comments please contact Malthe Munkoe, Senior Adviser, Economics Department ([m.munkoe@businesseurope.eu](mailto:m.munkoe@businesseurope.eu)).

### EU response

- **EU finance ministers** on 4<sup>th</sup> March issued a statement regarding their commitment to provide a co-ordinated response and to use all appropriate policy tools to achieve strong, sustainable growth and to safeguard against the further materialisation of downside risks.
- **Commission President von der Leyen** on 10<sup>th</sup> March, promised to ‘to use all the tools at our disposal to make sure the European economy weathers this storm’.
- **The ECB** on 12<sup>th</sup> March announced, in particular, plans to temporarily relax capital requirements for the financial sector to support lending to the real economy, as well as more accommodative monetary policy through increasing its asset purchases by €120 billion during 2020.
- At a press meeting on EU March 13, **EU leaders** including President von der Leyen confirmed that the EU “general escape clause” was applicable to the situation (which grants Member States leeway to break with fiscal rules in the face of an emergency that is unusual and outside their control), and that there will be granted maximum flexibility under state aid rules in government efforts to support the economy, while also announcing a 37 billion euro Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative to support the healthcare sector and labour markets generally (drawing from unused structural funds).
- The **Eurogroup** met on March 15 and confirmed the applicability of the “general escape clause” in light of the virus outbreak, while noting that member states had already commenced fiscal stimulus corresponding to 1% of GDP. The Eurogroup issued a statement promising to “do whatever it takes to effectively address the current challenges and to restore confidence and support a rapid recovery”.
- On March 16 the **G-7 leaders** issued a statement committing to do “whatever is necessary to ensure a strong global response through closer cooperation and enhanced coordination of our efforts”, noting that “while current challenges may require national emergency measures, we remain committed to the stability of the global economy”.
- On March 17 Commission Vice-President Vestager circulated to member states a **draft Temporary Framework for state aid** designed to ensure full flexibility to use state aid to support companies/sectors
- On the night of March 18 the **ECB** announced additional quantitative easing of 750 bn euro in 2020, and made clear in its statements that if necessary it was prepared to raise the issuer limit (cap on how large a proportion of one member state’s sovereign debt it can hold)
- On March 19 the Commission was able to **adopt an approved temporary framework for state aid**, that gave maximum flexibility, and notably allowing grants to businesses up to 800.000 euro.
- On March 20 **the Commission formally activated the general escape clause** (requesting Council to approve its activation), suspending constraints on public debt insofar the debt increase is associated with the virus outbreak.
- This was formally approved by ECFIN on March 21

## Overview table on various measures on national level

While we strive to keep it up-to-date, we cannot guarantee all country lists are always fully updated

Type of measure	Implemented in	Examples or further details (not meant to be exhaustive list)
<b>Tax-related measures</b>		
Deferral of Tax payments (Corporate income tax, social contributions, etc)	Numerous countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Austria has reduced advance payments on corporate and income tax in 2020 to zero</li> <li>France allows postponements of direct tax payments -on individual basis following application</li> </ul>
Deferral of VAT payments	Numerous countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greece has deferred businesses, who are affected by the COVID, their VAT payments by 4 months.</li> </ul>
Acceleration of VAT Credit refunds	France, Malta, Luxembourg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Luxembourg VAT Authority will reimburse all VAT credit balances below €10000.</li> </ul>
Deferral of Fines/Interest on late tax payments	Numerous countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Belgium allows fines for late tax payments to be remitted</li> <li>Netherlands: Temporarily, no penalties for failure to pay taxes (on time) will be imposed.</li> </ul>
Tax returns can be filed later	Numerous countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finnish businesses can request more time for filing their tax return, if necessary, if they have a justified reason, such as illness,</li> </ul>
Temporary reduction in VAT-rate	Cyprus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cyprus: Temporary reduction of VAT from 19% to 17% for a period of two months and from 9% to 7% for a period of three and a half months for tourism activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Subsidies</b>		
Subsidy for wages (workers)	Cyprus (Small enterprises only), Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Estonia, France, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Czechia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Austria to backstop 80-90% of wages for workers that are put on short time work but not terminated (working hours can be reduced by 90%)</li> <li>France: The State will cover 100% of the wages paid under the short time scheme.</li> <li>Germany already had Kurzarbeit-scheme in place, which is being made more flexible for short-term workers. The Federal Employment Agency will cover 60% of the net salary in case of short term working and will reimburse the social contributions for the lost working hours to the employer</li> <li>Firms that need to reduce hours or days worked can avail of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection Short Term Work Support</li> <li>In Sweden employer's salary costs can be reduced by half by the state accounting for a larger cost. The construction is similar to short-term work, but the degree of subsidy is greatly increased. The employee receives more than 90 percent of the salary</li> </ul>
Subsidy for wages (self-employed)	Denmark, Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Italy compensation of 600 euro, monthly non-taxable, for self-employed workers</li> </ul>
Subsidy for other costs (e.g. mortgage)	Denmark, Spain, UK, France, Portugal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Denmark offers to cover 25-80% of fixed costs for companies that have seen at least 30% decline in sales due to coronavirus,</li> <li>In Portugal during lay-offs companies are temporarily exempted from social contributions</li> <li>In France there is a suspension of rent and utility bills owed by small companies.</li> </ul>
Non-sectoral state aid (grants)	Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Malta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>France: A €1 billion 'solidarity fund' will get created for the microbusinesses, SMEs and independent workers whose turnover is less than €1 million and who suffered a 70% decline of their turnover between March 2019 and March 2020 (cumulative criteria) : these eligible entities will then get a monthly €1 500 grant</li> <li>Austria to set up "hardship fund" with grants to SMEs</li> <li>Germany to set up 500 bn euro Business Stabilization Fund, which will give 100 bn in grants to recapitalize companies and extend 400 bn euro loans</li> <li>Italy: establishment of a show, cinema and audio-visual emergency fund and provisions for the cultural sector;</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Malta: A business that was asked to close as part of the Covid-19 measures will get 2 days of assistance per week per employee. This is equivalent to €300 per month per employee. A self-employed person will get the same amount</li> </ul>
Sectoral state aid (grants)	Croatia, Austria, US, Denmark, Netherlands, UK, Italy,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Austria offers direct state aid to industries that are most affected</li> <li>Croatia gives state aid to tourism and creative industries</li> <li>US offers direct support to airlines</li> <li>Denmark has given 1.5 bn DKK to its travel fund which backstops failing travel agents and broadened its scope</li> <li>In the Netherlands, to support firms that are affected by our government's health measures - for example by the closure of restaurants - an emergency desk will be introduced, through which those firms can receive a one-off lump sum allowance of EUR 4000</li> <li>Italy: for commercial rentals, tax credit equal to 60% of the March rent;</li> <li>UK will offer cash grants for retailers and pubs, increase the Business Rates retail discount to 100% for one year and expand it to the leisure and hospitality sectors, and increase the planned rates discount for pubs to £5,000. Will also provide a one-off grant of £3,000 to around 700,000 business currently eligible for SBRR or Rural Rate Relief, to help meet their ongoing business costs</li> </ul>
Direct company state aid	Denmark, Sweden, Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Denmark and Sweden each offered 1.5 bn SEK as guarantee to the airline SAS</li> <li>Finland promises max. EUR 600 million guarantees to airline company Finnair.</li> </ul>
Delay tourist tax (fee) payments	Croatia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Croatia offers delay the payment of tourism fee for companies and tourism charges for private renters</li> </ul>
Increase in short-time work payments	Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in short-time work payments (65%--&gt; 70%)</li> </ul>
Government to assume part/entire cost of sick leave	Denmark, Estonia, (Malta), Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Denmark government pays the full sick leave of employees (normally would only be after 2 weeks) for Covid-19 related absence</li> <li>In Malta, Quarantine leave: Government to pay companies €350 per employee on quarantine leave</li> <li>In Sweden The state takes over the sick pay responsibility for two months</li> </ul>
<b>Loans/guarantees/payment suspension</b>		
Additional loans e.g. through state lenders (such as German KfW)	Numerous countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The French state will guarantee €300 billion of bank loans to companies</li> <li>Germany to extend loans through its KfW, e.g. a 50 bn hardship fund with loans to SMEs and self-employed</li> <li>The Estonian KredEx Foundation to Loan collateral amounting to EUR 1 Billion for bank loans already issued in order to allow for repayment schedule adjustments (maximum EUR 600 Million for the surety collection), under certain conditions</li> </ul>
State guarantees on loans	Numerous countries	
Export guarantees	Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Austria exporting companies can be granted credits up to 10% (large companies) or 15% (SMEs) of their export revenues by the OeKB (österreichische Kontrollbank). AWS (Austria Wirtschaftsservice) will provide guarantees</li> <li>The Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development will: Guarantees to commercial banks supporting exporters under the Export Guarantee Fund and Increase scope of the Export Guarantee Fund to include tourism</li> <li>Additional loans targeting SMEs for 1.25 bn DKK specifically for export purposes through the state-run Danish Export Credit Agency</li> </ul>
Direct purchase of corporate bonds	Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finland: 1 billion euro fund to invest in corporate bonds. E.g. also about 73 million euros to stave off acute corporate funding pressures.</li> </ul>
Rescheduling loan payments with state intervention	France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support from the State and the Banque de France (credit mediation) to negotiate with its bank a rescheduling of bank credits;</li> </ul>
State-backed loans	Numerous countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>France will guarantee €300 billion of bank loans to companies</li> </ul>

Moratorium of repaying reimbursable grants	Portugal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Portugal, 12-month moratorium on repayment of reimbursable grants (incentive systems) for the most impacted companies.</li> </ul>
<b>Labour market (incl. social policy)</b>		
Make social benefits available to self-employed	(Estonia), Finland, Netherlands,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Finland, Unemployment protection for entrepreneurs and freelancers is ensured. In order to be eligible for unemployment insurance, you don't have to close your business.</li> <li>In the Netherlands self-employed and entrepreneurs will be able to receive social assistance if they meet certain standards, which will be relaxed. This social assistance will include additional benefits to meet livelihood standards and/or a loan for working capital.</li> <li>In Norway Self-employed and freelancers receive sickness benefits from day 3, and care money from day 4.</li> </ul>
Help for apprentices	Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apprentices now receive an income hedge on par with apprenticeship pay.</li> </ul>
Help for students	Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional state-guaranteed loans made available to students who may lose student-part time jobs</li> </ul>
Extra/longer allowance for workers absent to care for sick relatives or take care of small children	Cyprus, Norway, Poland, Italy, Malta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cyprus grants special leave to parents with kids up to the age of 15 that have no support and have to stay at home since the government has closed all schools until April 10th. In Norway the period of care money (for parents staying home with children home from school) is doubled.</li> <li>Italy: parental leave for additional 15 days at 50% of remuneration for working parents or otherwise babysitter bonus 600 euro worth;</li> <li>Government will cover additional two months leave for parent who has to stay at home to take care of the children as a result of school closures with an €800 per month benefit.</li> </ul>
Fired workers can retain their full salary	Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employees receive a "full salary" for 20 days upon termination. The cost is distributed with two days to the employer, and then 18 days from the state with pay, but limited up to 600.000 NOK/ 60.000 EUR. This will ease the burden on many jobs.</li> </ul>
Greater flexibility in laying off workers	Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notice period for layoffs is reduced from the current (from 14 days to 6 weeks) to five days. The right to lay-offs is also extended to fixed-term workers.</li> </ul>
Increased availability of unemployment benefit	Finland, Norway, (Malta)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Finland Own-risk days in unemployment benefits are cancelled in the event of lay-offs and redundancies. Unemployment insurance is immediately accessible. Working conditions to be eligible for income-related unemployment benefits are shortened.</li> <li>Maltese or EU citizen who becomes redundant will get €800 per month as unemployment benefit</li> <li>In Norway the income limit for receiving unemployment benefit is set at 0.75 G (7.500 EUR). This group also ensures at least 80 per cent of its income up to 3G during the layoff period</li> </ul>
Suspension of pension payments	Estonia, Finland,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Estonia Payments into the II pillar of the pension fund are temporarily suspended.</li> <li>In Finland Employers' earnings-related pension contribution shall be reduced by 2,6% of salaries. It will be implemented as soon as possible and will be valid until the end of 2020. It will ease the companies' payments by EUR 910 million. Pension companies refrain from paying customer bonuses for a period when employers' pension contributions are reduced.</li> <li>People in rental property and who lose their job and did not qualify for rent subsidy, will now benefit from the scheme</li> </ul>

<b>Regulatory changes</b>		
Moratorium on insolvency	(Croatia), Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Spain companies can have insolvency protection, but insolvency proceedings are suspended</li> <li>In Croatia commercial banks to have an accelerated loan rescheduling process without clients being reclassified to being "default"</li> </ul>
Relaxation of regulation	Austria, Denmark, Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Austria to suspend working time provisions to offer greater flexibility (e.g. working overtime in healthcare)</li> <li>A number of regulations of the transport sector to be suspended temporarily in Denmark in order to secure distribution of goods in the country.</li> <li>In Greece certain administrative requirements, such as the obligation to report overtime, are suspended in order to facilitate the gradual access of workers to avoid overcrowding in the workplace and public transport.</li> </ul>
Doubled salary for people in isolation or in risk of contagion	Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With respect to those employees isolated or in risk of contagion, they shall receive a supplement of up to 100% of their salaries.</li> </ul>
Extra parental leave		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Italy parental leave for additional 15 days at 50% of remuneration for working parents or otherwise babysitter bonus 600 euro worth</li> </ul>
<b>Public Sector</b>		
Public authorities to pay contractors up front rather than use entire length of time before deadline	Italy, Denmark (encouraged)	
Force majeure clause for public tenders to be granted to private contractors, and not be invoked by public actor	Belgium, Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Companies in Belgium will not be fined (sued) or have contract suspended if they cannot fulfil a contract in time due to coronavirus circumstances</li> <li>In France no penalties for delay in fulfilling contracts.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial sector</b>		
Contracyclical capital buffer lowered or suspended	Denmark, Finland, Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other measures of Financial Supervisory Authority (FIN-FSA) decided to lower Finnish credit institutions' capital requirements. The reduction is implemented by removing the systemic risk buffer and by adjusting credit institution-specific requirements so that the structural buffer requirements of all credit institutions will fall by 1 percentage point, all in all. The decision will increase the lending capacity of the Finnish banks by around EUR 52 billion.</li> </ul>
Ease capital requirement for insurance sector	Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postponement option for pension insurance payments (Tyel and Yel) as well as easing the pension insurance company capital requirements.</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>		
Compensation for events cancelled	Denmark, Estonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Denmark: Following government order to cancel events with 1.000+ attendees the government offered to compensate event organisers for the losses</li> <li>Estonia compensates for the direct costs of cultural and sporting events cancelled due to coronavirus in March-April, up to EUR 3 million.</li> </ul>
Helicopter money	US	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stimulus package proposed by the White House would give 1.000 USD to every American citizen</li> </ul>
Direct money to people in sectors forced to close down	Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Greece there will be, inter alia, a compensation of 400-500 euros to approximately 600,000 workers in businesses closed by government decision.</li> </ul>
Offer gift certificates and vouchers for shops	South Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide retailers in traditional markets with vouchers designed to support their marketing activities, such as joint promotion</li> <li>Issue vouchers for local products</li> <li>Give a 20 percent raise in wages to seniors in government's elderly job programs if they agree to receive 30 percent of their pay in local gift certificates</li> </ul>

Country promotion/marketing campaigns	Iceland, United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once the situation returns to normal, a marketing campaign will be launched to promote Iceland as a tourist destination and Icelanders will be encouraged to travel domestically.</li> </ul>
Corona - Business task force	Lithuania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A state-level task force on business emergency coordination was formed.</li> </ul>
Grant for investing in telework equipment	Malta	

#### Magnitude of measures, in % of GDP

	Immediate fiscal impulse	Deferrals (Tax, VAT etc.)	Other liquidity (loans, guarantees)
France*	1.1%	9,4%	12.4%
Germany*	4.4%	14.6%	32.2%
Italy*	0.9%	13.0%	7.3%
Spain*	0.3%	2.0%	8.9%
Hungary*	0.4%	8.3%	0%
	<b>Fiscal stimulus</b>		<b>Loans</b>
Eurozone**	2%	Unspecified	13%
United States*** Total package is 2T usd, around 10%	At least 2.5%	Unspecified	At least 4%

\*Bruegel, March 25 \*\* Eurogroup, March 24, \*\*\* own calculations based on currently incomplete available information about US stimulus package, may be revised.

(In EU-US comparisons one should bear in mind that the US has weaker automatic stabilizers, e.g. according to one widely cited study corresponding to 38% of lost income in the EU vis-à-vis 32% in the US

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0047272711001642?via%3Dihub>)

## a. Country overviews of measures taken by country

### Austria

#### - CoVid-19 Crisis Management Fund

Budget of **up to EUR 38 billion**, with the **main objective of improving liquidity**. Measures include:

- EUR 9 billion state guarantees and state liabilities for loans,
- EUR 15 billion emergency aid for industries most affected,
- EUR 10 billion for tax moratoriums.
- Hardship fund for SMEs (direct cash aid, not to be paid back)

#### - COVID-19-Short Time Work ("Kurzarbeit")

- Financial means of EUR 400 Mio.
- **Short time work is planned for three months.**
- **Key Points of COVID Short Time Work:**
- **Before starting short time work, the employee has to consume all annual leave and overtime.**
- **Wage guarantee:**
  - Up to EUR 1.700 of gross wage, 90% of the previous net wage.
  - Up to EUR 2.685 of gross wage, 85% of the previous net wage.
  - Beyond EUR 2.686 gross wage, 80% of the previous net wage.

- **The employment contract must not be terminated during the short time work period, and in the first month after short time work**, barring exceptional circumstances that require special negotiations.
  - During short time work, working hours can be reduced by an average of up to 90%.
  - Normal working hours can be changed in agreement with the employee.
- **COVID-19-Law on Special Care**  
§ 18b Labour contract law: In case of (partial) closure of institutions (e.g. schools) due to official measures, **employers can now grant special care leave even to those employees who would normally have no entitlement to stay at home** to take care of their children (up to 14 years old). This care leave is limited to three weeks. During this time, employees will receive a third of their gross wage, paid for by the government.
  - **Work Inspections & Working Hours**  
During the occurrence of COVID-19, **deviations from the working time provisions are possible** (e.g. extensions to the normal working hours). This **applies to all industries with an extraordinary need for work** (e.g. healthcare).
  - **Measures of the Austrian National Health Insurance Fund:**  
The Fund has put together a package of measures to relieve the pressure on affected companies, such as **deferral of contributions, payment by instalments, waiving of late-payment fee, suspension of notices of seizure and bankruptcy applications.**
  - **Corporate and Income tax**  
Corporate and income tax advance payments for 2020 can be **reduced or set to zero.**
  - **Guarantees and Financing**  
Exporting companies can be granted **credits up to 10%** (large companies) or **15%** (SMEs) of their export revenues by the OeKB (österreichische Kontrollbank). AWS (Austria Wirtschaftsservice) will provide **guarantees with special conditions** for companies who are affected by the COVID-crisis to facilitate financing credits.

## Belgium

- Private individuals and businesses can suspend loan payments, including mortgage loan payments, from now until 30 September (dependent on conditions)
- Companies can follow a so-called 'payment plan': In this payment plan, companies can 'spread' payments of VAT, social contributions and fines. They can also delay payments of corporate income tax and regular income tax. The Belgian authorities have confirmed that they will allow companies to delay the filings by over two weeks and payments by two months.
- Fines to companies for late payments can be remitted.
- Increase in short-time work payments (65%--> 70%) + €150
- Federal government will not charge companies with fines if they can't fulfil a public contract in time.
- These measures only apply to companies that can show that they have been directly hit by the coronavirus (e.g. a decrease in turnover, a significant decrease in orders and / or reservations, consequences of a "chain reaction" with partner companies,...). The deadline for getting this 'payment plan' is June 30.
- The government will pay gas, water & electricity bills for technical unemployed-people for one month, worthy of €202.
- Increased tolerance for home office workers to not constitute a Permanent Establishment in view of the Belgium – Luxembourg Tax treaty and Belgium-France Tax treaty.
- Guarantee: The government will guarantee state-backed credit lines for companies for the duration of 12 months (€50bn) to cover losses incurred on future loans. Losses up to 3% of the capital loaned will be fully borne by the financial sector. Losses of between 3% and 5% will be shared – half for the government and

half for the financial sector. Losses that are greater still will be borne for 80% by the government and 20% by the financial sector.

## **Bulgaria**

*Last updated: March 25*

**On 13<sup>th</sup> of March** the National Assembly declared state of emergency until April 13. The state of emergency is declared on the basis of Article 84 of the Constitution. According to it, it is valid until the danger has passed and enables the authorities to impose complete bans, including for movement inside and outside the country.

**On 20<sup>th</sup> of March** the National Assembly adopted the **Law on Measures and Actions during the State of Emergency**. There are listed the specific measures that have important effect on employees and employers:

- Employees are entitled to 50% of their gross salary in case of work termination in state of emergency;
- Without the consent of the employee, the employer could provide him up to the half of their annual paid leave;
- Depending on the nature of work the employers could assign the distance work (telework) or home work for the employees, without their consent;
- The validity of identity cards which expires from March 13 to October 31, 2020, is extended by six months. In this period the ID is valid only on the territory of Bulgaria;
- Until the state of emergency is lifted, the effects of late payment on the obligations of individuals, including interest and penalties for late payment, as well as non-monetary consequences such as early payment, contract cancellation and seizure of property, will not apply;
- During the state of emergency, all the announced public sales and holdings announced by the state and private enforcement agents are suspended;
- From 13 March 2020 until the state of emergency was lifted, would cease to run procedural time limits for judicial, arbitration and enforcement proceedings; limitation periods provided for in statutory acts; the time limits for the implementation of instructions given by an administrative authority to parties or participants in proceedings;
- By one month from the lifting of the state of emergency are extended the time limits set by law, which expire during a state of emergency and relate to the exercise of rights or the fulfillment of obligations of individuals; the effect of administrative acts, which is limited in time and expires during a state of emergency;
- During the state of emergency, but for a period not exceeding three months, the National Social Security Institute shall transfer 60 percent of the amount of the insurance income for January 2020 for insured by insurers meeting the criteria determined by an act of the Council of Ministers. The provision implies that the Council of Ministers will have to announce what the criteria are for companies to apply. *The draft provision will be discussed in National Council for Tripartite Cooperation.* For this measure are directed 1 billion levs.
- Until the state of emergency is lifted, the management authorities of the resources from the European Structural and Investment Funds are entitled to: unilaterally modify contracts for financial support through grants in accordance with the need for crisis measures, including to increase the amount of the contracted grant; extend grants under simplified rules; increase the overall resource for operations;
- Extended deadlines:
  - For companies until June 30, 2020, is extended the deadline for filing an annual corporate tax return as well as the corporate and expenses tax payment;
  - The deadline for publication of the annual financial reports and the annual activity reports is by 30.09.2020;
  - Filing an annual tax return and for payment of the due tax on the annual tax base under the tax return according to the Personal Income Tax Act is also extend to 30 June 2020.

**Other measures:**

- The government increased the capital of Bulgarian Development Bank (BDB) by up to 500 million leva, which will serve as a guarantee that businesses will receive credits in the amount of 2.5 billion leva through commercial banks. *The specific requirements will be communicated shortly.*
- Up to 200 million leva will be used for non-interest consumer loans up to 1500 leva for employees on unpaid leave.

#### Measures by the Bulgarian National Bank (BNB):

On March 19 Bulgarian National Bank (BNB) announces that is applying a 9.3 billion leva package of measures in connection with the COVID-19 epidemic. The purpose of the measures is to preserve the resilience of the banking system and, at the same time, to increase its flexibility to reduce the negative effects of the pandemic constraints on citizens and businesses. The key measures aim to further strengthen banks' capital and liquidity as follows:

- Capitalization of the total volume of profits in the banking system worth 1.6 billion leva;
- Cancellation of the increase in the anticyclical capital stock projected for 2020 and 2021, resulting in 0.7 billion leva;
- Banking system's liquidity is increased by 7 billion leva by reducing foreign bank exposure to commercial banks.

In addition, BNB has implemented additional measures to ensure the smooth functioning of the currency board, cash circulation, payment systems and banking supervision.

#### Measures by the Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA):

- On 27<sup>th</sup> of February BIA issued **recommendations to the economic operators** in view to tackling the COVID19 situation, that consisted of organizational and practical measures;
- On 12<sup>th</sup> of March BIA launched a **survey**, aimed at the companies, that have to help the analysis of the situation and to plan measures, based on objective information;
- On the BIA's website was set a **focus panel** with information about the COVID19, that is updated in a timely fashion, incl. useful links to the Orders of the Health Minister, recommendations of the Ministry of Health, WHO, etc.;
- On 18<sup>th</sup> of March BIA launched the **Electronic Mutual Assistance Exchange**. The e-Exchange is a place where companies can post advertisements for the search for or offering of goods and services or for hiring employees who may lose their jobs during a state of emergency.

The duration and scope of the measures may vary depending on the development of the epidemic situation in the country.

On 20<sup>th</sup> of March the National Assembly adopted the Law on Measures and Actions during the State of Emergency. There are listed the specific measures that have important effect on employees and employers:

- Employees are entitled to 50% of their gross salary in case of work termination in state of emergency;
- Without the consent of the employee, the employer could provide him up to the half of their annual paid leave;
- Depending on the nature of work the employers could assign the distance work (telework) or home work for the employees, without their consent;
- The validity of identity cards which expires from March 13 to October 31, 2020, is extended by six months. In this period the ID is valid only on the territory of Bulgaria;
- Until the state of emergency is lifted, the effects of late payment on the obligations of individuals, including interest and penalties for late payment, as well as non-monetary consequences such as early payment, contract cancellation and seizure of property, will not apply;
- During the state of emergency, all the announced public sales and holdings announced by the state and private enforcement agents are suspended;

- From 13 March 2020 until the state of emergency was lifted, would cease to run procedural time limits for judicial, arbitration and enforcement proceedings; limitation periods provided for in statutory acts; the time limits for the implementation of instructions given by an administrative authority to parties or participants in proceedings;
- By one month from the lifting of the state of emergency are extended the time limits set by law, which expire during a state of emergency and relate to the exercise of rights or the fulfillment of obligations of individuals; the effect of administrative acts, which is limited in time and expires during a state of emergency;
- During the state of emergency, but for a period not exceeding three months, the National Social Security Institute shall transfer 60 percent of the amount of the insurance income for January 2020 for insured by insurers meeting the criteria determined by an act of the Council of Ministers. The provision implies that the Council of Ministers will have to announce what the criteria are for companies to apply.

## Croatia

### The Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development will:

- Impose a moratorium on credit obligations for existing clients
- Allow taxpayers to defer payment or to arrange an instalment payment plan for their tax liabilities, social security contributions and certain non-tax levies without being subject to interest being imposed during the period of deferral of payment (payments in installments)
- Introduce a grace period in repayments
- Provide liquidity loans to companies to cover wages, overhead and operating expenses in cooperation with commercial banks
- Guarantees to commercial banks supporting exporters under the Export Guarantee Fund
- Increase scope of the Export Guarantee Fund to include tourism

### Support to commercial banks

- Introduction of “standstill” arrangements, i.e. three-month suspension of collection of debts
- Liquidity lines with three-year maturity
- Accelerated loan rescheduling process without clients being reclassified to being “default”

### Government will:

- Increase the allocation of “ESIF Micro Loans” supporting micro- and small enterprises, and reduce interest rates whilst increasing maximum guarantee rates for “individual guarantee” scheme (the amount that the state will guarantee)
- 90 extension of repayment obligations for co-funded projects
- Allowing EU aid beneficiaries to suspend/delay project implementation, repayment of reimbursement
- Possibility of state intervention to purchase surpluses in livestock, crop and food and vegetable production
- Implement various loan schemes
- Delay the payment of tourism fee for companies and tourism charges for private renters
- State aid to provide capital and liquidity for endangered tourism businesses, for cultural and creative industries,
- Suspension of universal service obligation for postal services
- Suspension of collection fees for extraordinary transports on public roads and temporary suspension of 10-% increase in tolls for vehicles of certain types during the summer

## Czech Republic

### *Updated March 25*

- On 12 March, the government declared a **state of emergency** for 30 days
- With effect from 16 March 2020 to 24 March 2020, the **free movement of persons** throughout the Czech Republic is prohibited. There are some exceptions, particularly for travelling in order to work, running your business, seeing doctors, necessary visits of families or other close persons, buying grocery, medicines,

cleaning compounds, fuel, pet food etc. You can visit banks, post offices, insurance companies etc. but you are urgently asked to limit this to really necessary cases.

- The state borders are closed with some exceptions mainly for truck drivers, pilots, ship crews, rescue services and people important for the special interest of the country.
- People who commute to work abroad (up to 100 km from the borders) were allowed to do so until Thursday 26 March 2020. Now they have to choose if they rather stay at home or move to Germany/Austria for at least 21 days. They have to remain in quarantine for 14 days after returning. According to the government, this very strict measure has been induced by the fact that many of those people did not respect the given rules and some of them got infected abroad.
- Selected protective equipment must not be exported and can be sold only to the state (mostly FFP3 class).
- All shops which are not urgently needed (with some exceptions, including the above mentioned together with for example car services, ICT equipment repairs etc.) are closed. Those excluded services, like car repairs, must limit the number of persons on site to 30.
- In general, events where people gather are prohibited – even in-house business meetings are limited to less than 30 persons. Commercial gatherings like theaters, sport events etc. are prohibited.
- Several villages and smaller towns are under strict quarantine – which, unfortunately, influences also several important companies there. II) Financial aid and support (Government and state controlled financial institutions)
- On March 16, the Czech-Moravian Guarantee and Development Bank (CMZRB) has launched COVID credit applications. The target group are SMEs and self-employed, whose economic activities are limited due to the outbreak of the coronavirus infection and related preventive measures. It aims at facilitating access to operational financing for those businesses through interest-free loans. The loans range from 18 000 EUR to 540 000 EUR. Entrepreneurs will be eligible to use it for example to pay employees' salaries, energy costs, rents, to finance supplies, to pay supplier-customer invoices, to pre-finance receivables, etc.
- CMZRB also provides a guarantee for commercial loans for small and medium-sized enterprises (for companies, not self-employed).
- There is an enormous demand (after approx. 3200 applications the original amount has been depleted, given that all of them will be approved, which we will see after those will be processed. First support should be given to companies in 14 days. No further applications are being accepted now.)
- **In order to raise the capital**, at least 360 millions of EUR (approx.) will be transferred from the „Operational Program Enterprise and Innovation for Competitiveness“. Details and parameters are being prepared. COVID II – new program which is not providing loans but preferential supported guarantees for commercial loans. The Czech-Moravian Guarantee and Development Bank (CMZRB), together with the Ministry of Industry and Trade, are preparing the continuation of the COVID I Loan program. It has fulfilled its purpose and will be transformed so that more projects can be supported. CMZRB will provide entrepreneurs with guarantees for commercial bank loans and contribute to the payment of interest. The guaranteed operating credit of the COVID II program should support around 10,000 business projects worth approximately 1 billion EUR.
- CMZRB is also working on the follow up support for SMEs and tradesmen, which involves the resources of commercial banks. It allows to satisfy many more companies, including those who need a loan of less than approx. 18 thousand EUR. Under the COVID II program, CMZRB will provide entrepreneurs with guarantees for operating loans from commercial banks, with a minimum threshold of approx. 360 EUR and a maximum of approx. 535 thousand EUR. In addition, guarantees will be provided together with a financial contribution for the payment of interest.
- A total of approx. 180 million EUR will be allocated to the program which means up to approx. 1 billion EUR available funds from commercial banks.
- The guarantee will probably cover up to 80% of commercial loans and the applicant will also be able to draw up a financial contribution of up to 35 thousand EUR to pay interest. The expected duration of the guarantee will be three years. The guaranteed commercial loan can only be used to cover operating costs such as wages, rent, energy, supplier-customer invoices, materials, inventory, etc. It cannot be used for investments.

- Specific parameters of this support (COVID II), including further information about the program, are being prepared and will be published in the coming days. We expect the launch of COVID II around 10 April 2020. -
- **State Export Guarantee and Insurance Corporation (EGAP)** reacts as well and provides a special package to ease the situation for exporters. The measures include:
  - Introduction of the Fast Track, i.e. priority processing of insurance applications for exporters looking for new customers due to the global coronavirus pandemic.
  - Significantly reduced fees for exporters seeking EGAP insurance products covering new risks.
  - Shortening the period of time required to recognize claims (waiting time) for insured credits from 6 to 3 months and for insured guarantees from 3 months to 1 month in order to help resolve any cash flow problems of exporters.
- **Czech Export Bank (CEB)** even during the viral pandemic provides its clients with full services and, in cooperation with the EGAP export insurance company, now offers financial products and services under favorable conditions. CEB is ready to help all exporters, regardless of the company size, by providing products that will support exports of Czech goods abroad.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic announced the **Emergency Package for Czech exporters**. Embassies of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs offer assistance to Czech entrepreneurs in case of problems with the realization of commercial supplies abroad, especially in case of administrative barriers imposed on importers by local authorities. With respect to restrictions of the movement of persons, the Ministry offers assistance in finding new contacts and opportunities in areas that will be a part of national stimulus packages. These services are for free. Emergency package contains mainly: 1) Practical information on conducting foreign operations in the coronavirus situation with a number of restrictions in the target country; 2) Assistance of embassies in solving problems with performing of trade cases; 3) Finding and analyzing opportunities, assisting in identifying and verifying suitable partners. 4) Assistance and information sharing through a series of webinars and online consultations. 5) Offer to use services of local experts to assist the businesses on site during the negotiating and implementing phase. Synergy with commercial banks:
  - According to the Czech Banking association, **banks will be willing to postpone the repayment of consumer loans and mortgages for three months**. In particular, they want to be helpful towards small businesses which have difficulty paying debts due to the coronavirus epidemic. III) Tax measures of the Financial Administration of the Czech Republic
    - **Extension of the deadline for tax return of income taxes** up to July 1 (it means 3 more months). All taxpayers will automatically be allowed to file their income tax return and pay this tax without any sanction no later than 3 months later, without having to prove the reasons related to coronavirus.
    - **Other penalties relating to late VAT declarations and certain administrative charges will also be waived.**
    - A possibility to request a **deferred tax payment** because of the impact of COVID-19 (it is an already existing general institute, but now the impact of COVID-19 is one of the reasons). Filing this request is now for free (normally 15 EUR).
    - The Financial Administration will be **more tolerant to noncompliance** during the next wave of implementing the Electronic Sales Records (EET) system. Many businesses could get into troubles with meeting the deadlines.
    - According to the recently approved bill, **craftsmen and other self-employed persons do not have to pay advances for social and health insurance** (March – August). Health insurance: up to the minimum deposit, payments for this six-month period will be waived. Social insurance: They will be allowed to pay contributions with the final annual account. ☑ The Financial Administration, similarly as other parts of the state administration, provides an emergency phone line help desk. 4 IV) Labor market
      - **Targeted employment support program (kurzarbeit)** The Government of the Czech Republic has approved the introduction of the so-called “kurzarbeit” for companies that have been subject to restrictions due to the spread of coronavirus. The Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic cooperates closely with the government. The goal is to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Czech labor market. The period of validity of the Program is provisionally fixed until 30 June 2020, with a possibility of eventual extension. The program can be used to pay a contribution to reimburse employers'

eligible costs incurred after March 1, 2020. The aim of the program is to compensate for wage costs, or part thereof, in the form of wage or salary reimbursement payable to employees for periods of work-related obstacles caused by quarantine, emergency and crisis measures related to the spread of COVID-19 in the Czech Republic and abroad. The Program is implemented by the Labor Office of the Czech Republic. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs will through the Labor Office of the Czech Republic ensure the payment of the following contributions to employers (upon request of the employer, the Labor Office will conclude an agreement on the payment of the contribution(s) with the employer): /it is not a special law, but the agreement between the Labor Office and the employer/ There are several regimes (A – E) depending on the kind of obstacle:

- **Employees in ordered quarantine - wage or salary compensation.** MODE A; 100% of the wage paid (this means 60% of the reduced assessment base) will be refunded;
- Inability to assign work to employees in connection with government crisis resolutions. For the period of 20 days of obstacles to work for a particular employee - MODE B; 80% of the wage compensation paid will be refunded. The amount of compensation per employee under MODE B is limited and it will not exceed the relevant percentage of the current median wage as officially published;
- **Wage or salary compensation** due to impossibility to assign work to employees as a result of a quarantine order, or as a consequence of an important personal obstacle on the part of an employee consisting of the care of a child in connection with the government resolution (schools shutdown etc.), hitting 30% or more of employers' employees in total – MODE C; 80% of wage compensation paid will be refunded; Notice: The law defines a "child" as a child under 10 years of age. On March 25, the Senate approved an amendment to the law in order to raise this age up to 13.
- Limited availability of inputs for continuing the company operations caused by the COVID-19 situation, including missing inputs from foreign suppliers. In the case of this obstacle on the part of an employer under MODE D, 50% wage compensation paid will be refunded;
- 5 Reduction in demand for employer's services, goods and other products as a result of the quarantine measures at the employer's point of sale (the Czech Republic and abroad) or otherwise causally related to COVID-19. In the case of this obstacle on the part of an employer under MODE E, 50% wage compensation paid will be refunded; Some of the measures are still being refined or updated.

## Cyprus

- Grant of special leave to parents with kids up to the age of 15 that have no support and have to stay at home since the government has closed all schools until April 10th.
- A Work Suspension Plan that will apply for companies that were forced to shut down by a Ministerial Decree. This plan provides for unemployment benefit during the suspension period with the prerequisite that no dismissals go forth. Note that companies were forced to shut down in the following areas of economic activity:
  - a. All private businesses in the list below will be closed from Monday 16/3 for four weeks.
    - i. The decision covers malls, department stores, cinemas, theatres, libraries, museums, archaeological sites, betting shops, casinos, sports venues and clubs, theme parks, barbershops and hairdresser salons, beauty parlours, cafes, bars, and all food and beverage businesses excluding those that only do delivery, take away and drive through services.
  - b. Hotels must suspend their operations until April 30.
- Supermarkets, pharmacies, private health services, bakeries, kiosks, and petrol stations will remain open under certain conditions (re number of visitors at any given time and health related measures that will have to be taken).
- A Work Suspension Plan for companies that have a turnover decrease of 25% or more. Details are going to be announced.
- A Small Enterprise Support Scheme for companies that employ up to 5 people. A 70% of salaries will be subsidized. Details are going to be announced.

- A scheme to compensate employees/self-employed who work/provide services for the Ministry of Education and who have been impacted by the shut down on schools (note these are not public sector employees). They will be paid their salaries/entitlements in full.
- A special sick leave allowance scheme for vulnerable groups and people who are put in self-isolation.
- An extension of the deadline self-employed people have to submit an objection to the Social Insurance Services for their actual income in order to submit contributions.
- A service to old people/quarantined people/people in self isolation and vulnerable groups to help them with shopping and other needs so they minimize their movements. Full collaboration with the private sector, NGOs, supermarkets etc.
- Suspension of an increase in contributions to the NHS for two months (increase would have been effected end of March).
- Support Scheme for students who remain abroad during the upcoming Easter Holidays and do not travel back. This is a lump sum of 750euros per student. No income criteria.
- Introduction of a legal cap on prices of sanitary products.

The Support Programme that has been formulated is structured and specific, both in range as well as in expenditure, and it is valued at 700 million euros, an amount equal to the 3% of the GDP. Costs may vary with further measures that maybe adopted in the process.

Further measures include the following:

- Temporary reduction of VAT from 19% to 17% for a period of two months and from 9% to 7% for a period of three and a half months.
- temporary suspension for two months of the VAT due for companies with turnover less than €1 m. and businesses whose turnover decreased by more than 25%.
- special arrangements for persons who are included in the scheme of paying overdue tax debts.
- extension of the period for tax submission for two months.
- suspension of the requirement to hold guarantees under public and private contracts for the supply of services or products that will be delayed due to crisis.
- financial support for the recovery of the tourism sector between June-September 2020 in cooperation with airlines and tour operators as well as actions to enhance the attraction of tourists during the period October 2020 - March 2021.
- Setting price ceiling for personal hygiene products (masks, antiseptics, antibacterial liquids, soaps, etc.).

**Denmark**

*Last updated March 25*

**Labour market initiatives**

- Government has suspended rules on sick leave until January 1, 2021. Thus the government pays sick leave from day 1 (instead of the usual 30 days) when employees are quarantined or sick with Covid-19. Self-employed receive sick leave payment from first day of absence instead of after 2 weeks.
- Greater flexibility awarded to scheme which allows companies to endorse employees to temporarily work part-time, with employees receiving supplementary unemployment benefits during the period.
- Tri-partite agreement on temporary wage compensation to companies in the private sector for employees in danger of being laid off. The agreement will be in force for a period of 3 months (9 March – 9 June 2020) and applies to companies forced to lay off at least 30% of staff or more than 50 employees.
- Similar scheme of compensation paid for by the state for self-employed that suffer large loss of income
- Law under way to ensure economic compensation for companies that will face shortage of labour as a consequence of corona (6-months' period), if the companies keep the employees with pay. The aim is to avoid redundancies and risk of losing valuable part of the companies' work-force.
- Work-share can be used directly after an agreement with the employee instead of a waiting period of one week after the initial registration at the job center. Plus enhanced flexibility in use of scheme. The measure will be applicable for a period of 13 weeks with possibility to apply for an extension.

### Other initiatives

- Suspension of company payments of VAT and other taxes.
- Contracyclical capital requirements set to zero which allows banks to provide more liquidity to companies.
- 1 bn DKK set aside to provide guarantees for companies.
- Additional loans targeting SMEs for 1.25 bn DKK specifically for export purposes through the state-run Export Credit Agency
- A number of regulations of the transport sector to be suspended temporarily in order to secure distribution of goods in the country.
- Public authorities are allowed to prolong deadlines for bids for tenders (e.g. if companies are likely not currently in a position to commence work on projects).
- For three months government to compensate 25-80% of fixed costs for companies severely affected by the crisis (across size and industry)
- 1.5 bn SEK guarantees for SAS (along with similar 1.5 bn SEK guarantee from the Swedish state)
- 1.5 bn DKK to additional guarantees for to cover customers' losses from travel operators filing for bankruptcy
- Public procurement: public procurer allowed to pay contractor in advance of up to 1 mil DKK, and refrain from filing lawsuits if companies are delayed or fail to meet their contractual obligations if this inability is due to Covid-19
- Expanded student loans scheme to help students that lose their part-time student jobs
- Suspension of the upper limits on municipal and regional spending on construction works

### Estonia

State resources are directed to support companies through KredEx Foundation and the Estonian Rural Development Foundation. The package also includes labour market support of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, sickness benefits, tax incentives. The package allows for deferral of tax debt for 18 months, temporary suspension of second pillar pension scheme payments, as well as partial compensation for direct costs of cancelled events.

KredEx Foundation measures:

- Loan collateral amounting to EUR 1 Billion for bank loans already issued in order to allow for repayment schedule adjustments (maximum EUR 600 Million for the surety collection), under the following conditions:
  - if the bank relaxes the repayment schedule of the existing bank loan which has not been secured by KredEx Foundation, then KredEx foundation will secure the loan;
  - the maximum guaranteed amount is EUR 5 Million per company,
  - if possible, fixed guarantee will be restored or the guarantee rate will be increased to cover more than 80% of the guaranteed liability.
- KredEx Foundation business loan – amounting to EUR 500 Million, subject to the following conditions:
  - KredEx Foundation issues a revolving business loan to a company in order to overcome liquidity problems caused by the coronavirus, including, where necessary, the payment of bank loans,
  - the maximum loan amount is EUR 5 million per company,
  - the interest rate is approximately 4% per year.
- KredEx Foundation investment loan – amounting to EUR 50 million, under the following conditions:
  - KredEx Foundation grants an investment loan to the company so it would be possible to take advantages of the business opportunities created by the coronavirus, and other new business opportunities.
  - the maximum loan amount is EUR 5 Million per company,
  - the interest rate is approximately 4% per year.
- The labour market service provided by the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund to cover for wage reduction – amounting to EUR 250 Million, under the following conditions:

- the benefit can be used by a compliant employer to cover the period of two months from March to May 2020;
- the benefit of no more than EUR 1000 per month per employee in need of the support is paid as gross amount.
- the benefit is calculated based on the gross wages of the employee over the period of the previous 12 months, plus remuneration payable by the employer to the employee which is no less than EUR 150 in gross amount. The Unemployment Insurance Fund and the employer will pay all labour taxes on wages and benefits.
- For the period of March to May, the state will compensate the first three days of sick leave for all incapacity leave applications.
- Rural companies can apply to the Rural Development Foundation for guarantees (up to EUR 50 million), business loans (up to EUR 100 million) or land capital financing (up to EUR 50 million).
- Self-employed workers are subject to an advance social tax support measure.
- Payments into the II pillar of the pension fund are temporarily suspended.
- The State compensates for the direct costs of cultural and sporting events cancelled due to coronavirus in March-April, up to EUR 3 million.
- The Members of the Government supported the proposal of the Minister of Finance to suspend the tax interest calculation for a period of two months and to allow tax debt to be rescheduled at lower interest rates than are currently in force.

## Finland

### Financial measures announced by Finnish government on 17th March:

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

credit institution-specific requirements so that the structural buffer requirements of all credit institutions will fall by 1 percentage point, all in all. The decision will increase the lending capacity of the Finnish banks by around EUR 52 billion.

- The Bank of Finland has decided to restart its activities in the domestic corporate paper markets. The size of the programme is initially EUR 500 million. The decision was announced on 15th March

#### New package of measures on 20 March:

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

- The guarantee mandate of the state-owned special financing company Finnvera will be increased by EUR 10 billion to a total of EUR 12 billion. The increase in the mandate will allow additional financing of € 10 billion for businesses.
- Employers' earnings-related pension contribution shall be reduced by 2,6% of salaries. It will be implemented as soon as possible and will be valid until the end of 2020. It will ease the companies' payments by EUR 910 million. Pension companies refrain from paying customer bonuses for a period when employers' pension contributions are reduced.
- An increase of EUR 150 million in Business Finland's mandate to be used for fast-start business support activities. An increase of EUR 50 million is proposed to support business development projects.
- Own-risk days in unemployment benefits are cancelled in the event of lay-offs and redundancies. Unemployment insurance is immediately accessible. Working conditions to be eligible for income-related unemployment benefits are shortened. These measures will cost the state more than EUR 100 million.
- Notice period for layoffs is reduced from the current (from 14 days to 6 weeks) to five days. The right to lay-offs is also extended to fixed-term workers.
- Unemployment protection for entrepreneurs and freelancers is ensured. In order to be eligible for unemployment insurance, you don't have to close your business.
- The Government promises max. EUR 600 million guarantees to airline company Finnair.
- An increase of EUR 26 million is proposed for the control of infectious diseases. An additional budget of EUR 12,8 million is proposed for the operating costs of the Institute for Health and Welfare for coronavirus expenditure.
- An increase of EUR 5,6 million is proposed to the police for additional expenditure due to the coronavirus epidemic.
- An amount of EUR 200 million is proposed for non-specific expenditure linked to exceptional circumstances.

#### France

- It is possible to apply for a later payment of tax due if the companies can prove that they are financially affected by Coronavirus. However, only the deferral of direct taxes (including corporate income tax) is currently possible. VAT has not been included in the measures taken. Authorities have also committed to accelerate faster reimbursement of VAT credits.
- In difficult cases tax rebates can be decided on an individual examination of requests
- Support from the State and the Banque de France (credit mediation) to negotiate with its bank a rescheduling of bank credits;
- The State will guarantee €300 billion of bank loans to companies
- A €1 billion 'solidarity fund' will get created for the microbusinesses, SMEs and independent workers whose turnover is less than €1 million and who suffered a 70% decline of their turnover between March 2019 and March 2020 (cumulative criteria) : these eligible entities will then get a monthly €1 500 grant. Practical details will be clarified in the upcoming days.

- Suspension of rent and utility bills owed by small companies. Practical details regarding especially the size of eligible companies will be clarified in the upcoming days.
- The mobilization of Bpifrance to guarantee bank cash lines which companies may need because of the epidemic;
- Maintaining employment in companies through the simplified and reinforced partial unemployment system;
- Support for the treatment of a conflict with customers or suppliers by the Business Mediator;
- Recognition by the State of Coronavirus as a case of force majeure for its public contracts. Consequently, for all State public contracts, the delay penalties will not be applied.
- The State will cover 100% of the wages paid under the short time scheme.

## **Germany**

### **Making reduced hours compensation benefit (Kurzarbeitergeld) more flexible**

- Facilitation for short-time work - the threshold of employees that need to be affected by it was lowered from 1/3 to 10%
- Already in January the possible period for short-time work was extended from 12 to 24 months
- The Federal Employment Agency will cover 60% of the net salary in case of short term working and will reimburse the social contributions for the lost working hours to the employer
- Partial or complete waiver of the need to build up a negative balance in working hours
- Short-time working allowance will also be available to temporary workers

### **Tax-related liquidity assistance for businesses**

- options for deferring tax payments and reducing prepayments will be enhanced, and enforcement rules will be adapted.
- It will be easier to grant tax deferrals. Revenue authorities will be able to defer taxes if their collection would lead to significant hardship. The revenue authorities will be instructed to not impose strict conditions in this respect.
- It will be easier to adapt tax prepayments. As soon as it becomes clear that a taxpayer's income in the current year is expected to be lower than in the previous year, tax prepayments will be reduced in a swift and straightforward manner.
- Enforcement measures (e.g. attachment of bank accounts) and late-payment penalties will be waived until 31 December 2020 if the debtor of a pending tax payment is directly affected by the coronavirus.

### **A protective shield with unlimited volume**

In a first step, existing liquidity assistance programmes will be expanded to make it easier for companies to access cheap loans. This can mobilise a large volume of liquidity-enhancing loans from commercial banks. To this end, our established instruments complementing loans offered by private banks will be extended and made available to a greater number of companies:

- Conditions for the KfW-Unternehmerkredit (business loan for existing companies) and the ERP-Gründerkredit-Universell (start-up loan for companies that are less than 5 years old) will be loosened by raising the level of risk assumptions (indemnity) for operating loans and extending these instruments to large enterprises with a turnover of up to €2 billion (previously, the limit was €500 million). Higher risk assumptions of up to 80% for operating loans of up to €200 million will increase banks' willingness to extend credit.
- In the case of the "KfW Loan for Growth", the programme aimed at larger companies, the current turnover threshold of €2 billion will be raised to €5 billion. In future, these loans will take the form of syndicated loans and will not be restricted to projects in one particular field (in the past, only innovation

and digitalisation projects were eligible). Risk assumption will be increased to up to 70% (from 50%). This will improve larger companies' access to syndicated loans.

- For companies with a turnover of more than €5 billion, support will continue to be provided on a case-by-case basis.
- For guarantee banks (Bürgschaftsbanken), the guarantee limit will be doubled, to €2.5 million. The Federation will increase its risk share in guarantee banks by 10% to make it easier to shoulder risks, which are difficult to assess in times of crisis. The upper limit of 35% of operating resources in guarantee banks' total exposure will be increased to 50%. To accelerate liquidity provision, the Federation is giving guarantee banks the freedom to make guarantee decisions up to €250,000 independently and within a period of three days.
- The large guarantee programme (parallel guarantees from the Federation and the Länder), which was previously limited to companies in structurally weak regions, will be opened up to companies in other regions, as well. In this programme, the Federation covers operating loans and investments with a surety requirement upwards of €50 million and a guarantee rate of up to 80%.

These measures are covered by existing state aid rules. These special programmes are now being submitted to the European Commission for approval. The Commission President has already indicated that, in light of the coronavirus crisis, she will ensure that state aid rules are applied in a flexible way. The EU and Eurogroup finance ministers will advocate the necessary flexibility on the Strengthening European cohesion.

#### **An additional package (March 22)**

- Bailout fund (WSF) with 500 bn euro, that will take stakes in rescued companies (100 bn to recapitalize companies, 400 bn to assume debt from companies).
- Suspension of the debt brake initiated (constitutional limit on issuing new debt in excess of 0.35% of GDP)
- 50 bn hardship fund with loans to SMEs and self-employed
- Alongside loans from the German KfW (above), this would increase total borrowing for Germany by around 350 bn euro, or around 10% of GDP)

#### **Greece**

- Suspension of payment of VAT, payable at the end of March, for 4 months, in sectors and areas where the business is suspended by government order for more than 10 days. In addition, no interest or surcharge shall be payable on the amounts due when the deadline for payment and suspension of payment is extended.
- Suspension of payment of certified debts to the tax authorities, as well as installments of partial payment arrangements of certified debt, payable at the end of March, for 4 months in sectors and areas where business is suspended by government order for more than 10 months days.
- Establishing a mechanism, based on the available data from the Independent Public Revenue Authority, e-banking transaction and figures from the Ministry of Labour, that will monitor developments in the labour market and social security contributions, so that timely, targeted and effective intervention in the economy and in the regions where there is a significant decline in economic activity.
- Administrative requirements, such as the obligation to report overtime, are suspended in order to facilitate the gradual access of workers to avoid overcrowding in the workplace and public transport. Existing provisions on overtime and minimum rest time are not affected. A facility is provided for teleworking where possible.
- Support measures for businesses and workers affected by the pandemic, amounting to € 2 billion in the first phase. They will include, inter alia, a compensation of 400-500 euros to approximately 600,000 workers in businesses closed by government decision.

**Hungary***Last updated: March 25***Details of first package (announced on 18th March):****1. Suspending loan payments**

For the extent of the state of emergency, all payment obligations related to loans paid out before 18th March 2020 to businesses or private individuals are suspended. The moratorium affects all bank loans and financial leasing contracts, and beyond principal and interest payments, the moratorium extends to fees as well. The moratorium ends on 31 December 2020, but it can be extended by a government decree. The moratorium also extends to loan contracts that would expire during 2020 - the deadline of obligations arising from these contracts is postponed until 31 December 2020. Those who want to keep paying their instalments can do so; the decree does not affect debtors' rights to keep making payments in accordance with the original conditions.

**2. Sectoral relief**

Until 30 June 2020, the decree forbids landlords to terminate non-residential rent contracts or increase rent for businesses in the economic sectors worst hit by the pandemic, namely tourism, hospitality services, event organising, gambling, entertainment industry, film industry, performance arts, and sporting services. This too can be extended by a government decree. For the months of March, April, May, and June, these sectors were also exempted from paying most contributions after their employee's wages, only healthcare contributions are still to be paid, although the decree introduces a 7710 Forint cap on that as well. Private entrepreneurs performing passenger transport services (taxis) under the so-called "KATA" tax regulation will not have to pay their flat tax for those same months, which means the deadline of their next tax payment corresponding to the month of July is 12 August. These measures affect approximately half a million Hungarians (5% of population).

**3. More flexible labour regulations**

The decree also relaxed employment regulations, *"in order to help employers and employees come to agreements easier."* In practice, this means that some provisions of the 2012 Labour Code (which prevents employers from altering work schedules fewer than four days in advance) were suspended until the 30th day after the end of the state of emergency. The government decree allows employers to alter work schedules anytime. Employers can also unilaterally order employees to work from home or work remotely and introduce measures to check the health condition of their employees. The decree states that these temporary rules overwrite collective agreements and allows employers and employees to divert from the Labour Code's regulations in individual agreements.

**4. Personal loans**

Starting from 19th March, the government decree also sets a limit on the annual percentage rate of all new consumer loans (except for mortgages) at the Central Bank's base interest rate (currently 0.9%) plus five percentage points. It is unclear what the consequences of a 5.9% limit on the ARP of consumer loans - including personal loans and even credit card debts - will be; the introduction of similar measures is usually preceded by weeks of preparation, but the decree entered into effect hours after the announcement.

**5. Closing borders**

Hungary closed borders to all foreigners except for residence permit-holding EEA citizens and spouses and parents of Hungarian citizens on 16th March after declaring a state of emergency on the 18th March. As of 16th of March, universities and schools are closed, education will continue remotely. All events are banned, cafes, restaurants, non-essential stores have to close at 3:00 PM each day (pharmacies, drug stores, grocery stores, tobacco stores, and gas stations can remain open longer). Hospitals in Hungary no longer accept visitors, doctors, medical staff, and public officials require special permits to travel abroad. On 16th March, the government has allocated more than 8 billion Forints (~€24 million) for the coronavirus response.

**Details of second package (announced on 23rd March):**

1. On top of taxi drivers, 81 thousand more private entrepreneurs and small businesses will be exempted from paying the "KATA" flat tax and social security contributions after their employees. The measure will affect performing arts, beauty services, repair services (gas, water, glass, etc), sporting services, and other sectors, but the exact list will be released later in the government decree.
2. The government also grants exemptions for all "KATA" flat tax debts occurring after 20 March.
3. Hungarian media providers will get tax reliefs to balance missing ad revenues.
4. All evictions and foreclosures will be suspended until the end of the state of emergency, just like the enforcement of tax debts.
5. Child care allowances and child care benefits expiring during the state of emergency will be prolonged until the special legal order terminates.

### **Iceland**

- Businesses experiencing temporary difficulties due to a fall in revenue will be given flexibility, e.g. extended deadlines for taxes and other public charges.
- Efforts will be made to provide temporary relief to the tourism industry, including temporarily reducing industry-specific tax payments.
- Once the situation returns to normal, a marketing campaign will be launched to promote Iceland as a tourist destination and Icelanders will be encouraged to travel domestically.
- Measures to stimulate private consumption and demand will be enacted, e.g. tax reduction or increased benefits.
- Ongoing and planned infrastructure projects will be accelerated.
- The Government will cooperate with the Icelandic Financial Services Association on their response to foreseeable liquidity and payment difficulties of tourism companies.
- The HF-Fund (former HFF-Fund) will transfer funds from the Central Bank to increase the ability of banks and creditors to provide credit to both companies and individuals.

### Measures of 21 March

- Part time workers can claim up to 75% of unemployment benefits to avoid job losses. Those who are under the risk of losing their jobs will be eligible for unemployment benefits which allow them to move to part time hours for their employer (as low as 25% of their previous employment hours or salary) and claim additional support from the government.
- Postponement of taxes until next year, hotel taxes abolished until end of 2021
- Reductions in bank taxes and state guarantees on loans to eligible companies
- Initiation of a special project still this year to increase investment in transport, public construction and technology infrastructure – details to be released later

### **Ireland**

- A €200m Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) Working Capital scheme for eligible businesses impacted by COVID-19. Loans of up to €1.5m will be available at reduced rates, with up to the first €500,000 unsecured. Applications can be made through the SBCI website.
- Application of interest to late payments of VAT suspended for January/February
- Application of interest to late payments of employer PAYE(income tax)liabilities suspended for February/March
- A €200m Package for Enterprise Supports including a Rescue and Restructuring Scheme available through Enterprise Ireland for vulnerable but viable firms that need to restructure or transform their business.
- The maximum loan available from MicroFinance Ireland will be increased from €25,000 to €50,000 as an immediate measure to specifically deal with exceptional circumstances that micro-enterprises – (sole traders and firms with up to 9 employees) - are facing. Applications can be made through the MFI website or through your local LEO.

- The Credit Guarantee Scheme will be available to COVID-19 impacted firms through the Pillar Banks. Loans of up to €1m will be available at terms of up to 7 years.
- the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation will provide a joint First Responder support service through the Intreo Offices and development agencies, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland in each region to provide tailored supports for impacted firms, with objective of avoiding mass lay-offs and buying time for firms to work through the short-term disruptions.
- Firms that need to reduce hours or days worked can avail of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection Short Term Work Support by contacting their local Intreo Office, see [gov.ie/en/service/c20e1b-short-time-work-support](http://gov.ie/en/service/c20e1b-short-time-work-support).
- The full range of Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Local Enterprise Office and Údarás na Gaeltachta grant supports will be available to firms to help with strategies to innovate, diversify markets and supply chains and to improve competitiveness.

## Italy

Legislative Decree n. 18 of 17 March 2020 The main measures related to enterprises focus on 4 main axes:

### **1) Support for workers and enterprises,**

- **redundancy fund** - extended to all national territory, to all employees of all productive sectors, even to companies that already benefit from extraordinary layoffs, for a maximum of 9 weeks;
- compensation of 600 euro, monthly non-taxable, for self-employed workers and those subject to VAT;
- equivalence between disease and quarantine;
- **parental leave** for additional 15 days at 50% of remuneration for working parents or otherwise babysitter bonus 600 euro worth;
- for **air transportation**, enhance of the special fund for sustaining of income and the establishment of a new society fully controlled by Ministry of Finance.

### **2) Measures to support the liquidity of households and businesses**

- **moratorium on loans** to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (mortgages, leasing, credit openings and short-term expiring loans)
- strengthening of the **SME guarantee fund**:
  - o eligibility for the guarantee of debt renegotiation operations;
  - o automatic extension of the guarantee in the event of a moratorium or loans suspension;
  - o for transactions up to € 100,000, the evaluation procedure is restricted to the economic and financial profiles only;
  - o the chance to combine the guarantee of the fund with other forms of guarantee for the tourism sector;
  - o possibility to set up special sections of the fund in order to support access to credit for certain economic sectors or business chains, on the initiative of the sectorial Administrations, associations and reference bodies.
  - o suspension of the fund's operating terms;
  - o extension of the limit for the granting of the guarantee from 2.5 million to 5 million;
- strengthening of the **Confidi** for micro-enterprises;
- establishment of an Integrated Promotion Fund at MAECI;
- instantaneous entry into force of the volatility adjustment for insurance companies;
- introduction of a counter-guarantee mechanism for banks, by CDP, with which to allow the expansion of credit also to medium-large companies affected by the crisis;
- incentive to sell impaired loans by converting deferred tax assets into tax credits for financial and industrial companies;
- establishment of a show, cinema and audio-visual emergency fund and provisions for the cultural sector;

- rules on the reimbursement of residence contracts and on the termination of contracts for the purchase of tickets for shows, museums;
- Increase in advances from the 2014-2020 Development and Cohesion Fund within the Operational Plans of Central Administrations and Development Pacts.

### 3) Fiscal measures

- **Suspension of withholding tax, social security and social security contributions and compulsory insurance premiums** during March and April, together with payment of VAT in March. The sectors concerned are tourist-hotel, spa, passenger transport, restaurants and bars, culture (cinema, theatres), sport, education, amusement parks, events (fairs/conferences), games rooms and betting centres;
- **suspension of payment periods and tax and contribution payments** for taxpayers with a turnover of up to EUR 2 million (VAT payments, deductions and contributions for March);
- **deferral of the deadline** for payments due to public authorities from 16 to 20 March for economic operators not subject to suspension;
- **disapplication of withholding tax** for professionals without employees, with revenues not exceeding 400,000 euros, on the invoices of March and April;
- **suspension until 31 May 2020** of time limits for winding-up, control, establishment, collection and litigation activities by the offices of the Revenue Agency;
- **suspension of time limits** for collection of tax records, payment and removal, suspension of new files and suspension of executive acts;
- incentives and contributions for **sanitation and safety at work**;
- **for commercial rentals**, tax credit equal to 60% of the March rent;
- provisions on road transport and public passenger transport;
- the suspension until 31 May 2020 of fees for the award of public sports facilities to sports associations and societies;
- urgent extraordinary measures in support of the press chain.

### 4) Enhancement of the health System and of civil protection

- appropriations for the recruitment of 20000 health workers for the national health system.
- increase of **national emergency Fund** of 1.65 billion;
- the funding for **increase the hospital beds**;
- requirement for **private facilities** to provide for health workers, buildings and their equipment:
- authorization to Invitalia to provide concessional financing or straight grants **for producers of medical devices** and PPE (personal protective equipment);
- possibility for civil protection of **requisition** of health centres, medical surgical and essential goods. Prefects will have at their disposal the requisition of hotels or other buildings;
- preview of price in public contracts, to expedite the purchase procedures and the payment of materials and health tools.

### Latvia

- temporary support to employers to cover sick leave payments and employee salaries in idle time
- possibility to defer tax payments up to three years and the deadline for submitting annual reports has been extended to at least 31 July
- State revenue service will refund approved VAT payments already within 30 days of submission of VAT declarations
- ALTUM (national development finance institution) will provide loan guarantees and loans for crisis solutions to businesses affected by COVID19
- Interest rates on loans for tourism sector businesses will be cut by 50% for SMEs and by 15% for large enterprises

## Lithuania

On 16 March 2020 the Lithuanian Government adopted the Economic and Financial Action Plan to address the impacts of the COVID-19 virus on the economy, people and businesses. 10% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), accounting for 5 billion euros, will be allocated to support the measures.

The action plan focuses on ensuring the health of the population, helping small and medium-sized businesses, boosting employment and economy:

- **Provision of necessary resources for the efficient operation of health and public security systems - 500 million euros**
- **Jobs and income protection - 500 million euros**

The Economic and Financial Action Plan provides 500 million euros for measures aimed at maintaining jobs and income. The state will jointly support businesses with job retention for up to three months, by also covering partial downtime or part of downtime allowance for employees. In the case of quarantine in educational institutions or social care and employment centers, a provision foresees sickness benefits for the specialists who take care of children and the disabled. It also provides for self-employed workers who have paid social security contributions: to receive 257 euros / month for up to 3 months when they are unable to carry out their activities due to quarantine, and to extend the credit payment period (excluding interest) for those who became unemployed – from 3 to 6 months with the state guarantee. Also, to allow the possibility of postponement or settlement of payments for electricity and natural gas to the national energy holding company Ignitis UAB, to recommend municipalities to postpone or arrange schedule for utilities and heat energy payments.

- **Maintaining business liquidity - 500 million euros**

The plan provides for immediate tax loans, with postponed or deferred payment schedule, without interest payment; stopping recovery actions on the basis of reasonableness criteria; exemption of taxpayers from fines and penalties; possibility to defer payment of personal income tax; increase the Guarantee Limit for the Agricultural Loans and INVEGA Guarantee Fund by 500 million euros as well as extend the terms for the guarantees; enable businesses to defer or postpone payments for the electricity and natural gas consumed to the national energy holding Ignitis UAB. It is also recommended that municipalities exempt businesses from commercial real estate and land taxes, and allow to defer or arrange utility bills and payments for heat energy.

- **Boosting the economy - 1 billion euros**

The Economic and Financial Action Plan provides for accelerating investment programs, speeding up payments and increasing the intensity of funding. It also allows reallocation of EU investment funds to health, employment and business fields, accelerates the use of state budget for current expenditure, use all funds from the Climate Change, Road Maintenance and Development programs and accelerate the renovation of apartment buildings. In addition, it is planned to recommend the Bank of Lithuania to take measures to increase the lending potential of banks by 2.5 billion euros: (1) reduction of capital requirements for credit institutions; (2) Reduction of liquidity reserves; (3) Reduction of other supervisory measures.

Moreover, an additional 500 million euros state guarantee ceiling is foreseen to create or supplement the existing financial instruments. Also, to establish a COVID-19 Impacts Reduction Fund open to contributions from legal and natural persons.

A 1 billion euros stimulus package for the economy will encompass 500 million euros additional investments and 500 million euros additional guarantees.

- **Ensuring liquidity of the state treasury**

The Economic and Financial Action Plan provides for the Government to borrow additional 5 billion euros.

- **Task force on business emergency coordination**

A state-level task force on business emergency coordination was formed. LPK is represented by its President Robertas Dargis.

**Luxembourg**

- Companies directly affected by government orders eligible for a short-time working scheme
- Reimbursements for unemployment caused by government closures at 80% of normal salary
- Commuter certificates for cross-border workers to allow them to cross borders that are otherwise closed
- Companies can apply for cancellation of tax advances for the first 2 quarters of 2020, and can apply for a four-month payment deadline for taxes due after February 29
- All VAT credit balances below 10.000 euros will be reimbursed

**Malta**

*Last updated: March 25*

- Government to finance €800 per month for full-time employees and self-employed, and €500 per month for part-time employees, in critical sectors that were affected by Covid-19 measures. These include hotels, restaurants, certain retail outlets, travel agencies, transport operators, entertainment. This will also be extended to all those activities hit by forced closure as a result of public health measures
- Government and social partners agreed that employers will guarantee a minimum top-up of €400 per month per employee for those on higher wages to ensure that these employees receive a minimum of €1,200 per month
- Nothing prevents employers from giving more than the agreed minimum top-up to employees on a higher wage. At the same time, employers that cannot afford the top-up will have to obtain permission from the Director of Labour
- Government will also finance €160 per month for full-time employees in sectors hit by reduced consumption, including manufacturing, some retail outlets and the information sector

**Retained measures:**

- A Maltese or EU citizen who becomes redundant will get €800 per month as unemployment benefit
- Government will cover additional two months leave for parents who have to stay at home to take care of the children as a result of school closures with an €800 per month benefit. This benefit applies where both parents work in the private sector
- Government will provide an Eur800 per month benefit for disabled people who work in the private sector but choose to stay at home
- Quarantine leave: Government to pay companies €350 per employee on quarantine leave
- Taxes due in March and April, including provisional tax, VAT and social security contributions, have been postponed to a future date
- Incentives/grants for companies to invest in teleworking equipment
- Government to provide Eur900 million for loan guarantees to enable business to access bank finance

**Economic impact:**

The measures announced will be sustained for three months but can be reviewed depending on how the situation develops. This is expected to cause public debt to increase by about 8%. Government anticipates that the debt-to-GDP ratio will still be less than 50%, giving it enough fire power to increase the aid package at a later stage if the situation does not improve.

- €1.6 billion in liquidity for companies: €700 million in tax deferrals and €900 million in guarantees. The €900 million in government guarantees to companies are expected to open up the availability of credit and loans to the tune of €4.5 billion that would give companies additional liquidity
- Quarantine leave: Government to pay companies €350 per employee on quarantine leave
- Government will cover additional two months leave for parent who has to stay at home to take care of the children as a result of school closures with an €800 per month benefit.
- A company registering 25% less sales will benefit from 1 day per week per employee. This amounts to around €37 per week, equivalent to around €147 per month per employee. Measure is capped at €800 per month.
- A business that was asked to close as part of the Covid-19 measures will get 2 days of assistance per week per employee. This is equivalent to €300 per month per employee.
- A self-employed person will get the same amount
- A self-employed person who also employs others will get 3 days per week of assistance for himself and 2 days per week for every employee
- A Maltese or EU citizen who becomes redundant will get €800 per month as unemployment benefit
- A third country national who becomes unemployed will get no financial assistance but JobsPlus will help to find alternative work
- People in rental property and who lose their job and did not qualify for rent subsidy, will now benefit from the scheme
- Foreign workers: A company that makes anybody redundant cannot apply for a work permit for a third country national. Malta will stop accepting new third country national work permit applications
- Taxes due in March and April, including provisional tax, VAT and social security contributions, have been postponed to a future date. VAT credit refunds will also be accelerated.
- Incentives/grants for companies to invest in teleworking equipment

## **Netherlands**

On March 17 the Dutch government further announced:

1. A guarantee facility for SME loans (BMKB) is already in place and working – EUR 665 million of an available budget of EUR 765 million, 0.08% of GDP. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy has expanded guarantees to a higher guarantee percentage, up to 90% of the credit risk of banks for SMEs that want to take out a loan of EUR 1.5 mln maximum but that do not have the required collateral. This measure was recently expanded for SMEs coping with risks associated with the nitrogen ruling (adopted) and is further expanded to apply to SMEs affected by COVID-19.
2. The social assistance decree, aimed at self-employed persons, (Bbz, Besluit bijstandverlening zelfstandigen 2004) will be expanded, meaning that the self-employed and entrepreneurs will be able to receive social assistance if they meet certain standards, which will be relaxed. This social assistance will include additional benefits to meet livelihood standards and/or a loan for working capital.
3. A new temporary measure will be introduced to help entrepreneurs paying wages, in order to prevent unemployment. This measure replaces the current working time reduction scheme, which was not designed for handling a pandemic. In the new scheme, employers will be supported more quickly than before. Employers using the scheme must commit to not firing their employees on economic grounds. Employers who expect a decline of at least 20% in revenue can request an allowance for a period of 3 months of maximally 90% of the total wage sum. The Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) will pay a deposit beforehand, and it will be determined afterwards whether a firm has received too much or too little support. The Dutch government will work on the details of the proposal in the coming period and will send a request to the European Commission regarding stateaid rules. The costs will strongly depend on the number of applications. If 25% of all employers apply for an average of 45% of their wage bill, the

costs will be around 10 billion euros in the first 3 months. These costs will increase when the number of applications rise.

4. Businesses can request for a special deferral of payment in income tax, corporate tax, VAT, energy tax and wage tax. Temporarily, no penalties for failure to pay taxes (on time) will be imposed. Businesses that already forecast lower profits due to the epidemic can request a reduction of the provisional tax assessment and will be able to pay less initial tax in order to avoid liquidity problems. To avoid immediate liquidity problems, the requirement for a “third expert” will not have to be included in the request immediately (but after two weeks). Moreover, the tax authorities will temporarily decrease the recovery interest rate from 4% to 0.01%.

5. The so-called GO-regulation, through which SMEs can secure a 50% guarantee from the government on their bank loans and bank guarantees, will be expanded. The maximum ceiling guaranteed will be increased from EUR 400 million tot EUR 1.5 billion and the maximum GO-facility per firm will be increased from EUR 50 million to EUR 150 million. This will enable both small and large firms to benefit from this policy.

6. In order to support small firms and start-ups with little financial reserves, we will expand the Qredits-programme. Through this program, we expect to support approximately 3000 to 6000 firms by a deferment of payment for a period of a maximum of six months and by giving those firms a discount on their rent payments for the same period.

7. Agricultural and horticultural SMEs will be supported by temporarily relaxing the guarantee for working capital, which is part of the existing decree Borgstelling MKB-Landbouwkredieten (BL). The decree will ease acute liquidity problems for agricultural and horticultural business who experience those problems due to the COVID-situation. The credit is for a maximum of 2 years.

8. The central government will discuss with local governments on how they can support local entrepreneurs within the current regulatory frameworks. In order to support the liquidity of local firms, the central government will discuss whether it is possible to postpone the collection of local taxes, including tourist taxes.

9. To support firms that are affected by our government’s health measures - for example by the closure of restaurants - an emergency desk will be introduced, through which those firms can receive a one-off lump sum allowance of EUR 4000. The conditions for this allowance are currently being drafted.

## **Norway**

The Norwegian government has taken strong measures to fight the Covid-19;

- “closed” the borders and banned foreigners from entering the country/to be put in quarantine for 14 days, goods will still be allowed to enter
- closed all schools and universities,
- closed bars, restaurants etc. but shops are still allowed to be open
- banned sectors treating people form operating (hairdressers, phycists, opticians, dentists etc)
- closed down non essential public offices for public availability.

On March 16 a settlement was presented that includes, among others, the following measures:

- The employer’s period of layoff is reduced from 15 to 2 days.
- The employer period for sick pay and care allowance is reduced to 3 days. This will mean a lot to businesses in a very demanding situation. Employers do not receive an extra bill when the workforce disappears. This applies to sick pay related to the coronary pandemic.
- Self-employed and freelancers receive sickness benefits from day 3, and care money from day 4.
- The period of care money (for parents staying home with children home from school) is doubled.

- Deferred VAT payment. Payment of the employer's contribution on May 15 and VAT on April 15 this year is postponed. The 12 percent VAT rate is reduced to 8 percent. Along with deferred payment of other taxes, these are crucial measures in a period when companies have limited revenues. We also have to gradually clarify whether companies can be exempted from any taxes and fees.
- Apprentices now receive an income hedge on par with apprenticeship pay.
- Self-employed persons also receive an income hedge equivalent to 80 per cent of average income for the past three years, limited up to 600.000 NOK/60.000 EUR.
- Employees receive a "full salary" for 20 days upon termination. The cost is distributed with two days to the employer, and then 18 days from the state with pay, but limited up to 600.000 NOK/ 60.000 EUR. This will ease the burden on many jobs.
- The income limit for receiving unemployment benefit is set at 0.75 G (7.500 EUR). This group also ensures at least 80 per cent of its income up to 3G during the layoff period.

In addition there will be more credit available;

- Loan and guarantee schemes for business on a total of NOK 100 billion (EUR 10 billion)(more if needed) to help ensure that the companies get the credit they need. The credit will be handled through the ordinary banks.
- The Norwegian central bank has lowered its interest rate to 1% and reduced the capital demands for banks to free capital for businesses

## **Poland**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of March, Polish government announced the anti-crisis shield which supposed to help Polish economy to counteract the consequences of coronavirus epidemy. Value of the package: 212 billion PLN (€47 bln ):

### **Pillar I: Employees**

- For entrepreneurs with lower turnovers: 40% of salary covered by state and at least 40% by employer to the level of average salary in Poland.
- For self-employed, contract agreement and work contract employed: possibility to cover up to 80% of minimum salary in Poland.
- Extended care allowance: 3-4 billion PLN from the social insurance fund.
- Credit installment prolongata.

### **Pillar II: Entrepreneurs:**

- Up to 5,000 PLN micro-loans, guarantee and liquidity solutions; loans and credits on preferential terms, among others for industries most affected by the crisis (transport).
- Increased guarantee from Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego\* (up to 80% loan) - postponement of loan repayments by banks.
- Deferring payments to ZUS (Social Security Institution) and spreading repayments into instalments.
- Temporary restoration of stores and trade supplies on Sundays.

### **Pillar III: Health care:**

- 7.5 billion PLN for infectious hospitals, medical equipment, modernization of the hospital base etc.

### **Pillar IV: Stability of financial system:**

- Capital - liquidity package.
- Deposit protection.
- Anti-Usury Act - the fight against unjustified price increases

### **Pillar V: Public investments:**

- 30 billion PLN, digitization, modernization of schools, environmental protection, reconstruction of infrastructure, local roads.

\* A state development bank whose mission is to support the social and economic development of Poland and the public sector in the fulfilment of its tasks.

### Portugal

- Credit line, with state guarantee, to support companies' cash flow (200 M €).
- 12-month moratorium on repayment of reimbursable grants (incentive systems) for the most impacted companies.
- Postponement of tax payments.
- Simplified regime of temporary lay off for companies in "emergency crisis" (having their activity suspended for reasons related to the epidemic or with a considerable fall in their turnover). Workers receive 2/3 of their wage, of which 30% is paid by the employer and 70% by social security. During lay off (and one more month), companies are exempt from social security contributions.
- New credit lines with favourable conditions for companies operating specific sectors of activity: restaurants, tourism, events, shoes, textile, extractive industries (3000 M €)
- Postponement of tax and social contributions payments

### Romania

*Last updated: March 25*

#### **Fiscal**

- **the postponement of payment of tax liabilities:** all principal tax liabilities which become due by taxpayers during the period of the state of emergency are postponed for payment without accrual of interest and late payment penalties until the elapse of a 30 day-period as of the date when the state of emergency ceases.
- **Changes regarding the corporate income tax:** The quarterly anticipated payments of the annual corporate income tax for 2020 can be made at the value of the calculation of the current quarterly corporate income tax, while the methodology for the calculation of the corporate income tax shall remain the same for the entire year 2020.
- **Extension of payment deadline for local taxes:** payment of the tax on buildings, land and means of transport for all taxpayers was prolonged from 31 March until 30 June while taxpayers will still be able to benefit from a 10% discount of such taxes if the due amounts are properly paid until June 30.
- **The suspension/not commencement of the enforcement proceedings** by garnishment in respect of certain budgetary liabilities during the state of emergency;
- **the prolongation of certain deadlines for the restructuring plans**
- Tax authorities decisions:
  - The reimbursement of VAT tax during the month of March for all the accounts that are settled and for which decisions of reimbursement were issued;
  - The implementation of a new mechanism for VAT reimbursement which aims to rapidly solve the VAT reimbursements starting with April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020;
  - The suspension of fiscal control (fiscal inspections, anti-fraud controls), with the exception of the verifications that can be done remotely and of the tax evasion cases, where there are clues in this regard;

#### **Labour & social**

- According to the Romanian Labour Law, employment contracts can be suspended (**technical unemployment**) in case of temporary reduction / interruption of the activity, and with the payment by the

employer of an indemnity of at least 75% of the basic salary corresponding to the job. **New provisions have been introduced during the state of emergency.**

- the employees' indemnities may be borne from the unemployment insurance budget up to the limit of 75% of the medium gross salary (i.e. 75% of lei 5,429), provided that the employer is under one of the cases provided by the GEO (below). The indemnity amounts are subject to income tax (10%) and social contributions (except for employer's labour insurance contribution) to be paid by the employer.
- The employees' indemnities may be borne from the unemployment insurance budget, if:
- employer discontinues in whole or in part the activities based on the decisions issued by the competent public authorities as per the law, during the emergency state period (eg. restaurants, cinemas, etc.) - based on the Certificate of emergency situations issued by the Ministry of Economy OR
- employer reduces activities due to the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic and does not have the financial capacity to pay all the salaries of their employees, but in such case indemnities will be covered by the unemployment budget only for maximum 75% of employees – based on a written statement of the employer acknowledging both a diminishing of revenues at least 25% compared to the average revenues for the months January-February 2020 and the lack of financial capacity to pay all employees
- Employers should grant **leave to one of the parents for the supervision of the children under 12 while the schools are closed** in case there is no option to work from home. Allowance for each day off is 75% of the salary of a working day, but no more than the correspondent per day of 75% of the average gross wage in the country (in 2020 the average gross wage gain is 5,429 lei). Since the state of emergency started, **telework** is the rule where possible.

### Slovakia

- Extension of VAT payment date and removal of interest or penalties on late filings due to COVID-19.

### Spain

Measures from 12 March Supporting business activity:

- flexibilization allowed for tax payments during a period of six months, which would inject 14 billion euro of liquidity; For all Spanish VAT returns due in the period 13.03.2020 until 30.05.2020, an extension of the deadline for submission may be requested from the Spanish tax authorities using a special form. However, this extension cannot be requested by large companies (annual turnover exceeding EUR 6 million) or if the VAT due on the return exceeds EUR 30,000.
- opening of a specific credit line through the Official Credit Institute for 400 million Euro to cope with liquidity needs of companies and self-employed people in the tourism sector;
- extension of Social Security subsidies for permanent seasonal contracts in tourism, retail and restaurants linked to touristic activity; and
- a request has been sent to the European Commission to introduce an exemption from the slot-use obligations for the next seasons.

Additional measures:

- prohibition of interruption of supply during the alarm state and the suspension of the automatic update of energy prices
- Suspension of the term to apply for insolvency. Courts will not accept the insolvency applications submitted by creditors during the state of alarm or during the two months following its termination.
- The Royal Decree suspends the deadline for tax debt payments assessed by the tax authorities, including deferred or suspended tax debts as well as tax debts within the enforcement period (periodo ejecutivo), until 30 April. In addition, a general delay in the deadline of tax administrative procedures has been approved until 30 April.
- Employment guarantee: The Royal Decree includes in its final provisions an employment guarantee whereby all extraordinary employment measures carried out by companies in application of the measures

approved by the Royal Decree are conditioned to the companies keeping employment within the six months following the restart of business activity

- Working time adaptation or reduction Employees may request an alteration of working hours (including changes in shifts) or the reduction of working hours (up to 100%) to take care of a spouse or partner, or dependent family members up to the second degree of kinship, for COVID-19-related reasons
- Suspension of mortgage payments for businesses, self-employed and persons having lost their job during the epidemic
- Reduction in Social Security contributions: (i) Companies with less than 50 employees will be exempted from paying Social Security contributions (employer quota only) during the term of the measures, and (ii) companies with more than 50 employees will have a 75% discount on the employer quotas.
- Unemployment allowance: All employees affected by the suspension/reduction measures will be entitled to the unemployment allowance irrespective of whether they personally fulfil or not the requirements set by law to access such allowance
- If cases where the business activity needs to be suspended or reduced, the Royal Decree establishes new provisions in relation to the process to follow for the collective suspension of employment relationships or the collective reduction in working hours, which are basically aimed at making such processes more flexible

Spanish Social Partners are asking to:

- Introduce flexibility and easing the legal procedure in relation to temporary lay-offs, due to force majeure reasons.
- Social security coverage must be assured for permanent seasonal employees who may be affected at work;
- With respect to those employees isolated or in risk of contagion, they shall receive a supplement of up to 100% of their salaries. However, the Government must draw up a proceeding to process withdrawals and registrations, in order to provide with legal certainty.
- Precise legal provisions should be considered foreseeing childcare and elderly care, including contributions to social security.
- Teleworking should be allowed in case of extraordinary public health reasons, even in the bosom of companies or sectors where teleworking has not been implemented yet.

## Sweden

Last updated: March 25

	Date	Cost
<b>Government measures</b>		
<b>Almi Företagspartner receives a capital injection of SEK 3 billion, Svensk Exportkredit's loan framework will be increased from SEK 125 to 200 billion</b> and the Export Credit Committee will make decisions on credit guarantees that mean new and improved opportunities for companies to borrow.		See text
<b>SEK 1 billion is given to culture and sport</b> as a result of the effects of the corona virus	March 20	1 bn SEK
<b>State credit guarantees to airlines and extended credit guarantee framework for the Export Credit Committee</b> to dampen the effects of the corona virus. The credit guarantees may amount to a maximum of SEK 5 billion for loans to airlines that on 1 January 2020 had a Swedish permit to conduct commercial operations in aviation and which have their main business or registered office in Sweden. Of these SEK 5 billion, SEK 1.5 billion is directed to SAS.	March 17	5 bn SEK

<b>The state will compensate municipalities and regions for extraordinary measures</b> and additional costs in health care and care linked to the corona virus.	March 16	
<b>The benefit deduction is canceled between March 11 and May 31</b> by the state paying sickness benefit for the first day of the sickness case, and for self-employed days 1-14	March 16	
<b>The public health authority, the National Board of Health and the Swedish Medicines Agency receive additional resources</b> . The Public Health Authority receives a supplement of SEK 41 million for mainly personnel costs. The National Board of Health and Welfare receives a subsidy of SEK 20 million, primarily for personnel costs, training efforts and equipment. The Swedish Medicines Agency receives a grant of SEK 5 million for its work together with the regions to secure drug supply in Sweden. The grants correspond to the authorities' own assessments of what they need at present. In addition, the National Board of Health and Welfare's loan frame is tripled from SEK 100 to 300 million, in order to be able to buy, among other things, protective equipment and sampling equipment.	March 16	
<b>Resources are being increased for the so-called transmission carrier allowance</b> as the number of individuals entitled to this compensation is assumed to increase.	March 16	
<b>The state temporarily takes over the sick pay responsibility for two months.</b> The state is proposed to temporarily take the full cost of all sick pay costs in April and May.		
<b>Liquidity enhancement is provided through the tax account for VAT, employer contributions and employees' provisional tax from 1 January.</b> The deferment covers three months' tax payments and is submitted for a maximum of 12 months. The new rules are proposed to apply on April 7, 2020, but can be applied retroactively from January 1, 2020. This means that companies that have paid tax in their tax account for January to March can receive the tax refund from the Swedish Tax Agency.		300 bn SEK if the system is used fully
<b>Short-term leave is introduced from 16 March.</b> the employer's wage costs can be reduced by half, while the employee receives more than 90 percent of the salary. The aim is for affected companies to be able to retain their staff and switch up quickly again when the situation turns. The new regulations will come into force on April 7, but will be implemented from March 16. They will be valid during 2020. The Growth Agency will administer the support and will receive SEK 20 million. There are three fixed levels of reduction in working hours in the proposal: 20, 40 or 60 percent, which means reduced costs by 19, 36 and 53 percent for the employer in the three different cases. The new regulations will come into force on April 7, but will be implemented from Monday, March 16. The state will bear three quarters of the cost in 2020. This means that companies and employees can start planning to receive compensation for layoffs from 16 March. Salary ceiling of 44,000 sek.	March 16	2.4 billion SEK
<b>Other measures</b>		
<b>Measures to facilitate the provision of credit</b>		
<b>The Riksbank expands purchases of securities by up to SEK 300 billion this year.</b> The purchases will, if necessary, include both government and municipal bonds and housing bonds. The purchase of government bonds starts immediately.	March 16	

<b>The Riksbank</b> 's INKING s lending rate for overnight loans to banks from 0.75 to 0.20 percentage points above the repo rate.	March 16	
<b>Riksbank</b> e rbjud s banks to weekly borrow an unlimited amount of money secured with three-month maturity at an interest rate of 0.20 percentage points above the repo rate.	March 16	
<b>National Bank</b> island ka r flexibility around which guarantees (also housing bonds) banks may be used when borrowing of the National Bank .	March 16	
<b>The Riksbank</b> lends up to SEK 500 billion to the companies through the banks to secure the credit supply (at least SEK 100 billion should reach the companies).	March 13	
<b>Finansinspektionen</b> reduces the countercyclical capital buffer to zero in order to safeguard a well-functioning credit supply.	March 16	

### Switzerland

- Border controls reimposed
- Schools closed, all public and private events are prohibited in Switzerland. All shops, markets, restaurants, bars and entertainment and leisure facilities, such as museums, libraries, cinemas, concert halls and theatres, sports centres, swimming pools and ski areas are closed. Also affected are businesses at which the recommended distance of 2 m. cannot be maintained, such as hairdressers and cosmetics studios.
- Extend the instrument of compensation for short time work for companies in difficulties.
- economiesuisse urges the Federal Council to rapidly activate the loan guarantee cooperatives, which are supported by the federal government and facilitate SMEs access to bank credits because these organisations can provide the banks with guarantees. These cooperatives guarantee loans of up to 1 million CHF. The Confederation insures up to 65% of the associated risk of loss. The authorities also pay a proportion of their administrative costs. This scheme shall be made available to SMEs who are particularly hit by the effects of the Corona virus. In addition to this, companies should be given the possibility to delay payments to the authorities in order to avoid bankruptcy of otherwise solvent enterprises.
- Goods transports must continue to cross the borders without further hinderance. economiesuisse welcomes the decision of the Swiss government not to foresee any restrictions in this area and to coordinate cross border exchange of goods closely with the EU.

### United Kingdom

Measures 20 March:

- **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme** accessible for all businesses. The details of the scheme include:
  - The government will pay up to 80% of furlough workers' salary (up to £2,500 per month)
  - This is a grant and the first grants will be paid within weeks; it should all be up and running before the end of April
  - The pay will be backdated to 1 March 2020
  - The scheme will run for a maximum of 3 months and employees cannot work during that period.
- **Coronavirus Business Interruption Scheme**
  - The loans will now be interest free for 12 months, not the previously indicated 6 months.
- **Q1 VAT payments will be deferred**
  - There will be no payments between now and the end of June
  - Businesses will have until April 2021 to pay this back
  - This is a £30bn package.
- **Additional measures**

- The Chancellor also announced the Universal Credit standard allowance would be increased by 12% over the next 12 months
- The minimum income floor for Universal Credit will be suspended
- Self-assessment payments are deferred until January 2021
- The Chancellor also announced a £1bn support package for renters to cover around 30% of market rents.

### **Economic measures in third countries**

#### **South Korea**

11,7 trillion won supplementary budget plan, among others for measures such as,

- Expand the emergency loans for business operation, and provide facilities investment support for SMEs in the disease-hit areas of Daegu City and North Gyeongsang Province
- Provide loan guarantees through the Korea Credit Guarantee Fund and Korea Technology Finance Corporation
- Invest in accounts receivable insurance funds
- Invest in export financing
- Provide wage support for small merchants
- Promote a rent cut in traditional markets by offering 100 percent support for fire prevention in the entire market in the case of at least 20 percent of shops getting rent cuts
- Support the resuming of business after shut-down due to a visit by the virus-infected
- Promote expanding to online markets
- Provide retailers in traditional markets with vouchers designed to support their marketing activities, such as joint promotion
- Issue vouchers for local products
- Give a 20 percent raise in wages to seniors in government's elderly job programs if they agree to receive 30 percent of their pay in local gift certificates
- Redeem 10 percent of the prices paid for home appliances with a high-energy efficiency rating
- Increase the budget for homecare allowance in the case of childcare shifting from daycare institutions to homecare
- Increase job seekers' allowance for young adults, and reintroduce job seekers' allowance for those from low income households
- Expand the employment support designed to promote employment retention and job training

#### **United States**

*Last updated: March 25*

On March 25 agreement was reached in the House on a stimulus package. While details have currently not been disclosed in full, it is supposedly of 2 trillion usd (around 10 % of US GDP), contains a "helicopter money" direct payment to all US citizens of 1.300 USD, and considerable loans.

CNN reported "The full details have yet to be released. But over the last 24 hours, the elements of the proposal have come into sharper focus, with \$250 billion set aside for direct payments to individuals and families, \$350 billion in small business loans, \$250 billion in unemployment insurance benefits and \$500 billion in loans for distressed companies."

This followed a proposal from March 17 where the US government proposed an aid package (to be ratified in the Senate) of a magnitude estimated to be around 1 trillion USD, which will include:

- 500 bn USD "Helicopter money", in the form of a check of 1.000 dollars to every American in April, possibly followed by another check later if the situation requires it
- 3-months tax deferral for businesses as well as individuals (up to 10 million / 1 million max)
- 50 bn USD support for airlines
- Loans for businesses

On Sunday March 15 the US Federal Reserve announced

- Its second rate cut during the coronavirus outbreak, the Fed lowered its interest rate by own 1 percentage point, down to zero (0.25% for some rates).
- It also announced it will purchase 700 billion dollar worth of Treasury bonds and mortgage-backed securities (quantitative easing)
- The existing dollar liquidity swap lines with European countries and Japan will also be strengthened

The US Chamber of Commerce requests government to:

- **enact legislation cancelling the payment of all payroll taxes typically paid by employers for the months of March, April, and May.** Each month, employers remit more than \$100 billion to the federal government in the form of Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment taxes. Collectively, these taxes add just over 15% to the cost of employing the average employee. Temporarily cancelling the collection of these taxes will reduce the cost for employers for continuing to pay employees regardless of whether they are working or on sick leave and increase liquidity for employers to help them respond to losses in revenue. Further, for employers with fewer than 500 employees, cancellation of the taxes combined with the refundability for paid sick and family leave included as part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act will provide meaningful additional financial support.
- **enact legislation expanding and streamlining loan programs for small businesses with fewer than 500 employees experiencing revenue loss as a result of the Coronavirus.** The Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster loan program for those impacted by the Coronavirus should be immediately made available nation-wide, eliminating the state-by-state and county-by-county certification process. Additionally, we recommend giving SBA the authority to streamline its disaster loan approval process for amounts below \$350,000 in order to provide emergency capital more quickly to small businesses in need. This should include removing the requirement that small businesses demonstrate that they cannot access credit elsewhere before receiving a SBA-disaster loan.
- **enact legislation enabling the creation of credit facilities to provide loans and loan guarantees to employers with more than 500 employees experiencing significant revenue loss as a result of the Coronavirus.** Specifically, legislation should expand the use of the Federal Reserve Discount Window through the liberalization of the restrictions of Section 13-3 of the Federal Reserve Act. Then the U.S. Treasury, Federal Reserve, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) should work in combination with banks to establish a system of credit facilities, to provide loans and loan guarantees that can be accessed by businesses with more than 500 employees to address disruptions created by the Coronavirus emergency. Banking regulators should temporarily suspend and review requirements such as the Liquidity Coverage Ratio and provide flexibility in their supervisory expectations for banks extending credit to businesses. These actions should allow for an orderly operation of a program of loans and loan guarantees.

## Japan

### **Expanding special measures on the Employment Adjustment Subsidies**

- Due to the impacts of COVID-19, some businesses are forced to curtail their operations in response to the slow-down of the flow of people and goods. The government will significantly expand special measures on the Employment Adjustment Subsidies so as to protect employment and secure the stability of the people's lives even in such a situation. Expand the scope of the special measures to all business owners, clarify eligibility criteria (such as simultaneous closure), and apply retroactively back to January, 2020.
- Increase the subsidy rate for certain areas (SMEs: increase from 2/3 to 4/5; large enterprises: from 1/2 to 2/3)

#### **Robust liquidity supports**

- In order to overcome the impacts on local economies, including those from self-restraint from holding events, and bring businesses back on a growth track after the disease is under control, the government will implement financial measures totaling 1.6 trillion yen from the Japan Finance Corporation and other institutions, primarily focusing on micro, small and medium-sized business operators.
- Establish a COVID-19 special loan program (on the scale of 500 billion yen) and reduce the interest rate, as well as provide real interest-free, unsecured financing support to micro, small and medium-sized business operators and others
- Applying safety net guarantee system No. 4 (100%) and No. 5 (80%) of credit guarantee corporations, as well as crisis-related guarantees (100%)
- Support financing and reorganization of domestic supply chains through operations to facilitate crisis response by the Development Bank of Japan (DBJ), and the Shoko Chukin Bank (on the scale of 204 billion yen)
- Call for private financial institutions to actively provide new loans and change terms for existing debt

#### **Responses for the damages to supply chains**

- Taking into consideration the burdens on micro, small-, and medium-sized business operators, the government will enable expedited assistance, regarding priority supports on capital investments to respond to the damages, including those on supply chains, and for business owners who work to cultivate new sales channels
- Make use of the Growth Investment Facility and other measures of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) (on the scale of up to 500 billion yen)
- Support reorganization of domestic supply chains through the DBJ, etc (same measure as previous item)

#### **Measures for the tourism industry**

- The prevention of the spread of infections is the premise of the recovery of tourism demand. The government will strongly support the tourism industry through the Employment Adjustment Subsidy and liquidity supports for the time being. At the same time, regarding the period in which the government is working on prevention as a forward-looking "run-up" period, the government will develop a foundation to prepare for a turnaround in the future, identifying this infection control period.
- Provide supports in various fields such as diversification of attractions, including the development of attractive tourism content and multilingual signs.
- Consider a post-COVID-19 campaign through the collaboration of the public and private sectors

#### **Strengthening comprehensive supports through promoting the use of the self-reliance support system for people in need**

- The government encourages the local governments to provide comprehensive supports tailored to people in need, including those who had to leave their jobs or have decreased incomes due to the impacts of COVID-19.