

NewsLetter 20



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN ALBANIA

LEGAL ACT

CONTRACTUAL DISPUTE

What do we need to know during Covid-19

OPTIMA LEGAL & FINANCIAL

SUMMARY ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 AND THE MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON CONTRACT LAW IN GENERAL

This is a summary of the recurring questions we currently receive from clients who have entered into contracts that provide for Albanian law as applicable law and are now affected by the rapid spread of COVID-19 as well as the impact of government measures that have caused suspension of the business activities on a national, but also global scale. This situation presents problems in relation to contractual obligations and the potential consequences of non-performance. We provide answers to key questions on legal remedies available under Albanian law. Please note that contract provisions and types vary between industries and they should be evaluated individually on case by case basis. This brief summary can serve as a first basic guide and not a detailed legal response, to assessing the next steps in dealing with business partners in the current situation.

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PANDEMIC

Remote Work Tips

MANAGING THE SITUATION FROM THE HUMAN CAPITAL PERSPECTIVE



Roden Pajaj



Anisi Abazi



SITUATION MANAGEMENT

Suggestions for company executives

Every organization faces challenges managing its work and human capital during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are some suggestions on what you can do to make collaboration easier:

- Evaluate the employee positions you currently have by looking at which jobs can be done remotely, the needs to manage other positions and which

jobs cannot be done remotely and must be done on site. Taking measures to increase staff safety is also an important step.

- Determine which positions or tasks are essential and which can be performed or completed at a later date.
- Be there for your people by being present, so that they understand that you know and understand their needs.
- Build a communication plan, provide timely information, be transparent

about the situation and what is happening with the company and what is expected to happen in the future.

- Educate your employees about COVID-19, its symptoms and how it can be prevented. Ensure that you have taken measures to prevent infections at your work site and provide as much information as possible on this issue.
- Build a communication channel with the staff so they can address questions, ambiguities or concerns. Stress, ...

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MEASURES AGAINST PANDEMICS

RED PROTOCOL OF HYGIENIC-SANITARY MEASURES COVID-19

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COVID 19- ECONOMIC NEWS



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WHY ARE EMPLOYERS NOT APPLYING FOR EMPLOYEE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE?! BUSINESSES BLAME PROCEDURES AND DEADLINES – Monitor.al

Self-employment program: If you are unemployed and have a business idea, the government finances up to 500 thousand ALL – Monitor.al

Green, yellow and red code, Businesses are divided into three risk categories for COVID-19; List and rules that everyone should follow – Monitor.al

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...anxiety and job insecurity are among the most typical elements of the current situation

- Also prepare for other critical situations such as staff absenteeism, refusal to work at the job site, etc.
- Update your risk policy, and if you don't have one, it's time to create it by setting up a task force responsible for managing the situation and developing problem-solving strategies.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE COLLABORATION WHILE WORKING REMOTELY

Working remotely – like any other mode that is different from everyday work conditions – comes with many challenges. Below are some tips for managing relationships with employees:

- Clarify the responsibilities, objectives, roles and responsibilities of each team member/employee.
- Clarify your expectations for remote work, explaining what you expect from each team member in order to avoid misunderstandings.
- Continuously communicate with the team:
 - Schedule periodic meetings at a regular time.
 - Schedule one-on-one meetings with each member of your team to check-in.
 - Forward information you receive to others.
 - Encourage collaboration among team members.
 - Pay special attention to personal interaction.
 - Allow space for social interaction.
- Hold virtual meetings according to a set schedule.
- Briefly provide the latest updates and be flexible.

TIPS FOR TEAMS

Faced with the current situation, there is a need for every team leader/manager/director and every employee to take proactive action to make collaboration easier.

Here are some tips for managing teams/work groups.

Manage expectations

- Team leaders need to review and update the responsibilities of each team member, making sure there is clarity of roles and objectives while working remotely.

Check-ins

- Team leaders should schedule ongoing meetings with each employee to discuss what is going well, what can improve in the future and discuss various suggestions that may arise from both parties. Stress management and job satisfaction need to be carefully monitored at all times to ensure a healthy employment relationship.

MANAGING *the* SITUATION

FROM THE HUMAN CAPITAL PERSPECTIVE**Communication**

- Every team member is responsible for ensuring open and ongoing communication with all other team members, resolving potential conflicts and misunderstandings effectively and on time.
- Communicate frequently and consistently, so you don't lose touch and continue to feel part of the group.

Virtual technology

- Make use of the various tools you may have available to ensure teamwork continues.
- Develop virtual meetings and video conferencing.
- Also use SMS or other applications.
- Select those communication channels that ensure that your message is clearly received and understood. For example, in some cases the phone is more appropriate to use, while other specific cases require video conferencing.

Risk management

- Make sure everyone is informed about the company's policies regarding information security, confidentiality and computer access.
- Also provide a contact to resolve IT issues.

WORKING REMOTELY FOR EMPLOYEES

Below are some tips for managing the current situation viewed from the perspective of the employees.

Communicate often

- Create open lines of communication,

including maintaining constant communication with your team and customers.

- Dedicate time from your day to social interaction through virtual conversations, social media groups, etc.

Be accessible

- Stay available on the phone and other tools used by the company.
- Be active, be proactive and show your willingness to help or take on other tasks.
- Take care at the end of the day to shut off from your job and engage in your personal activities.
- Work effectively.
- Create a dedicated working space at home.
- Create a daily routine that works for you and for your job.
- Schedule things in your calendar -- when you are free and when you are dealing with something -- to avoid interruptions.

Manage expectations

- Constantly review your performance with the team leader.
- Seek help and information for any occasion that calls for it from the team leader or teammates.

Embrace technology

- Use tools to maximize collaboration among team members.
- Develop virtual meetings through video conferencing.
- Use SMS and other texting applications.
- Keep in touch via phone, e-mail, IM.

General tips

- Be proactive in supporting any colleague who needs help, or whose situation doesn't allow flexibility at work (as the case may be for colleagues with children, colleagues facing issues with company systems or those who have someone in the family to take care of).

GENERAL TIPS FOR MANAGING THE SITUATION

Working remotely means there is a need to manage how you work differently. Below are some suggestions on how to maximize your time.

Take full responsibility of your time

- Create a daily routine.
- Clearly determine when your work day starts and ends.
- Set a schedule for short breaks and lunch.
- Do what you can, discuss what you can't do.

Be proactive

- Clarify priorities and discuss how tasks will be performed.
- Set clear deadlines for accomplishing tasks.
- Focus on solutions.
- Take more notes than usual (highlights of your ideas, next steps, meeting notes).

Keep in constant contact with the team you work with. It is very important to share with each other

- What is going well?
- What is not going so well?
- The way you feel.
- Areas in which you need help.

Set boundaries between your personal life and remote work

- Create a working space from which you can leave at the end of the day.
- Leave the computer in the dedicated workplace.
- You can use different techniques, such as changing clothes, to signal to the brain when you are working and when the work schedule is over.
- Create boundaries with your loved ones while you are working.
- Inform other people with whom you share the living space that you will be in virtual meetings during a certain period of the day.
- Manage potential distractions like phone calls or private conversations.

Keep spirits high

- Know and understand the feelings of others and their concerns.
- Recognize and repeat the positive aspects of the current situation.
- Schedule time for informal conversations to stay updated on each other.

REFERENCES

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 Deloitte 2020, *Caring for employees' mental health during COVID-19* - [link](#)
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Fatos Lazimi

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CAN A PARTY TO A CONTRACT USE THE EFFECT OF THE COVID-19 EVENT AS A CAUSE OF DEFAULT?

It is a principle of our contractual law, Articles 422 and 455 of the Civil Code that the parties must behave towards each other in good faith and with correctness. This means that throughout the duration of the contract the parties must make every reasonable effort to enable them to fulfill their obligations and to minimize any harmful external effects that may put in jeopardy the performance of the contract.

In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with government restrictive measures, in many contracts the parties have been deprived of their ability or possibility to fully or properly meet their contractual obligations.

Albanian legislation, as well as many other laws of the countries of the civil law system, does not provide for a definition of force majeure although the concept and circumstance related to this phenomenon is recognized and addressed in other legislations as well. Likewise, the force majeure, though undefined, is mentioned in the Civil Code, e.g. in cases of statutory suspension or can be used incidentally in other pieces of legislation. Usually force majeure clause is provided for in different contracts, where because of their very nature, the implementation of rights and obligations is likely to be affected by its effects.

The nature, effects and extent of COVID-19 and the nature of the government measures taken to cope with it, can amount to a force majeure as it has the characteristics of an event that could not be reasonably foreseen at the moment of the conclusion of the contract and objectively owing to changes in applicable law disables the parties' obligations without their fault, in reference to Article 476 of the Civil Code.

When we say non-fault, we mean that the conduct of the contracting party has been such that, despite the measures taken by it, such party inability to enforce the obligation as a factual and legal category is established.

As per the above, any deficiency or non-performance of a party's obligation attributable to the presence of COVID-19 may be justified first and foremost by the fact that the party has taken all measures to notify and keep updated the business partners so as mitigate the eventual damage and fulfilling the obligation in as far as possible if COVID-19 did not exist, this situation is verified on a case-by-case basis. **In any event defaulting party has the burden to prove that COVID-19 affected its impossibility to perform or its non-performance.**

Thus, a party may use the situation of COVID-19 as a cause of non-performance in full or in part should the latter is objectively impossible due to the radical change of circumstances and applicable law and that the party concerned has taken all necessary and reasonable measures including keeping

CONTRACTUAL DISPUTE

What do we need to know during Covid-19



WHAT STEPS SHOULD I TAKE NOW?

1. Check for daily updates from the government.
2. Contact your business partners if you find that you are unable to meet your contractual obligations. By doing this, you also honor your duty to limit damages. Keep contemporaneous data on the situation and the latter influence on your non-performance.
3. Review your contracts for any force majeure clauses or other termination clauses.
4. Before terminating contracts based on force majeure or because the basis for the contract has ceased to exist, try to amend or negotiate the contract with your business partner if possible.

updated records and notifications to other contracting party as well acting without negligence, to mitigate the damage that may be caused to the other contracting party. On the other hand, the defaulting party is not relieved from its obligation to fulfill other obligation even partially - in all cases where this is possible and unaffected by the impact of COVID-19.

DOES A CONTRACTING PARTY REMAIN RESPONSIBLE FOR FULFILLING ITS OBLIGATIONS PRIOR TO THE OPERATION OF COVID-19?

Of course, the contracting party must fulfill its obligation according to the content, manner and time provided in the contract and for any non-fulfilled obligation according to the above criteria, not attributable to the operation of COVID 19, it remains responsible and liable.

WHAT HAPPENS IF, AS A RESULT OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY STATE AUTHORITIES DUE TO COVID-19, ONE PARTY'S OBLIGATIONS CANNOT BE FULFILLED?

If the enforcement of the obligation becomes impossible as a result of the actions of the State authorities - that is, the contract

has lost its basis and functionality - then the parties may terminate it and each party must recover what it has given at the time of conclusion of this contract. However, this measure is viewed as an extreme measure or a final resort. The parties are recommended to enter into negotiations to amend or adapt the terms of the contract to the new circumstances.

UNDER THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19, CAN THE CONTRACT BE UNILATERALLY TERMINATED?

If the contract provides for an epidemic or pandemic force majeure, or this event is broadly described as an act of God or nature, as is the case with COVID-19, and this force majeure is expressly provided as a ground for unilateral termination of the contract, then this ground may be invoked by the party undertaking the unilateral termination of the contract. If the above is not provided, however, the party seeks release from its obligations, may invoke it as a cause but always on the condition that such ground remains the only one and all previous steps have been exhausted, involving here the negotiating and adjusting of the contract to new circumstances. Care should be taken with employment contracts that include elements of public policy specifically regulated by the Labor Code.

WHAT HAPPENS IF ONE PARTY'S ACTIONS FOR FULFILLING ITS CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS ARE CONTRARY TO THE DECISIONS OR ACTIONS OF THE STATE AUTHORITIES TAKEN UNDER COVID-19?

Any action taken by a contracting party that would violate a prescriptive norm provided for in current government decisions or acts - including the act declaring the state of natural disaster in the Republic of Albania - within the meaning of the law shall be deemed null and void, i.e. with no legal effect. In such cases the party must adhere to the dynamics of decisions, legal acts and state norms by temporarily suspending the activity, following the evolution of these rules and adapting the activity based on this dynamic. Any claim for compensation as a result of the suspension of business activities due to COVID-19 must be addressed according to the remedies and legal means recognized by Albanian law if such measures promulgated by the Government in the legal acts on COVID-19, though formally based, are unproportionally, negligent or in conflict with the protection afforded to the basic economic rights of business by the Constitution of the Republic of Albania itself, even in extraordinary circumstances.

UNDER THE TERMS OF THE COVID-19 SPREAD, WHERE ONE PARTY'S EXECUTION OF OBLIGATIONS IS IMPOSSIBLE OR INCOMPLETE - CAN THE OTHER PARTY APPLY THE ENTITLEMENT ENVISAGED BY THE CONTRACT TO APPLY PENALTIES?

The answer to this question depends on a case-by-case basis, but penalties are usually applied for guilty or faulty conduct in non-compliance - which is not the case. Even if the penalty is applied, the other party who has been the subject of this measure may address this issue directly to the court, considering the penalty to be excessive and applied for an inappropriate circumstance.

UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES IS IT MANDATORY TO SUSPEND OR LIMIT OUR BUSINESS OPERATIONS?

We recommend that you get regularly updated on the current situation, as it is developing rapidly and changing daily. If your business is under the prohibited activities set by the Albanian Government, you must comply with and suspend business as required.

IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT MEASURES INTRODUCED BY THE GOVERNMENT, I AM OBLIGED TO CLOSE MY BUSINESS. CAN I CLAIM DAMAGES FROM THE GOVERNMENT?

Claims for damages are unlikely to succeed as long as state authorities have acted legally and without negligence. It is up to the prospective Claimant to prove the contrary, i.e. whether such measures run counter to the Law. However, to the best of our knowledge the authorities are working on compensation funds for damages due to the current situation. We recommend that you observe developments from time to time.

DOES IT HAVE ANY IMPACT ON PROCEDURAL PERIODS OR STATUTORY LIMITATIONS?

Yes. The Government has ordered the suspension of all procedural periods (with the exception of some public interest proceedings) until the COVID-19 situation is resolved. This means that all periods will be interrupted and will start again at an unspecified second time so far.



Has distributed 500 food packages to families in need



Being close to communities in need is a moral and human obligation

AMCHAM IS PROUD OF ITS MEMBERS.

TEUTA COMPANY

In these difficult times of crisis, Teuta Company gave its contribution by cooperating with the Municipality of Durrës, and other humanitarian organizations. During this period, Teuta Company helped the Municipality of Durrës, assisting with consumer products the Spitalë area, by providing 35 food packages to one of the most problematic areas in the city. Also, the well-known company has distributed 500 food packages to families in need, in cooperation with the organization "Fundjavë Ndryshe". For Teuta Company, being close to communities in need is a moral and human obligation, and its humanitarian work will continue.

Riu Mermer

Assisted with food relief an entire village



The Social Responsibility is part of Riu Mermer

AMCHAM IS PROUD FOR ITS MEMBERS.

RIU MERMER

Riu Mermer is one of our member companies that have demonstrated solidarity during this time of crisis, assisting with food relief an entire village. The village of Shkumbat in Slllova, Debar, has received food packages for all families in this remote area. The Social Responsibility shown by Riu Mermer in these difficult times by providing assistance to remote areas deprived of food supplies, was also welcomed by residents and local authorities in the region.

vodafone

No child should be left behind in education



Donated 5,000 smart devices to children with no access to digital education

AMCHAM IS PROUD FOR ITS MEMBERS.

VODAFONE ALBANIA

The Vodafone Albania Foundation responds to the #RedForKids initiative by donating 5,000 smart devices to children with no access to digital education and on-line learning. Devices are being distributed by the Ministry of Education to children around Albania so that they can access on-line classes and e-learning platforms from home. No child should be left behind in education, even in times of a pandemic. AmCham appreciates the act of kindness by Vodafone Albania helping more children not miss the opportunity to attend online learning

RED PROTOCOL

OF HYGIENIC-SANITARY MEASURES COVID-19

The entity initially verifies the object of its activity by self-determining the level of risk according to the activity codes. In the case of activities of a mixed nature where an exercises several activities, self-determination will be performed according to the secondary addresses and the type of each activity. The entity is allowed to carry out its activity during the permitted time slot.

This protocol applies also to the activities that have over 50 employees working in a common closed environment. The entity must have a person responsible for health that workplace.

The administrator of the entity has the obligation to notify the State Health Inspectorate and the State Labor Inspectorate and Social Services of generalities and the license number of the person responsible for the health in the workplace.

The person responsible for the health in the workplace and/or the administrator are responsible for the implementation of the measures according to this protocol based to there spective obligations.

THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE:

- Performs daily assessment of the presence of COVID-19 symptoms of employees and anyone entering and leaving the workplace, including the administrator, carrier, distributor, third parties who are part of the supply, distribution, sales chain, etc. In case of symptoms, it should not be allowed in any case to continue the activity by the relevant person and it should be reported immediately as a case by calling the number 127. If the person shows symptoms while working or after work, this person should be quarantined in a separate premises of the enterprise until appropriate measures are taken by the health care services;
- In any case, the person responsible for occupational health and the administrator immediately notify the relevant structures, especially the Local Health Care Unit and the Public Health Inspectorate;
- Measures the temperature of the employees/administrator or any other person at the entrance and exit with an infrared thermometer and keeps, daily the relevant book with notes for temperatures higher than 37.5 degrees or the appearance of other symptoms. the person responsible for the health in the workplace manages the medical data in accordance with the law for the protection of personal data, especially with the provisions for protection sensitive personal data and has the

obligation to maintain confidentiality.

THE ENTITY SHOULD:

- Provide constantly and by its own means protective gloves, masks and hand sanitizers with over 60% alcohol;
- Provide constantly at any time and by its own means soap, hand cleaning paper, disinfectants for cleaning surfaces and closed garbage bins which must be cleaned daily;
- Provide, at the entrance and exit, hand sanitizers for the staff and anyone who enters and leaves the enterprise and takes care of their replenishment. The percentage of active substance should be at least 60% alcohol;
- Guarantee and respect at any time the distance of 2 meters between the employed staff. The entity reorganizes its work with shifts according to an individual plan in order to respect the above obligation;
- Disinfect the environment and clean before and after closing and at least 5 times a day. Dirty surfaces are first cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected with other products. Each employee performs disinfection with the hygiene products of desks, counters, telephones and any space where there has been touch contact at the beginning and end of the shift. The products are used in accordance with the relevant instructions from the manufacturer/seller or the Ministry of Health;
- Display the list of COVID-19 symptoms according to the approved checklist;
- Display the information poster on



COVID-19 risk reduction according to the approved format;

- Display the statement for the implementation of the red protocol according to the approved format which includes the obligation for self-assessment of symptoms by the employed staff/ administrator/ any other third party who enters and leaves the enterprise according to the approved format where administrative or criminal responsibility is stressed out for the person who does not take measures according to legal obligations as well as the toll free number for denunciation;
- Fully display the red protocol according to the approved text. The above materials are displayed at the entrance of the entity as well as in visible places inside the enterprise.

EMPLOYEES:

- Perform daily self-assessment if they have symptoms of COVID-19 according to the approved checklist. In case of symptoms the person should immediately notify by calling the number 127 and the person responsible for the health in the workplace. In no case should the activity of the respective person be allowed to continue and, as the case may be, should be quarantined in the predetermined premises;
- Are obliged to declare to the administrator and the person responsible for the health in the workplace if there have been contact with persons who result or have tested positive with COVID-19;
- If they notice clinical signs during the stay at home, they should not show up for work and should immediately

notify the administrator and the person responsible for the health in the workplace. The employee must call the number 127 and the family doctor;

- Shall not use the tools or workplace of colleagues during work.

GENERAL RULES:

- Going to work and returning home from work by foot is performed by maintaining a distance of 2 meters and by not creating groups. In case of going to work with bus transport service, employees sit on the sides of the bus by the windows and leave a space empty line behind them. Masks and gloves must be worn on the bus or vehicle and touching of surfaces must be avoided. The bus is disinfected and ventilated every day. For vehicle circulation, the measures published by the State Police should be applied;
- Employees/administrators/other persons must wear a protective mask covering their nose and mouth. They also must use protective gloves following the advice;
- Coughing and sneezing are performed using the elbow or using a handkerchief;
- In any case, provide natural ventilation (aeration) at least 5 times a day. Entities should take appropriate measures to intervene in ventilation systems where to switch to natural air mode or through the addition of windows;
- In no case is physical contact allowed between employees or third parties such as carriers, distributors, etc., including greetings;
- During time-off at work and meal break, avoid gatherings of people in rooms such as kitchens, dining rooms or outdoor areas, whether public or private



GREEN PROTOCOL

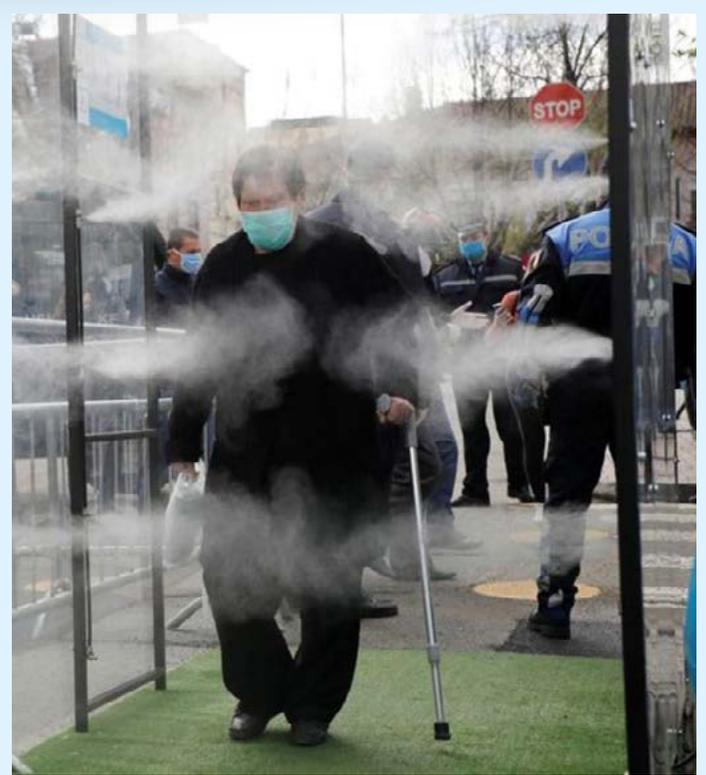
OF SANITARY-HYGIENE MEASURES COVID-19

The entity initially verifies the object of its activity by self-determining the level of risk according to the activity codes. In case of activities of a mixed nature where an entity exercises several activities, self-determination will be performed according to the secondary addresses and the type of each activity. The entity is allowed to carry out the activity during the permitted time slot. The person appointed by the administrator/entrepreneur performs daily its self-assessment and that of its employees if they have symptoms of COVID-19 according to the approved checklist.

In case of symptoms, the continuation of the activity should not be allowed in any case and should be reported immediately as a case by calling 127. In any case, the administrator/entrepreneur shall immediately notify the relevant structures, especially the Local Health Care Unit and the Public Health Inspectorate.

THE ENTITY SHOULD:

- Provide in-service hand sanitization product to customers and take care of their replenishment. The percentage of the active substance should be at least 60%;
- Display in a noticeable place on the facade the possibility of on-line shopping, the possibility of booking an online or telephone meeting. It is recommended the delivery service as much as possible;
- Place protective glass (or plexi-glass) between seller and customer and distance tape on the cash register counter;
- Perform disinfection of the environment and cleaning before opening and after closing, especially of tables, counters, tele-phones and any space where there has been touch contact;
- Provide ventilation as much as possible at least 3 times a day. This obligation for entities such as perfumery or during which gases are produced must be performed 6 times a day;
- Display the obligation for self-assessment of symptoms by clients and staff employed / administrator / entrepreneur according to the approved format where administrative or criminal liability is mentioned for the person who does not take measures according to legal obligations as well as the toll free number for denunciation;
- Display the list of COVID-19 symptoms according to the approved checklist;
- Serve only one customer in the premises, while others wait outside in line, 2 meters apart. In premises with a space of more than 30 square meters, it might be allowed another client, proportionally for every 10 square meters of additional space, orienting the customers in maintaining the distance.



COVID-19

ECONOMIC NEWS

Declining interest rates, liquidity injection, physical money, forms like the Bank of Albania are reacting to Covid-19 - Monitor.al

The Bank of Albania has made public the information "Bank of Albania's Response to COVID-19", on the measures taken by the Bank of Albania to mitigate the effects on the economy and financial markets from the Covid-19 pandemic. The answers have been in all areas, such as monetary policy, support for citizens, supply of physical money, etc.

Private Cars Able to Move Freely from 11 May - Exit.al

The Minister stated that after 11 May, drivers will no longer need to apply for authorization to move in green areas, but

this is likely to be extended throughout the country. Green areas are government-designated low-risk areas of the country that have less stringent lockdown measures.

Albanian Bars and Cafes to Open from 18 May - Exit.al

On 18 May, Albania's bars and restaurants will reopen but with strict social distancing guidelines in place. According to a [Facebook post](#) from Prime Minister Edi Rama, such businesses will be allowed to open until 5:30 pm and only the outside areas can be used. Owners and clients must observe social distancing and hygiene requirements.

Why are employers not applying for employee financial assistance? Businesses blame



[procedures and deadlines – Monitor.al](#)

The second financial package provides for them to receive a salary of 40 thousand ALL only once for 176 thousand employees, while the first provided 26 thousand ALL for three months for employees in small entities in the slide of closed activities by order of the Ministry of Health. But when more than a week has passed since the opening of applications, for the second financial package, by April 4, about 98 thousand people have applied, according to updated tax data, or about 56% of people who are expected to benefit.

[Self-employment program: If you are unemployed and have a business idea, the government finances up to 500 thousand ALL – Monitor.al](#)

If you are unemployed and have a business idea, you can benefit from the government up to 500 thousand ALL to implement it, through a competitive application process. A program to promote self-employment has been approved by the Council of Ministers on the proposal of the Minister of Finance and Economy, the Council of Ministers.

[Green, yellow and red code, Businesses are divided into three risk categories for COVID-19; List and rules that everyone should follow – Monitor.al](#)

An order from the Ministry of Health has categorized businesses, according to the levels of risk of spreading

COVID-19 infection, into low-risk (green code), medium-risk (yellow code) and high-risk categories (red code). For each of these categories, special protocols have been adopted for the fulfillment of hygienic-sanitary measures, social distancing and specific measures for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 induced infection.

[EC report: The Albanian government expects a loss of 540 million euros in revenue in the first 6 months; Strokes from tourism and neighbors – Monitor.al](#)

The report for the first quarter of 2020 for potential candidate countries, published by the European Commission, reflects the effects that the Covid-19 explosion is having on regional economies. For Albania, the report states that the country will feel the effects more due to high dependence on tourism and relations with neighbors, while adding that the government expects a loss of 540 million euros in the first 6 months.

[Democracy deteriorates in Albania – “Freedom House”: The lowest level since 2013, local elections affected – Scan-tv.com](#)

Democracy in Albania has deteriorated, says Freedom House in its latest report on democracy in transition countries. In total there are 29 countries, mainly of

Central and Eastern Europe as well as Central Asia, all countries emerging from protracted dictatorships. Albania has seen a drop in Freedom House's overall democracy index, hitting its lowest level since 2013.

[Wiiw also cuts projections - Joins IMF and WB, Albanian economy to fall 5% this year – Scan-tv.com](#)

The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (Wiiw) is the third institution after the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to project a 5% decline in the Albanian economy this year. It was initially the IMF that made such a projection. The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies has thus significantly reviewed the effect of global pandemics on the Albanian economy.

[Trade/ Albanian vehicles passing through the streets of Bulgaria will pay taxes – Monitor.al](#)

All vehicles passing through Bulgarian territory will pay an additional tax. The Albanian Investment Development Agency announced this Wednesday that the Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria in Tirana has communicated that the application of a new road tax (toll) has started, from March 1, 2020,

for the vehicles circulating in the sections. road of Bulgarian territory. This tax will be paid by all involved Albanian funds.

[Tourism does not benefit from the second package, Union: Unemployed and seasonal employees are left without help, hotels have cut 70% of staff – Monitor.al](#)

From the second financial package, which has been distributed since April 21, the lowest number of beneficiaries is for employees in the tourism sector. From the updated data from the Taxes until May 5, the request for assistance of 40 thousand ALL was approved for 1,930 individuals. The government expects 10,000 employees to benefit from 1,214 businesses in the sector. But so far only 19% of those expected to benefit have been granted salary claims.

[EU, Balkans Leaders to Reaffirm Ties Amid Virus Crisis – Nytimes.com](#)

European Union and Balkans leaders are set to hold talks Wednesday aimed at reassuring six countries in the volatile region that the EU remains their most important partner, particularly as the coronavirus ravages world economies.

Amid delays over the start of EU membership talks for Albania and North Macedonia, lingering tensions between Serbia and its former territory of Kosovo, and a perception that the EU was slow to help its Balkans partners cope with the virus, concern has mounted that Russia and China might take advantage.

COVID-19