



Social security and COVID-19

National measures taken in France

Last up-date: 27 April 2020

[The Representation of the French Social Security Institutions to the EU \(REIF\)](#) has gathered comprehensive updated information on national measures in the field of social security taken in France in the context of COVID-19.

REIF offers to continue to provide European institutions as well as European and national stakeholders with updated information in the coming weeks and months according to the eventual legislative and regulatory developments in France.

France

Adjustments of social security coordination rules in particular for cross-border workers

The application of social security coordination rules has been adjusted, in particular with regard to determining the legislation applicable to frontier workers, pluri-active workers (who work for one or more employers in at least two countries, including France), workers seconded during the Covid-19 crisis management period and/or who use teleworking.

<https://www.cleiss.fr/actu/2020/2003-covid-19-coordination.html>

Telework for cross-border workers

The use or massive increase of telework for cross-border workers residing in France and exercising their professional activity in another EU / EEA / Switzerland State has no impact on their affiliation and their rights to benefits. The same applies to workers posted to an EU/EEA/Switzerland State and to pluri-active workers by derogation to the existing principles in the European regulations.

Facilitation of cross border mobility in case an activity cannot be carried out at a distance

Specific measures have also been taken by instruction of the French Ministry of the Interior to facilitate the crossing of borders by frontier workers whose activities cannot be carried out at a distance in order to enable them to reach their place of work. In particular, permanent authorisations issued by the employer or specific passes granted by the national authorities may be issued.

Posted workers/seasonal in agriculture

Due to the closure of borders, the work of posted seasonal workers is impossible. Farmers need to recruit quickly agricultural manpower to secure food production and keep their businesses running. The initiative called "Let's mobilize to secure our plates!" led to the creation of an online platform with the support of Pôle Emploi to put candidates and employers in touch: <https://desbraspourtonassiette.wizi.farm/>. The usual hiring and declaration procedures remain unchanged.

Special provisions in the bilateral Franco-Monegasque social security agreement

In view of the exceptional circumstances, the increase in teleworking time or the start of teleworking also has no effect on the pre-existing social security regime for frontier workers and workers posted to Monaco. The special provisions provided for in the bilateral Franco-Monegasque social security agreement in the event of teleworking have been lifted. These adjustments have been made by all the ministries concerned.

Support measures to preserve jobs and support the unemployed persons

A mix of unemployment benefits and national employment support funds have been triggered with more than 10 million of workers under short time working allowance to prevent employees from losing their jobs during containment measures:

- A simplified and reinforced use of the partial activity system which is available to companies experiencing cyclical economic difficulties. This system, also called "partial unemployment", enables companies to receive financial aid to offset the loss of income caused by the reduction in the working time of the concerned employees. Companies have 30 days from the interruption of activity to apply for the partial activity system; compensation will be retro-active. The request form is available at the following address: <https://activitepartielle.emploi.gouv.fr/aparts/>

- Strengthening of the compensatory indemnity paid to employees undergoing partial employment: partial unemployment, normally compensated up to the minimum wage, will be fully supported (100%) by the government, up to 4,5 times the minimum wage (6,927 € gross monthly): <https://www.economie.gouv.fr/covid19-soutien-entreprises>
<https://www.unedic.org/indemnisation/vos-questions-sur-indemnisation-assurance-chomage/chomage-partiel-quelles-demarches>

- Allowing an exceptional extension of compensation for jobseekers at the end of their entitlement: <https://www.pole-emploi.fr/actualites/allongement-exceptionnel-de-lind.html>

More information: <https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/actualites/l-actualite-du-ministere/article/coronavirus-questions-reponses-pour-les-entreprises-et-les-salaries>

Facilitating cross-border healthcare provision

For cross border treatments, it is intended that under these exceptional circumstances, S2 forms (Request for Scheduled Care) will be issued retrospectively for patient transfer throughout the Covid-19 crisis management period.

Sickness allowance for persons affected by COVID-19

Insured persons who are affected by COVID-19 are covered for sickness risk by the payment of daily allowances without a waiting period as long as they are affiliated to a French social security scheme.

Persons affiliated in France even though they reside in a neighbouring State benefit from the support measures taken by the Health Insurance in terms of daily allowances, under the same conditions as all the others insured under the French scheme. This is also true for a worker posted from France to another member state.

Insured persons residing in a third State that are affiliated to a French social security scheme will benefit from the measures taken by the Health Insurance in terms of daily allowances under the same conditions as all other persons insured under the French

scheme. For instance, if an employee is seconded to another State, he will benefit of daily allowances because he is affiliated to the French social security scheme for the entire duration of his secondment. All the measures described above are also implemented by the social insurance scheme dedicated to salaried and self-employed people in the agricultural sector (MSA). Furthermore, regarding Health and safety at work issues, MSA is fully committed and assists salaried employees and farmers to enable them to work while protecting themselves and their environment.

Exceptional work interruption/sick leave period for persons at-risk and those caring for children

In France, a temporary work interruption/sick leave has been introduced for people at risk of developing a serious form of infection (chronic diseases patients, pregnant women) or employees that cannot work from home because they need to take care of their kids (under the age of 16) while schools are closed. Only one parent at a time (or holder of parental authority) may be issued a work interruption/sick leave, but it is possible to split the notice or share it between the parents over the period of kindergarten/school closure.

To benefit from this exceptional allowance, insured persons need to go through the website <https://declare.ameli.fr/> which is a system for declaring work interruption/sick leave set up by the Health Insurance. It is a declaration that acts as a notice of work interruption and replaces the interruption prescribed by a healthcare professional. The notice can be issued, without waiting periods or conditions for opening the rights, for a period of 1 to 21 days and may be renewable. The same measure has been put in place by MSA, the agricultural scheme for salaried and self-employed, by opening a special website: <https://declare2.msa.fr/z84cordeclaria/#/accueil>

In the context of the Covid-19 epidemic, the Health Insurance covers, by way of derogation and without waiting period, the daily allowances for self-employed health professionals if they have to interrupt their professional activity, in accordance with the same terms and conditions as those applied to employees and self-employed workers. These allowances amount to a daily allowance of €72 for paramedical professions and €112 for pharmacists and medical professions.

It is interesting to note that the Health insurance received between 1 and 1.5 Million of work interruption/sickness allowance applications in the first two weeks of lockdown.

Health expenditure

In the ambulatory care, there is a slowdown in spending, approximately EUR 350 million less per week, and an increase in daily allowances, approximately EUR 185 million more per week, linked in particular to derogatory work stoppages/sick leaves (childcare, vulnerable people).

These figures should be taken with caution, since the cost of the support system for health professionals, a catch-up effect on the consumption of care and additional costs linked to the epidemic itself such as expenditure on tests will also be added up.

The national health insurance expenditure target ("Ondam") for 2020 will be exceeded but it is not possible to know the exact extent of this overtake.

Family branch information

The family branch provides information on the Covid-19 pandemic on the <http://www.caf.fr/> and <https://monenfant.fr/>. Appointments for CAF benefits claimants can take place remotely (telephone interview, videoconference). Contacts can also be

made by email or through personalized « my account » space of the beneficiary on the CAF website.

Childcare services

French President Emmanuel Macron announced the general closure of nurseries from March 16 onwards and the setting up a system of childcare arrangements for the workers who are essential to the management of the Covid-19 crisis: nurseries can remain open (free of charge) for children of critical workers (health professionals, police, firefighters etc.) subject to a limit of 10 children received simultaneously. In order to support parents, Prefects are in charge of organising this emergency care service. A special service to identify the needs of these families and the available places has been created on the website of the Family Branch (<https://monenfant.fr/>).

The French national family benefits fund (CNAF) grants exceptional aids to nurseries for children under 3 which had to close down from March 16 until further notice due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. This flat-rate aid amounts to 27 euros (per day and per number of childcare places reserved in the structure which were left unused) for public nurseries and 17 euros for private nurseries (the amount for the latter is lower since these nurseries can receive an aid from the French unemployment fund). The nurseries do not charge parents for hours of childcare non realized.

Childminders experiencing earnings loss as a result of temporary inactivity can benefit from the partial activity mechanism (enabling them to be compensated at 80% of their net salary and keeping their existing contract with the parents). In addition, the registered childminder's houses which had to close down entirely or partially can receive 3 euros (per day and per number of childcare places reserved which were left unused) to cover rental costs.

As to other services and facilities aimed at families and supported by the French family branch, CAF aids are maintained, to the full or partial extent on a case-by-case basis, in the event of closure due to Covid-19. Yet, some of these structures maintain their activities relying on remote work of the employees and volunteers.

Similar measures to those described above are also implemented by the agricultural social insurance scheme dedicated to salaried and self-employed people.

Entitlements to benefits automatically renewed

The provision of family benefits granted by the family benefits offices (CAF) is not affected and the continuity of rights is guaranteed. Beneficiaries exceptionally received their benefit payments at an earlier date in April in order to provide them with the best possible support.

CAF encourages beneficiaries to use online services to make their quarterly declaration of income. If a beneficiary is unable to renew the quarterly declaration of income with its CAF-contact point due to the Covid-19 crisis, the entitlements to benefits are automatically renewed.

This applies in particular to the following benefits : active solidarity income (revenu de solidarité active (RSA)), specific allowance for French departments overseas (revenu de solidarité (RSO) dans les outremers), allowance for disabled adults (allocation adultes handicapés (AAH)), education allowance for disabled child (allocation d'éducation de l'enfant handicapé (AEEH)), housing allowances as well as a set of means-tested social benefits granted by the CAF. In order to facilitate access to social benefits, including minimum social benefits, some post offices counters were re-opened in early April so

that social welfare benefit recipients can collect their payments from post offices if need be.

In addition, the entitlements to AAH and AEEH which are about to expire are automatically extended by 6 months.

In cases of emergency, the CAF can grant financial aid for families in need (for instance families coping with precarious situations, single-parenting, handicap or bereavement).

As every year, the amount of certain benefits provided by the CAF are reassessed on the 1st of April and the Covid-19 outbreak has no impact on the revalorisation.

Regarding housing benefits, the reform of personalized housing benefits (APL) programmed for 1st of April 2020 is postponed due to Covid-19 crisis.

Similar measures to those described above are also implemented by the agricultural social insurance scheme dedicated to salaried and self-employed people.

Some people may find themselves isolated or in distress in the epidemic context. In order to break isolation and prevent psycho-social risks, Agri'écoute, a 24-hour telephone helpline, is available for farmers and farm employees as well as their relatives. This service allows confidential dialogue with a professional.

Exceptional solidarity allowance for the most deprived

An exceptional solidarity allowance will be provided from 15 May to the most deprived families and children. The allowance will be provided to the households already perceiving the active solidarity income (revenu de solidarité active (RSA)) or the specific solidarity allowance (allocation de solidarité spécifique (Ass)). The allowance will consist in an additional aid of 150 euros per household with an additional 100 euros per children under 20 years old.

Find out more: <http://www.caf.fr/allocataires/actualites/2020/une-aide-exceptionnelle-de-solidarite-versee-mi-mai>.

Public service continuity for the pension statutory scheme

CNAV (National Pension Scheme) and its regional pension schemes are finding solutions to continue dealing with pension applications and paying pensions to all general pension scheme's insured persons in order to ensure public service continuity. Management rules are implemented to continue the service and for precarious persons. Similar measures to those described above are also implemented by the agricultural social insurance scheme for their pension beneficiaries.

Alleviating social security contributions

First steps have been taken to postpone the payment of contributions by companies. Amicable and forced collection procedures are suspended. The government is considering a cancellation of social contributions to save the companies most affected by the crisis. For the self-employed, in accordance with the measures announced by the government in the context of the coronavirus crisis, the local institutions in charge of collecting social security contributions (URSSAF) are mobilised. The monthly deadline of 20 April has not been taken. Pending measure, the amount of this due date will be smoothed over future due dates (May to December).

In addition to this measure, the following can be requested:

- an adjustment of the contribution schedule to take into account a drop in income, by reassessing the 2020 income without waiting for the annual declaration;

- the intervention of the social action of the council for the social protection of self-employed workers (CPSTI) for the partial or total coverage of contributions or for the allocation of exceptional financial aid;
- the intervention of tax authorities to benefit from the aid provided by the solidarity fund.
- in the case of agricultural economic activity, public authorities have put in place specific measures to support farmers affected by the crisis such as deferred payment of contributions without penalty. Under certain conditions, very small farm businesses and farmers can benefit from financial support through an aid of 1.500 €.

Residence permits for foreign nationals legally residing in the country

In order to secure the presence of legally resident foreign nationals in the country and prevent any undermining of the rights conferred to them by the residence permits they possess, in particular the right to work and the enjoyment of social rights, several residence documents have their periods of validity extended by three months. Foreign nationals carrying expired permits and benefiting from this extension are advised not to leave French territory, as they risk encountering difficulties in re-entering.

Similar measures to those described above are also implemented by the agricultural social insurance scheme dedicated to salaried and self-employed people.