

## **THE GOVERNMENT OF CATALONIA APPROVES A NEW DECREE ON URGENT MEASURES TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON THE ECONOMY, PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY AND EMPLOYMENT**

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The Government agreement through Decree-Law 7/2020, of 17 March, includes a set of actions that affect various areas such as: public procurement, health and healthcare waste management, transparency, public transport and tax/economic management.

In the **area of taxation**, the decree law provides for the suspension of the deadlines for filing self-assessments and payments of all taxes owned and assigned by the Generalitat of Catalonia until the end of the state of alert decreed by the Spanish government on 14 March.

Aid of up to EUR 2 000 is approved (until the budget is exhausted) to **compensate for the losses of self-employed workers** affected by the crisis and who have no alternative sources of income. The requirements are:

- You must be registered in the special regime for self-employed workers of the Social Security,
- Have a fiscal address in a municipality of Catalonia,
- Be dedicated to activities for which closure has been decreed,
- Justify a drastic and involuntary reduction in your turnover.

In order to qualify for aid, financial losses must be demonstrated in March 2020 compared with the previous year. If the worker has been working under the RETA (Special Regime for Self-Employed Workers) for less than one year, the average monthly turnover since registration will be taken as a reference.

With regard to **public contracts**, the Generalitat will be responsible for salary expenses and insurance policies for the workers of the affected companies since the order to close the different facilities was issued. This includes, mainly, the contracts that the Generalitat currently has for cleaning, transport and school canteens,

special teaching and surveillance centres, and the work and service contracts awarded by the Generalitat or its Public Sector.

In order to ensure the functioning of the administration, it is envisaged that recruitment measures can be brought together without face-to-face assistance, while respecting the transparency required by the Public Sector Contracts Act. Likewise, local entities are authorised to use the emergency processing of contracts in various cases, and the Technology and Telecommunications Centre of the Generalitat (CTTI) is authorised to use emergency procedures for a series of essential services and supplies, such as the supply of laptops, software licences, the extension of corporate network infrastructures, the development and evolution of mobile applications in service of citizens or others that are necessary to guarantee the provision of the services of the Generalitat and its public sector during the period of the exceptional situation.

The suspension of the execution of contracts by application of this Decree-Law may in no case be considered a reason for the application of employment regulation files.

In the area of **healthcare**, the measures are aimed at ensuring maximum compatibility between health professionals in the field of epidemiology and specifying how the treatment of risk waste generated by the care of patients infected by COVID-19 should be carried out. In this sense, the Epidemiological Surveillance Emergency Service of Catalonia will operate through a guard service that will be assigned, according to a rotation system, to doctors and nursing staff assigned to the Ministry of Public Health.

With regard to **transparency**, the Decree provides that requests for access to public information may only be made by electronic means.

Finally, in the area of **public transport**, the Government undertakes to study the impact of the fall in fare revenue as a result of the decline in economic activity, and to include in the economic forecasts the increase in expenditure by the various operators as a result of the need for more personal and material resources.

The Decree approved on 17 March will come into force on the same day as its publication in the Official Journal of the Generalitat, except for the provisions regarding the suspension of public sector contracts which will come into force on 25 March 2020.

hcn

Av. Diagonal  
nº 472, 5è 2a  
08006 Barcelona  
T +34 93 208 09 40

mad

Alfonso XII  
nº 62, 2º  
28014 Madrid  
T +34 91 904 19 20