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Factsheet for case MT-2020-11/273

New parental benefit to care for children during school closures

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| Country | Malta, applies nationwide |
| Time period | Open ended, started on 09 March 2020 |
| Type | Legislation or other statutory regulation |
| Category | Change of work arrangements to ensure business continuity – Support for parents and carers (financial or in kind) |
| Case created | 04 April 2020 (updated 01 May 2020) |

Background information

Following the onset of COVID-19, one of the early measures taken by the Maltese government was to close down schools nationwide. This presented a problem to many working parents who were also advised not to leave their children with elderly relatives who may be at greater risk to COVID-19. As many such parents now needed to remain at home with their children, a benefit was introduced by the government. Parents working in the private sector with children under the age of 16 who cannot go to work to take care of their children following the 8th of March 2020, and who are unable to work from home may apply for this benefit.

Content of measure

Applicants must be parents of children under 16 years of age; they work full-time or part-time in the private sector (excludes employees working with private companies who work/provide an essential service to a government entity). who cannot work from home and are not attending work after the 8th of March 2020 to look after their children.

Eligible individuals receive a direct payment of €166.15 Euro per week if they work full-time or €103.85 Euro if they work part time.

Additionally, their social security contribution is paid and future contributory pension rights safeguarded,

children's allowance will be adjusted taking into consideration the individual's new income and therefore may increase to maximum rate (€24.08 per week per child). Individuals can continue to receive other benefits without deduction that they already may have been receiving including the 'In Work Benefit' and 'Tapering of Benefits'

Use of measure

This is expected to benefit 12,000 families and initially cost around €19million over two months.

Actors, target groups and funding

| Actors | Target groups | Funding |
|---|---|----------------|
| National government Social insurance | Children (minors) Parents Single parents Women | National funds |

Social partners

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Role of social partners | Consulted |
| Form of involvement | Bi-or tripartite social dialogue bodies |

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact upon business, and following consultation with social partners, the government initially announced a package of measures which included the deferral of taxes and financial support to incentivise telework. Following this announcement, employer associations publicly announced that these were insufficient and would not protect their businesses or jobs, stating the government instead needed to subsidise wages. These calls continued when on the 18th March, the government announced further measures including support for those who had lost their job, the disabled, families (the current measure), and for employers to subsidise quarantine leave. On the 24th of March, the government announced a third package of measures which included support for wages and other measures previously announced. This third package of measures was announced by the government whilst flanked by union and employer association members. It was announced that this package was the result of tripartite consultation. Furthermore, following announcement of these further measures, employer associations announced their satisfaction with the package..

Sectors and occupations

This case is not sector-specific.

This case is not occupation-specific.

Sources

- 18 March 2020: COVID-19 - Parent Benefit