



16 March 2020

CITUB position on the introduced state of emergency and the related measures for the socioeconomic situation in the country

CITUB welcomes the measures introduced by the government as timely and believes that they are a step in the right direction for protecting the health of Bulgarian citizens. This is a major priority in the current situation. We believe that the measures would be more effective if the following suggestions of CITUB were taken into account:

- Unblock wartime stocks to provide the necessary protective equipment and target high-risk occupational groups such as: all medical personnel, employees in the administrative sector, the transport sector - urban transport, airports, Bulgarian State Railways (BDZ).
- We urge the state to take the necessary steps to ensure the marginal prices of products, needed to curb the spread of the coronavirus.
- Next, provision should be made for guaranteeing the earnings of temporarily unemployed workers through compensation from the state as benefits, or from the state budget, or from the Guarantee of Claims Fund, extending the possibility of reduced-income companies to receive money from the fund.
- Priority should be given to funding of hospitals and individuals in the frontline of the pandemic, defining the mechanism and way for funding the medical staff. To this end, we demand a meeting with the Minister of Health Kiril Ananiev.
- In view of the relief of business in the face of the coming severe economic crisis, we support the reimbursement of natural gas overpayments to the end customers of Bulgargaz, following the agreement with Gazprom.
- All delayed and due payments of the state should be paid in order to prevent bankruptcies and inability to pay amounts to suppliers.
- We support changing and postponing the deadlines for annual financial closure of social security payments and personal income tax payments, submitting and payment of annual taxes of individuals, according to the duration of the state of emergency. To postpone the period for payment of the annual profit tax for companies and individuals, according to the financial status of the companies.
- To give individuals and companies the right to reschedule credit contributions from financial institutions and, if necessary, introduce a moratorium on mortgage payments and/or renegotiate the terms and refinancing of risky mortgages.

- We suggest that at the enterprise level, Working Conditions Committees and Groups be convened for considering measures to ensure safety at work in the new situation. To complement workplace risk assessment with specific measures to minimize it. Take measures to advise workers on what to do in case of suspected contamination. To inform workers of the risk, including through emergency training. Providing disinfectants, appropriate personal protective equipment - masks, protective gloves, etc., providing special storage places for the protective equipment used. Complement workplace risk assessments by involving representatives of Working Conditions Committees and Groups and occupational health services in their development.
- Social workers, social patronage must be provided with all protective equipment. Disinfectants should also be given to the people confined at home.

In the Labour Code:

Changes need to serve both the interests of employees and their employers.

- We suggest in the Labor Code to allow the employer in an emergency situation to be able to change (by order) the workplace of the employee, for carrying out the work from home or from a certain place, outside the usual premises of the employer. The order should specify the location of the workplace, the conditions for assigning and reporting the work, as well as the consumption costs at the workplace. The remuneration of the employee shall not be changed for the time of the relocation.
- We propose to create opportunities for the use of leave - paid or unpaid, in the event of a state of emergency of different categories of workers, such as mothers of children, workers caring for a dependent family member or looking after a sick or quarantined family member.
- In case of termination of work due to a state of emergency, the body which established the state of emergency, to pay monthly compensation to the employee in the amount of 60 percent of their gross remuneration, in accordance with the terms and conditions determined by a normative act. The remainder of the compensation payable by the employer for the period of emergency should be paid to the employee by the employer. The employer should have the right to repay the entire remainder of the compensation within two months after the state of emergency has been cancelled.
- Seek to apply greater flexibility to the already existing working time regimes under the Labour Code – extended working hours, part-time work, time available, etc.