

The Council of Ministers decided to take additional measures to support employees

With a view to supporting as many workers as possible who have been laid off or have lost their full-time status due to the COVID -19 pandemic, the Council of Ministers, chaired by the President of the Republic, Mr Nicos Anastasiades, today approved a proposal by the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, Ms. Zeta Emilianidou, for a series of additional measures to support employees.

The measures, which were determined following a dialogue between the Ministry and the social partners, are 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 emphasized 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.