



CONFEDERAZIONE
GENERALE
ITALIANA
DEL LAVORO

Rome, 18 March 2020

Subject: Update on Italian measures to face the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear comrades,
Dear colleagues,

This is to share with you some information concerning the **measures taken by the Italian government and social partners to face the COVID-19 pandemic** that is hitting very hard our country.

First of all, let me thank you for the many solidarity messages that CGIL received in the last few days via e-mail and the social media. We sincerely appreciate your solidarity and concern.

CGIL has always been concerned about the economic situation of the country and took action in solidarity with the workers most at risk, notably the health sector. Trade unions immediately asked for strong protection of these workers, urgently hiring of staff in the medical sector and more resources.

While most of the workplaces had been closed by effect of the decrees, many were still open. Workers and their reps expressed strong concerns about health and safety and demanded prevention measures to stop the contagion at the workplace. On some occasions, workers had to go on strike. This pressure led the government to discuss a Protocol with social partners (see below).

Trade unions also raised concerns about care workers, in particular women staying at home with children and demanded urgent measures to improve the situation in prisons, where there have been dramatic episodes leading to prisoners being killed and staff seriously injured. More safety and better working conditions are demanded for staff working in the prisons and for the general improvement of the conditions in there.

Trade unions also demanded to close supermarkets and all other food shops at 7 pm and on Sundays.

Many of these measures have been accepted by the Government in the “Care Italy” decree approved on March 17th.

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On March 1st, in consideration of an outbreak of COVID-19 cases in some of the northern regions of the country, the Italian government decided to establish a “**red zone**” including many municipalities of the Regions Veneto and Lombardy and some lighter measures for the whole regions.

On March 8, a **second decree** has been approved by the government to extend the now called protected area to the whole country. These measures will provisionally be in force until April 3rd.

Such measure include:

- all schools and universities are closed;
- prohibition of citizens to leave their domicile except for basic needs including buying food or medicines;
- all sports events, religious ceremonies, gatherings and meetings are cancelled;
- public competitions (except for the health sector) are postponed;
- restaurants and bars must close at 6 pm;
- a 1 mt distance between customers and/or staff must be ensured in all shops and malls (which must close on Sundays);
- smart working, wherever possible, is encouraged.

Such measures have been further restricted on March 11 when all shops except for essential services (supermarkets, pharmacies...) have been closed. Essential services including public transport are guaranteed but strict measure have been taken in order to limit movement of people. Despite this, the number of workers who are still on duty in the manufacturing sector is still high.

A self-certification must be provided to the police in case of check stating why one is leaving their domicile. Failure to do so, leads to a penal fine. This includes people who are moving to reach their workplaces.

In light of the lack of respect of preventive measures to be adopted to protect workers in the services that did not stop their production, trade union organizations asked for urgent measures to be adopted by the government. On 14 March, social dialogue between the Government, employers and workers' organizations led to the signature of a **Joint protocol measures for the contrast and containment of the spread of the Covid-19 virus in the workplaces.**

Such measures include:

- maximize the use of smart work for the activities that can be carried out at home or remotely;
- encourage use of paid leave also by collective agreements;

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- suspend the activities of company departments not indispensable for production;
- adopt anti-contagion safety protocols and, where this is not possible respect the interpersonal distance of one meter as the main measure of containment, with the adoption of individual protection tools;
- sanitization of workplaces and common areas;
- limit to the minimum essential movement of people inside production sites;
- encourage signing of specific collective agreements for the companies that are still in production.

The protocol also includes measures on:

1. workers' information;
2. workplace access modalities;
3. external suppliers access modalities;
4. cleaning and disinfection of work areas;
5. personal hygiene precautions;
6. personal protective equipment;
7. use of shared spaces (canteens, smoking areas, locker rooms etc.);
8. work organisation (shifts, smart work, business trips);
9. management of workers' entry and exit;
10. internal movements, meetings, internal events and training;
11. managing a person with symptoms at work;
12. health surveillance and role of health and safety reps;
13. workplace committees for the implementation and monitoring of the respect of the protocol.

On March 16, the government approved the **“Care-Italy” decree** which invested 25 billion euros and mobilized 350 bln euros resources. Measures include postponing of the main fiscal deadlines, support to the sectors most affected by the crisis (tourism, transportation, sports, cinema and performing arts, press). Funds have been mobilized to increase the capacity of hospitals, hire new medical staff and support PPE (like face masks).

Measures in the employment include:

- postponing most of the fiscal deadlines;
- increase of the guarantee fund for SMEs to ensure access to credit;
- 5 bln more euros to extend redundancy payment fund (*cassa integrazione*) to all companies (including those with 1 employee);
- extraordinary one-off 600 euros compensations for self employed, independent, performing arts and agriculture workers;
- up to 600 euros baby-sitting bonus and extraordinary paid parental leave;

- 100 euro one-off extraordinary compensation for those who worker at their workplace;
- 12 additional days of paid leave;
- inclusion of quarantine days in the sick leave;
- 60 days suspension of collective and individual dismissals on economic grounds.

Finally, given the urgent need to increase the number and support intensive care facilities, CGIL CISL UIL have decided to make a financial donation at this aim with own funding. Trade unions will also launch a call for donations so that all workers, retirees and individuals will be able to contribute to his fund.

CGIL has decided to guarantee access of workers to its services by keeping the local trade union offices open, but with restriction in terms of access and encouraging people to call for an individual appointment. All CGIL offices have been re-arranged or equipped in a way that respects the Government's measures and protect the health and safety of our staff and individuals visiting our premises.

The staff of the international department CGIL is smart-working to comply with the ongoing lockdown. For any further requests you may have, please write to our email addresses: europa@cgil.it or org.internazionale@cgil.it

In solidarity,

Susanna Camusso