

Additional measures to support employees in response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis

Within the framework of the ongoing process of reviewing the measures taken to address the current crisis due to the COVID -19 pandemic and the declared will of the Government and the President of the Republic himself to stand in solidarity with the workers and following the evaluation by the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance of the statistical data obtained from the payment of special benefits for the period between 16 March 2020 and 12 April 2020, it was found that due to the low insurance premiums declared in the Register of Social Insurance Services, a low amount of allowance was paid to a number of employees based on the method by which unemployment benefits were calculated on the basis of the Social Insurance legislation.

For these reasons and in order to support as many employees as possible that are currently out of work or full-time work, we are proceeding with a series of additional measures to support employees as follows:

- (1) For the purposes of paying the Special Unemployment Benefit and the Special Sick leave Benefit, the insurable earnings of the year 2018 will be taken into account, but in addition, a comparison will be made based on the declared salary of January 2020, so that the amount paid as Special Unemployment Benefit will be the highest amount that results from the above comparison and taking into account 60% for both calculations.
- (2) A special plan will be implemented for employees who first started work in February and March 2020, under the strict condition that they will be registered by their employers.
- (3) There will be a minimum amount which will be received as Special Unemployment Allowance or as a Special Sick leave Allowance.
- (4) Further measures will be taken to verify the bank accounts, by submitting also certifying copies of bank account details, which has already been implemented, so that a group of officers may correct errors that have been identified if the bank accounts are not confirmed by the Banking Institutions.
- (5) The inclusion of persons over 65 years of age who do not receive statutory pension and continue to work.
- (6) After identifying several errors in the applications due to incorrect data on the Social Security Number, no application will be accepted unless the Social Security Number submitted is confirmed at the time of submission.
- (7) The plans will include new categories of economic activity that were excluded between 13/4/2020 and 12/6/2020.
- (8) In addition, those for whom the regular unemployment benefits from the Social Insurance Fund have been completed, may join the Special Plans to receive a Special Unemployment Allowance for the period between 13/4/2020 and 12/6/2020.
- (9) Additional payments will be made for cases falling under paragraphs (1) and (3).
- (10) All employees will be subsidized, regardless of whether they are general managers or managing directors, in small businesses that employ up to nine employees and in the Partial Suspension of Business Plan.

The aforementioned arrangements are aimed at supporting workers during the crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to be in effect for the period until June 12, 2020 and with further support of both businesses and employees until October 12, 2020, without

being considered as a precedent for the payment of the usual unemployment benefits after the end of the above period.

It is important to emphasize that any rights from the Social Insurance Fund and any benefits provided in non-emergency situations, as well as pension rights, are calculated on the basis of the salaries declared to the Social Insurance Fund, so the declared salaries are very important in ensuring both decent living and workers' pension rights.

The above measures will be submitted to the Council of Ministers on Thursday 23/4/2020 for approval. All employers are reminded to file payroll statements for their employees for February as well as March 2020.