



Urgent measures to counter the consequences and prevent the spread of COVID-19

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Employment Law Alert



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Urgent measures to counter the negative consequences and prevent the spread of COVID-19

In light of the outbreak of COVID-19, the Greek government adopted a series of new provisions on 12 and 14 March 2020, including the Act of the President of the Hellenic Republic of Legislative Content dated 11 March 2020 (National Gazette no. A' 55/11.03.2020), which provide urgent measures to counter the negative effects of COVID-19 and limit its spread in the workplace.

The measures are as follows:

01 **Employers' obligation to report** any change in an employee's working hours, working schedules, extended working hours, and additional overtime arrangements on the **Ministry of Labor's "ERGANI" online information system is suspended.**

However, while the measures are being implemented, employers must report the information on the "ERGANI" system within the first 10 days of the following month.

02 Employers may opt to allow their employees to **work remotely.**

03 Employees with children may request **special-purpose leave** of at least three days, provided the employee uses one day of annual leave for every three days of special-purpose leave requested. The leave must be reported on the "ERGANI" system. Employees may request and be granted special-purpose leave during the period 12 March until 10 April 2020.

Two-thirds (2/3) of the costs of special purpose leave are covered by **the employer** and **one-third (1/3)** is covered by **the state.**

04 A ministerial decision may **extend the deadlines for employers to pay social security contributions, or to pay the contributions in installments or make partial payments,** regardless of whether the employees are paid a monthly salary or a wage, whether their employment is for a fixed term or open-ended, or whether they are employed on a full-time, part-time, or rotation basis.

05 **A special support system is established for employees of entities whose operations are temporarily banned** due to the emergency measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. This system includes economic support measures, special purpose compensation, social security coverage, special allowances, and training vouchers.

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The measures are as follows:

- 06** Affected employees will have to submit a sworn statement through a special electronic platform of the Ministry of Labor providing their personal information, bank account information (IBAN), as well as information on their employer in order to qualify for the special support system.
- 07** Employers whose entities are subject to a temporary operating ban by order of a public authority **are required to submit a sworn statement through the "ERGANI" system** stating that their entity is subject to a temporary operating ban. .
- 08** Employers whose employees have exceeded the annual or mid-year overtime limit may employ their staff for additional overtime work, regardless of a prior approval from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs while the measures taken to prevent and reduce the virus are in effect and, any case, for no longer than a six-month period. Overtime working hours should not exceed the daily statutory limit established by law.
- 09** Businesses that manufacture, transport, and/or supply food, fuel, medicine, and/or medical equipment are allowed to conduct their operations on Sundays and public holidays while the above measures are in effect and, any case, for no longer than a six-month period. However, the use of their employees remains subject to the time limits provided in the applicable laws.

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