

EU PolicyWatch

Database of national-level policy measures

Eurofound's EU PolicyWatch collates information on the responses of government and social partners to the COVID-19 crisis, the war in Ukraine, rising inflation, as well as gathering examples of company practices aimed at mitigating the social and economic impacts.

Overview

Factsheet for measure MT-2020-13/275 – **Updated** – measures in Malta

War in Ukraine

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Medical benefit for COVID-19 risk group who cannot carry out their work

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Country	Malta , applies nationwide
Time period	Temporary, 28 March 2020 – 05 June 2020
Context	COVID-19
Type	Legislations or other statutory regulations
Category	Income protection beyond short-time work – Paid sick leave
Author	Luke Anthony Fiorini (University of Malta) and Eurofound
Measure added	04 April 2020 (updated 15 November 2021)

Background information

Individuals who are employed in the private sector and after 27 March 2020 due to COVID-19, were ordered not to leave home by the Superintendent of Public Health because they suffer from one or more of several medical conditions, and are not able to work from home and are not being paid by their employer during their absence are eligible for this benefit.

Eligible individuals will continue to have their social security contribution paid and future pension rights safeguarded, whilst also receiving other benefits.

Content of measure

Individuals eligible are those ordered to not to leave home by the Superintendent of Public Health because they suffer from one or more of several medical conditions including: diabetes and is dependent on insulin; on biological medicines; had cancer in the previous 6 months; is immuno-suppressed; undergoing renal dialysis; is pregnant; admitted to hospital for respiratory disease over the previous 6 months; had a heart condition in the previous 6 months; attending the heart failure clinic; are on oral steroids. Furthermore, the individual works full-time or part-time in the private sector, cannot work from home and is not being paid by their employer during their absence; have not yet reached retirement age.

Eligible individuals will receive €166.15 per week if they worked full time, or €103.85 if they worked part time.

Individuals will continue to have their social security contribution paid and future pension rights safeguarded, will continue to receive children's allowance if eligible (and may be upgraded to maximum level due to new income), if entitled to other benefits these will continue without deductions.

Updates

The following updates to this measure have been made after it came into effect.

05 June 2020 This measure has now ended.

Use of measure

€13.2 million have been paid out to 8,360 beneficiaries for benefits related to parents, those with medical conditions, disability and those who applied for the additional unemployment benefit. A total of €17.5 million will be handed out by the end of June. A further breakdown is unavailable.

A 2021 prebudget document highlighted that more specifically, 1,679 person benefitted from the schemes for those with medical conditions and were unable to work during the initial months of COVID-19, incurring a cost of €2,754,914

Target groups

Workers	Businesses	Citizens
The COVID-19 risk group at the workplace	Does not apply to businesses	Does not apply to citizens

Actors and funding

Actors	Funding
National government Trade unions Employers' organisations Social insurance	National funds

Social partners

Social partners' role in **designing the measure** and form of involvement:

	Trade unions	Employers' organisations
Role	Consulted	Consulted
Form	Consultation through tripartite or bipartite social dialogue bodies	Consultation through tripartite or bipartite social dialogue bodies

Social partners' role in the **implementation, monitoring and assessment phase**:

- No involvement
- Main level of involvement: Peak or cross-sectoral level

Involvement

Social partners initially aired their COVID-19 related concerns both publicly and directly with the government. This led the government to announce a series of packages, with the current measure forming part of the third package. The measures that formed part of this third package were the result of tripartite negotiations between Malta's largest trade unions, employer associations, the government and the Central Bank. It was unanimously approved by the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD). The measure is administered by the Government via the social security department.

Views and reactions

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact upon business, and following consultation with social partners, the government initially announced a package of measures which included the deferral of taxes and financial support to incentivise telework. Following this announcement, employer associations publicly announced

that these were insufficient and would not protect their businesses or jobs, stating the government instead needed to subsidise wages. These calls continued when on the 18th March, the government announced further measures including support for those who had lost their job, the disabled, and for employers to subsidise quarantine leave. The measures whilst welcomed were still viewed as insufficient by both trade unions and employer associations. On the 24th of March, the government announced a third package of measures which included support for wages and other measures previously announced. The current measure emerged following this conference. This third package of measures was announced by the government whilst flanked by union and employer association members. It was announced that this package was the result of tripartite consultation. Furthermore, following announcement of these further measures, employer associations announced their satisfaction with the package.

Sources

- 27 March 2020: Covid-19 - Medical Benefit
- 01 October 2020: Ministry for Finance - Pre budget document 2021 (finance.gov.mt).

Citation

Eurofound (2020), *Medical benefit for COVID-19 risk group who cannot carry out their work, measure MT-2020-13/275 (measures in Malta)*, EU PolicyWatch, Dublin, https://static.eurofound.europa.eu/covid19db/cases/MT-2020-13_275.html

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