# C L I F F O R D C H A N C E



## LABOR LAW MEASURES TO FACE THE COVID-19 CRISIS IN LUXEMBOURG

1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2020

#### **CLIFFORD CHANCE LUXEMBOURG**

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As well as a public-health crisis, the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic is creating an unprecedented shock to the global economy.

The present table includes an overview of labor law related measures passed by the Luxembourg government as a response to the COVID-19 crisis (as at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020)

Special attention is to be given to Law of 20 June 2020 temporarily derogating from certain labor law provisions in connection with the COVID-19-related state of crisis and amending the Labor Code<sup>1</sup>. The latter is intended to ensure the temporary or permanent continuation of derogations from the Luxembourg Labor Code (the "LLC") implemented through Grand-Ducal Regulations ("GDR") passed on the basis of article 32, paragraph 4 of the Constitution (and which GDR have expired upon the end of the state of crisis). A few provisions introduced are definitively maintained and are incorporated into the LLC.

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Relevant area and latest update	Normally applicable provisions, and exemptions taken in the context of Covid-19	Description of the measure	Subsequent changes as a result of the evolution of the Covid-19 crisis
Extraordinary leave for family reasons	Articles L.234-51 and L.234-52 of the LLC and GDR of 10 May 1999 GDR of 12 March 2020 <sup>2</sup>	This concerns situations in which a parent can no longer go to work because he/she has to keep his/her children under 13 years of age quarantined upon the order of the competent authorities. <u>GDR of 18 March 2020</u> : the leave was extended to situations where a parent can no longer go to work due to an isolation, eviction or 'stay-home' measure decided against children, based on imperious public health reasons, by the competent authorities when faced with the propagation of an epidemic.	of the child, in order for the parent to benefit from this leave, was removed for certain children who receive an

https://chd.lu/wps/cortal/public/Accueil/TravailALaChambre/Recherche/RoleDesAffaires?action=doDocpaDetails&backto=/wps/portal/public/Accueil/Actualite&id=7603
Link to our client briefing here.
Paid to any child under 18 years of age, benefiting from family allowance and suffering from one or more medical conditions constituting an insufficiency or a permanent decrease of at least 50% of the physical or mental capacity of a normal child of the same age.

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			Law of 25 May 2020: the GDR of 25 March 2020 was abolished by the <u>GDR of 25 May 2020</u> and replaced by the Law of 25 May 2020, which retroactively removed the condition of hospitalization ( <i>i.e.</i> as of 16 March 2020) for children benefitting from the special allow ance provided for by article 274 of the Luxembourg Social Security Code. This change therefore applies for all leave for family reasons requests, even outside the context of the COV ID- 19 crisis. <sup>4</sup>
Taxation of cross-border workers Luxembourg and Belgium as well as Luxembourg and France both decided that the tax derogations for telew ork in the context of combating the spread of COVID-19 will remain in force until 31 August 2020.	Convention between the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Feder al Republic of Germany for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of tax evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital of 23 April 2012. Convention between the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Kingdom of Belgium for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of tax evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital of 19 September 1970	The agreements state <i>inter alia</i> that working days during which Belgian, French or German residents work remotely from their main place of residence as a result of the measures to combat the pandemic, should be considered working days performed in the country in which the work would normally have been carried out ( <i>i.e.</i> Luxembourg). Consequently, such working days spent outside of Luxembourg, will not be considered for the calculation of the threshold that is normally foreseen in the double tax treaties. <sup>5</sup>	Amicable agreement of 3 April 2020 between the competent authorities of Luxembourg and Germany (applicable from 11 March to 30 April 2020, and automatically extended from the end of one calendar month to the end of the next calendar month, unless terminated by the competent authority of one of the Contracting States at least one week before the beginning of the following calendar month by written notice to the competent authority of the other Contracting State) and Amicable agreement of 19 May 2020 between the competent authorities of Luxembourg and Belgium (applicable from 11 March 30 to June 2020): working days for which remuneration was received and during which employment was exercised at home solely because of the measures taken to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, may be regarded as having been performed in the Contracting State in which the cross-border worker would have exercised the employment without the measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

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	Convention between the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Government of the French Republic for the avoidance of double taxation, and the prevention of tax evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital of 20 March 2018.		
	Government announcement of 16 March 2020: introduction of exceptional measure between Luxembourg and Belgium regarding cross-border workers.		
	The Government then announced the same measure for <u>France</u> and <u>Germany</u> .		
Short-time working scheme The 'social partners' announced on 9 June 2020 that they had reached an agreement on short-time working schemes available in the context of exiting the state of crisis. <sup>7</sup>	Articles L.511-4(4), L.511-13, L.511-14, L.621-3 of the LLC, and Article 2 of the amended GDR of 15 September 1975 fixing the rate of compensation for the short-time w orkers.	In order to maintain employment and, consequently, avoid redundancies, employers may, under certain conditions, have recourse to different short-time working schemes, depending on the nature of the difficulties encountered.	<u>GDR of 27 March 2020</u> <sup>6</sup> : the compensation allow ance may not be less than the rate of the minimum social wage for unskilled workers over 18 years of age ( <i>i.e.</i> EUR 2.141,99 at index 834,76, applicable as of 1st January 2020). This has been confirmed for the post- state of crisis period until 31 December 2020 by the <u>GDR of 20 June 2020</u> .

(7) https://adem.public.lu/fr/actualites/adem/2020/06/cho-partiel-accord.html

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Law of 20 June 2020 on temporary derogation from certain labor law provisions in relation to the state of crisis linked to the COVID-19 and modifying the LLC; the LLC has been amended to permanently include sanctions for companies that have benefited from short-time working on the basis of deliberately false declarations; hours used under scheme between 1 <sup>st</sup> January and 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2020 are not computed towards thresholds of ordinary scheme; other adaptations are prolongated. GDR of 20 June 2020; see right- hand column.	Government announcement of 27 March 2020: a force majeure short-time working scheme has been announced, and an online platform opened w/c 30 March.	This measure foresees that the State will pay 80% of salaries as compensation in partial unemployment schemes and provides for a fast-track procedure allowing the payment of advances (normally such salaries would need to be paid by the employer and would be repaid by the state whereas here the State advances the payment to the concerned companies, in order to ensure that the measure is cash- flow neutral) <sup>8</sup> .	GDR of 29 April 2020: (i) a compensation allow ance is advanced by the employer and reimbursed by the Employment Fund <sup>9</sup> . This allow ance is reimbursed by the Government on the basis of a monthly declaration to be filed by the employer. The declaration is usually to be filed within 2 months, but this delay has now been extended to 3 months; (ii) in companies where a staff delegation is in place, this declaration will no longer be signed by the employees to confirm the amount they have been paid by the employer, but by this staff delegation; (iii) a legal basis is now provided for the Minister of Labor and the ADEM <sup>10</sup> to access directly and exchange betw een themselves the personal data relating to the affiliations and wages managed by the Centre for Social Security <sup>11</sup> within the limits of applicable data protection laws and for a limited number of purposes <sup>12</sup> . GDR of 30 April 2020: introduction of sanctions for companies that have benefited from short-time working on the basis of deliberately false declarations. Where the short-time working allow ance has been used for purposes other than the payment of wages, it must be refunded in its entirety and the benefit of this procedure is withdraw n with immediate effect.

(8) Link to our client briefing on short-time working (chômage partiel) here.

(9) Fonds pour l'Emploi

(10) Agence pour le Développement de l'Emploi.

(11) Centre commun de la sécurité sociale.

(12) This concerns the verification of the existence of affiliations and declared wages in the context of unemployment benefits, early retirement benefits, debt security in the event of the employer's bankruptcy, apprenticeship bonuses and grants and paternity leave, as well as short-time working.

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Maximum working time	Article L.211-12 of the LLC GDR of 27 March 2020 increasing the maximum working hours	The maximum weekly working hours was increased from 48 to 60, with a limit of 12 hours per day, for activities essential to the maintenance of the vital interests of the population and the country covered by the <u>GDR of 18 March 2020<sup>13</sup></u> introducing a series of measures to combat Covid-19 and declaring the state of crisis.	GDR of 11 May 2020: following the resumption of most activities on 11 May 2020, the list of activities still concerned by this derogation regarding working hours was annexed to the GDR of 27 March 2020 ( <i>i.e.</i> authorized commercial and craft activities such as food suppliers and drug stores, as well as activities essential for the maintenance of the vital interests of the population and of the country such as public transports). This clarification was necessary following the entry into force of the <u>GDR of 6 May 2020</u> abolishing these lists from the GDR of 18 March 2020 <sup>14</sup> . <u>GDR of 15 May 2020</u> : removal of the list of commercial and craft activities from the GDR of 27 March 2020. As of 15 May 2020, such extension remained only available for activities which are essential for the maintenance of the vital interests of the population and the country listed in the appendix.

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<sup>(13)</sup> See consolidated version here and the Law of 24 March 2020 extending the state of crisis declared by the GDR of 18 March 2020

<sup>(14)</sup> Three other identical GDR have been adopted regarding (i) the weekly duration of fixed-term contracts concluded between an employer and a student, (ii) the withdrawing of early retirement benefits and (iii) bonuses, extra payments and accessories granted to employees in professional reclassification.

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Student contracts Law of 20 June 2020 on temporary derogation from certain labor law provisions in relation to the state of crisis linked to the COVID-19 and modifying the LLC: fixed-term employment contracts between a student and an employer pursuing defined commercial or artisanal activities, or an activity deemed essential to the vital interests of the population and the country, expire as initially agreed on and may not be reconducted after the end of the state of crisis.	Article L.122-1 paragraph 3 of the LLC <u>GDR of 27 March 2020</u> on maximum weekly duration for fixed-term contracts between an employer who is active in one or more of the economic fields listed in the GDR of 18 March 2020 and a student	The weekly work duration may not exceed 40 hours on average over a period of one month or four weeks. This exceptionally derogates from the maximum weekly duration of 15 hours over a period of 1 month or 4 weeks.	<u>GDR of 11 May 2020</u> : following the resumption of most activities on 11 May 2020, this GDR inserts a new Appendix listing the commercial and artisanal activities as well as activities essential for the maintenance of the vital interests of the population and the country in the GDR of 27 March. Thus, the derogation concerning the maximum weekly duration for students is still applicable to these listed activities until further notice ( <i>i.e.</i> shops, postal services, public transports).

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Declarations of vacancies, unemployment benefits and internal or external reclassification Law of 20 June 2020 on temporary derogation from certain labor law provisions in relation to the state of crisis linked to the COVID-19 and modifying the LLC: 6-week deadline for ADEM to propose candidates during state of crisis period. GDR 20 June 2020: the 30 working days' delay (as extended during the state of crisis) regarding the entry into contact of the secretary of the joint commission with the employer, and/or regarding the decision of notification by the joint commission, shall continue to run, even beyond the date of the end of the state of crisis, provided that the opinion of the occupational doctor was notified, respectively the decision was taken, during the state of crisis.	Articles L.521-9, L.521-11, L.524- 5, L.543-11, L.543-20, L.552-2, L.622-4 of the LLC and Articles 8 and 10 of the GDR of 14 October 2002 GDR of 27 March 2020 regarding the method of appointing and compensating members, the operating rules and the deadlines for the procedure of the Joint Reclassification Committee ( <i>Commission mixte de reclassement</i> ) for workers unable to perform their last job, declarations of vacancies and unemployment benefits	The GDR provides, <i>inter alia</i> , for (i) the suppression of the period of 3 weeks available to the occupational doctor to return the file to the Joint Committee with its medical opinion ; (ii) the Joint Committee's decision on the internal or external reclassification of the employee is notified within 30 working days instead of 15 ; (iii) the extension until the end of the state of crisis of the rights to unemployment benefits expiring during the state of crisis.	GDR of 3 April 2020: (i) the ADEM has a period of 6 weeks during the state of crisis to propose candidates to the employer instead of 3 weeks; (ii) the duration of unemployment benefit entitlements, whether initial or extended, is extended by the duration of the state of crisis and the reference period of 24 months is extended by a period equal to the duration of the state of crisis.

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Employment market intervention measures	Article L.512-10 paragraph 3 of the LLC. <u>GDR of 27 March 2020</u> suspending the provision regarding employment market intervention measures.	The Ministers responsible for Employment and the Economy may exceptionally and on the advice of the Economic Committee ( <i>Comité de conjuncture</i> ), admit to subsidies the companies which, as a result of structural difficulties or rationalisation investments, have concluded planned employment reduction agreements including, in particular, for the month concerned by short-time working, redundancies for reasons such as economic, with one or more nationally representative trade union organizations. This possibility is temporarily suspended.	
Negotiation of a social plan Law of 20 June 2020 on temporary derogation from certain labor law provisions in relation to the state of crisis linked to the COVID-19 modifying the LLC; suspension of deadlines during state of crisis confirmed for the post-state of crisis period, and deadlines resume on the day following the end of the state of crisis.	Article L.166-2 of the LLC. GDR of 1 April 2020 regarding the negotiation of a social plan <sup>15</sup>	This allows the suspension of the applicable deadlines for the negotiation of a social plan in the context of a collective dismissal, as well as, if need be, the related conciliation procedure.	

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Non-withdrawal of early retirement benefits Law of 20 June 2020 on temporary derogation from certain labor law provisions in relation to the state of crisis linked to the COVID-19 modifying the LLC: the suspension of the possibility of withdrawing early retirement benefits has been confirmed for the post-state of crisis period until 31 December 2020.	Article L.585-6 point 5 of LLC. <u>GDR of 1 April 2020</u> temporary suspending the possibility of w ithdraw ing early retirement benefits.	This concerns the case of employees benefiting from an early retirement and who resume an activity generating an income which, over a calendar year, exceeds half of the minimum social wage applicable to the employee concerned per month.	<u>GDR of 11 May 2020</u> : following the resumption of most activities on 11 May 2020, this GDR inserts a new Appendix listing the commercial and artisanal activities as well as activities essential for the maintenance of the vital interests of the population and the country in the GDR of 1 April. Thus, the temporary suspension of the possibility of withdrawing early retirements benefits is still applicable to these listed activities until further notice ( <i>i.e.</i> shops, postal services, public transports).
Trial periods Law of 20 June 2020 on temporary derogation from certain labor law provisions in relation to the state of crisis linked to the COVID-19 and modifying the LLC: the suspension of trial periods during the state of crisis, as well as their resumption on the day following the end of the state of crisis, have been confirmed for the post-state of crisis period.	Articles L.111-3, L.121-5, L.122-11 and L.131-7 of the LLC. <u>GDR of 1 April 2020</u> temporarily suspending the trial periods of employees affected by partial unemployment for cases of <i>force majeure</i> .	This concerns employees of companies directly affected by the Government's closure decisions and those admitted to <i>force majeure</i> short-time w orking.	

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Medical examinations Law of 20 June 2020 on temporary derogation from certain labor law provisions in relation to the state of crisis linked to the COVID-19 and modifying the LLC: the suspension of medical examinations has been confirmed for the post-state of crisis period.	Articles L.322-2 and L.326-1 to L.326-12 of the LLC. <u>GDR of 1 April 2020</u> suspending medical examinations.	Medical examinations were suspended for health professionals and administrative personnel in hospitals and for the entire aid and care sector.	<u>GDR of 11 May 2020</u> ; abrogation of the suspension.
Leave for family support Law of 20 June 2020 introducing a leave for family support in the context of the fight against COVID- 19: this definitively introduces into Luxembourg law the provisions relating to family support leave previously introduced by the GDRs adopted during the COVID-19 crisis.	<u>GDR of 3 April 2020</u> introducing the leave for family support.	Eligibility conditions: (i) the care facility can no longer accommodate the person due to closure, (ii) the worker remains with him/her at home and (iii) there is no other possibility of care. In addition, neither the employee making the application nor any other member of the household in question falls under the partial unemployment scheme.	<u>GDR of 15 May 2020</u> : extension of this leave to approved structures for disabled or elderly people located not only in Luxembourg but also in another country of the European Union. The conditions for claiming this leave are cumulative.

Relevant area and latest update	Normally applicable provisions, and exemptions taken in the context of Covid-19	Description of the measure	Subsequent changes as a result of the evolution of the Covid-19 crisis
Work incapacity, sickness benefit and social security contributions	Article 11 paragraph 2, Article 12 paragraph 3, Article 14 paragraph 2 and Article 428 paragraph 4 of the Social Security Code and Article L.121-6 of the LLC. <u>GDR of 3 April 2020</u> temporarily suspending 3 social security mechanisms.	The mechanisms concerned are: (i) the calculation of the 78 weeks of work incapacity due to illness. In the event of work incapacity due to illness or non-occupational accident, the loss of professional income is compensated by the award of a monetary compensation. The benefit is limited to a total of 78 weeks over a reference period of 104 weeks; (ii) the normal mechanism of burden-sharing for sickness benefit betw een employer and the <i>Caisse Nationale de Santé</i> , and (iii) social security contributions and the calculation of default interest for late payment of social security.	

Relevant area and latest update	Normally applicable provisions, and exemptions taken in the context of Covid-19	Description of the measure	Subsequent changes as a result of the evolution of the Covid-19 crisis
Paid leave	Article 5 paragraph 2 of the GDR of 18 March 2020 introducing a series of measures to combat Covid-19. <u>GDR of 3 April 2020</u> providing for the possibility for employers to refuse or cancel already accepted leaves.	This applies to listed activities essential for the maintenance of the vital interests of the people and the country <sup>16</sup> .	
Protection against dismissal Law of 20 June 2020 on temporary derogation from certain labor law provisions in relation to the state of crisis linked to the COVID-19 and modifying the LLC: the protection period of 26 weeks resumes the day after the end of the state of crisis, if the employee is still unable to work.	Article L. 121-6 paragraph 3 of the LLC. <u>GDR of 8 April 2020</u> suspending the 26-week period of protection against dismissal	The employer properly informed of an incapacity to work, or in possession of the medical certificate is not authorized, not even for serious cause, to notify the employee of the termination of his/her employment contract or, where applicable, the invitation to the preliminary interview.	<u>GDR of 17 April 2020</u> : extension of the 26-week period of protection against dismissal for a duration corresponding to the period between the date of entry into force ( <i>i.e.</i> 17 April 2020) and the end of the state of crisis. The rule foreseen by article L.121-6 will continue to apply. During the extension of the protection period, starting from the first day of the tw enty-seventh week of protection against dismissal, the employer will be authorized, but only for serious cause, to notify the employee of the termination of his/her employment contract.

(16) These activities are: (i) the public services necessary for the proper functioning of the State, (ii) the health and care sector including hospital activities and medical analysis laboratories, (iii) the production and distribution of energy and petroleum products, (iv) the food supply, (v) the water production and distribution, (vii) the collection and treatment of wastewater, (viii) the waster memoral and management, (viii) the public transport, (ix) the transport, transhipment and freight forwarding services, (x) the systems for the exchange and payment of instruments, (xi) the postal and telecommunication services, (xi) the daycare, security, cash transportation and cleaning services, and (xiii) the essential activities linked to the functioning of the financial, insurance and reinsurance sectors.

Relevant area and latest update	Normally applicable provisions, and exemptions taken in the context of Covid-19	Description of the measure	Subsequent changes as a result of the evolution of the Covid-19 crisis
Calculation of the compensatory allowance granted in the event of a reduction in remuneration in case of occupational reclassification Law of 20 June 2020 on temporary derogation from certain labor law provisions in relation to the state of crisis linked to the COVID-19 and modifying the LLC: bonuses, extra payments and accessories must be defined as due under the state of crisis related to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to fall under the exemption.	Article L.551-2 paragraph 3 of the LLC GDR of 8 April 2020 excluding bonuses, extra payments and accessories from the calculation of the compensatory allow ance	This allow s employees who ensure the proper operation, maintenance or supply of the listed activities ( <i>i.e.</i> shops, pharmacies, public transports) to benefit from bonuses, extra payments and accessories. This derogates from the reduction in remuneration in situation of professional rehabilitation, where the employee under an employment contract shall be entitled to a compensatory allow ance representing the difference between the average monthly income subject to pension insurance contributions during the 12 calendar months preceding the decision on professional rehabilitation, and the new monthly income subject to pension insurance contributions.	<u>GDR of 11 May 2020</u> : follow ing the resumption of most activities on 11 May 2020, this GDR inserts a new Appendix listing the commercial and artisanal activities as well as activities essential for the maintenance of the vital interests of the population and the country in the GDR of 8 April. Thus, the exclusion of bonuses, extra payments and accessories from the calculation of the compensatory allow ance is still applicable to these listed activities until further notice ( <i>i.e.</i> shops, postal services, public transports).
Health and safety in the workplace	<u>GDR of 17 April 2020</u> introducing health and safety measures as part of the fight against Covid-19.	List of the rights and obligations of employers and employees in terms of health and safety in the workplace, specific to the health crisis, as well as the related sanctions.	
Student contracts Law of 20 June 2020 derogating from the provisions of Articles L. 151-1, paragraph 1, and L. 151-4 of the LLC: exemptions for employment contracts concluded with a student are extended until 15 July 2020.	Articles L.151-1 paragraph 1 and L.151-4 of the LLC. <u>GDR of 15 May 2020</u> providing exemptions for employment contracts concluded with a student.	Employment contracts concluded with a student for the purposes of out-of-school care of pupils (as part of the implementation of the alternating care plan of pupils in basic education in response to the COVID-19 crisis) are not subject to the normally applicable provisions of the LLC.	

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Apprenticeship contract	Article L.111-9 paragraph 3 of the LLC and the GDR of 1 August 2020 fixing the terms to grant and withdraw the right to train an apprentice <u>GDR of 20 May 2020</u> suspending deadlines provided for in the procedure for terminating the apprenticeship contract	A request for termination by one party must be sent to the competent apprenticeship advisor which then informs the other party to the contract and requests a written statement within 8 days. This period is suspended for the duration of the state of crisis. The 15-day periods for sending the conciliation report and the meeting of the Disputes Committee in the event of failure of the conciliation are also suspended. These suspensions temporarily interrupt the course without erasing the period already run.	
Rights to the 'tideover' allowance ( <i>droitsà l'indemnité d'attente</i> ) Law of 24 June 2020: extension of rights to the 'tideover' allowance that have expired between 18 March 2020 and 30 June 2020, are extended until 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2020.	Article 4 paragraph 4 of the Law of 23 July 2015. <u>GDR of 29 May 2020</u> extending the rights to the tideover allow ance expiring between the date on which the state of crisis has been established (i.e. 18 March 2020) and the last day of the calendar month in which the state of crisis ends (i.e. 30 June 2020)	These rights are granted to any person who has not yet found employment, following a professional reclassification decision, and who is still registered as a job seeker with the Employment Development Agency. They are extended until the end of the calendar month following the month in the course of which the state of crisis ends (i.e. 31 July 2020).	

# C L I F F O R D C H A N C E

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