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Factsheet for case **BE-2020-12/459**

Extension meal/eco/gift/sport/culture cheques

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Country	Belgium, applies nationwide
Time period	Temporary, 18 March 2020 - 31 December 2020
Type	Recommendation
Category	Measures to prevent social hardship – Provision of services in kind (e.g food vouchers)
Case created	10 April 2020

Background Information

Benefits like meal/culture/eco/sports and culture cheques are quite common forms of fringe benefits in Belgium.

The coronavirus crisis makes it more difficult to pay with cheques, especially eco-cheques (which can be used to buy a wide range of eco-friendly products or services). This is the reason why the social partners are asking for an extension of the validity period of the cheques in a joint national labour council advice. The government is expected to follow this advice.

Content of measure

For meal, eco and gift vouchers, which expire in March, April, May and June 2020, it is necessary that an immediate extension of 6 months is provided from the date of expiry of such vouchers.

For the sports/culture vouchers: request to postpone the expiry date of the sports/culture vouchers from 30 September to 31 December 2020.

There is no limit per person to the amount of cheques that can be extended. Following the advice of the national labour council the extension should happen automatically.

Finally, the cheque publishers commit themselves to a fast and effective information campaign.

Use of measure

It is unclear how many cheques are currently in circulation that are about to expire. Given the fact that these types of benefits are very common in a wide range of sectors, the amount is probably significant.

Actors, target groups and funding

Actors	Target groups	Funding
National government Social partners jointly	Employees Unemployed	National funds

Social partners

Role of social partners	Agreed (outcome)
Form of involvement	Bi-or tripartite social dialogue bodies

The advice was formulated within the National Labour Council, an important national bipartite social dialogue body.

Sectors and occupations

This case is not sector-specific.

This case is not occupation-specific.

Sources

- 08 April 2020: Advies Nationale Arbeidsraad nummer 2.161 (www.cnt-nar.be)