

## Legislative Act on Urgent Measures Aimed at Handling the Negative Consequences of the Coronavirus COVID-19 and the Need to Contain its Spread while Supporting the Society and Businesses and Ensuring the Smooth Operation of the Market and of Public Administration

Following various declarations of governmental officials during the week from 16 to 20 March regarding various measures aimed, amongst others, at supporting affected businesses and employees, a new legislative act was published on Friday evening, 20.3.2020, incorporating all these declarations. The main provisions of the legislative act that are of interest to businesses are the following:

- Deduction of rent by 40% for March and April applicable for businesses for which special measures have been taken suspending or temporarily prohibiting their operation. This reduction also applies to residential lease agreements in the cases that the tenant is an employee of a business whose operation has been suspended or prohibited and whose employment agreement has been suspended.
- The process for the refund of taxes owed to natural or legal persons is expedited provided that the application for the refund does not exceed the amount of Euro 30,000.
- A ministerial decision of the Ministers of Finance and Labor will be issued defining the terms, conditions and procedure to provide financial support to freelancers, including the suspension of their obligations to the tax authorities and to the social security institutions.
- Employers may decide that their business will operate with security personnel for a period of up to 6 months from the entry into force of the legislative act under the following conditions:
  - Every employee must be employed for at least 2 weeks per month;
  - This employment regime is materialized on a weekly basis and must apply to at

least 50% of the employees;

- An employer that will apply this measure is under an obligation to maintain the same number of employees throughout the period that this measure shall remain in force;
  - The employer is under an obligation to declare the application of the above measure to ERGANI, the online platform of employment registration, at the end of each month.
- Employers whose businesses have been significantly affected or whose operation has been suspended or prohibited, may transfer employees within the same group of companies following an agreement between the entities of the group. The businesses that will apply this measure are under an obligation to maintain the same number of employees throughout the period that this measure shall remain in force.
  - Businesses whose operation has been suspended are under an obligation not to proceed with terminating employment agreements throughout the period of suspension. Such terminations, if made, will be considered null and void. This clause is valid as of 18.3.2020.
  - Businesses which have been materially affected (as officially specified by the Ministry of Finance) may suspend the employment agreements of part or all of their employees in order to adjust their operational needs to the negative economic environment caused by the pandemic. Said suspension may be

implemented for a period of 1 month, which (period) may be extended with a decision of the Ministers of Finance and Labor. The following applies in relation to this measure:

- Employers who make use of this measure may not terminate any employment agreement of their staff. Any such termination, if made, shall be considered null and void.
- Following the termination of the suspension, employers making use of this measure will be under an obligation to maintain the same number of personnel for a period equal to the suspension period.
- This measure applies only to businesses whose activity falls within the list of business activity codes that has been published by the Ministry of Finance as materially affected. Said list was published on 20.3.2020.
- Employees whose agreements have been suspended (either because the operation of the business has been suspended or prohibited or because the employer whose business is considered to have been materially affected opted for the measure of suspension) are entitled to a special allowance. This allowance as well as the social security contributions of the employees for this period are covered by the state budget.
- The employer is under an obligation to file with ERGANI a declaration about the employees whose agreements have been suspended, including the employees whose agreements were terminated between 1 and 20 March who are also entitled to the special allowance. Employers who do not

make the filing with ERGANI are excluded from their right to come under the measures for the suspension of payments of taxes or other measures for payment of due taxes in installments.

of the public sector, to the allocation and handling of supplies of medicine, hygiene products and hospital equipment, the support of the national health system etc.) but the above summarize the measures which are of interest to businesses.

- For as long as an imminent danger for the spread of Coronavirus exists and, in any event for a period that cannot exceed 6 months from the entry of the legislative act into force, the working hours of the super markets and the shops selling food in general may be extended for 1 hour from Mondays to Fridays and for 2 hours on Saturdays. It may also be decided that such shops will open on Sundays.
- A number of measures have also been introduced enabling natural and legal persons to perform certain actions without the need for physical presence, i.e.
  - the issue of documents, through the digital portal of the Greek public administration following the electronic authentication of the user through their taxis-net (the Greek online tax platform) codes
  - applications for the issue of administrative documents from the public sector through this digital portal
  - making electronic solemn declarations
  - granting of electronic PoAs
  - filing of electronic applications with the Citizens' Service Centers
  - electronic signatures of documents issued by legal entities

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The legislative act also includes other measures relevant to the pandemic (e.g. relating to the operation