

Covid-19 Brief - France

In order to mitigate and limit the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the French government has taken various measures to protect its population and launched support plans for its economy.

The following link will redirect you towards the strategy established by French authorities:

- <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus> (FR)

You will find a summary of the main measures enclosed.

Sanitary measures :

Within France, a containment and confinement system has been implemented throughout the country from Tuesday, March 17 at 12:00 noon. On April 28, the Prime Minister announced that lockdown measures would be maintained until May 11 at least, when a gradual deconfinement of the country is foreseen.

Until then, leaving one's residence is prohibited except in the following circumstances and in possession of a written certificate:

- Travel between home and the place of work, when it is essential for the exercise of activities that cannot be organised in the form of teleworking or business travel that cannot be postponed.
- Travel to make purchases of supplies necessary for the professional activity conducted and essential purchases (such as food, pet food...) in establishments whose activities remain authorized (list on government.fr).
- Medical consultations and care that cannot be provided at a distance and cannot be postponed; consultations and care for patients with long-term illnesses.
- Travel for compelling family reasons, for assistance to vulnerable persons or childcare.
- Short journeys, within the limit of one hour per day and within a maximum radius of one kilometre around home, related either to the individual physical activity of persons, excluding any collective sporting activities and any proximity to other persons (forbidden between 10:00 am and 7:00pm in Paris), or to walking with only the persons grouped together in the same home, or to the needs of pets.
- Judicial or administrative summons.
- Participation in missions of general interest at the request of the administrative authority.

The borders of the non-European/Schengen area have been closed from March 17- noon. They are closed until further notice, and may remain closed until summer at least.

In the context of the implementation of the state of health emergency in France, access restrictions to

Mainland France and to French Overseas territories are in effect. Every traveler is requested, from 8 April 2020, 12 AM, to fill out and carry one of the following travel certificates according to his situation:

- for a trip from mainland France to French overseas territories
- for an international travel from abroad to mainland France
- for an international travel from abroad to French overseas territories

The document is to be presented to transportation companies before boarding, as well as to border control authorities.

Economic measures :

French authorities have also taken various measures in order to support its economy and as such, have launched a plan of 45 billion euros of which 35 are dedicated to the deferral of social and tax charges for companies.

Furthermore, 8.5 billion out of the 45 billion euros mentioned above have been dedicated to the funding of short-time working and partial/unemployment measures. As such, companies compensate 70% of the salary and employees at minimum wage are fully compensated.

The government also created a Solidarity Fund of 1 billion euros in order to help its small businesses with a turnover of less than 1 million euros. This fund enables any small business which has encountered an administrative closure or a loss of at least 70% of its turnover in March 2020 compared to March 2019 to receive a 1,500 euros subsidy. For more dire situations and after examination on a case by case basis, additional aid may be granted in order to avoid bankruptcy.

To support the financing of companies by banks, the government has implemented a guarantee scheme of 300 billion euros. This aims to enable banks to grant cash loans to businesses to safeguard employment. In addition, French banks have accepted to postpone the reimbursement of corporate loans for up to 6 months and to do so free of charge.

Finally, more specific measures have been implemented. For instance, the Ministry of culture has announced an emergency aid for various domains such as music, live entertainment and in favor of intermittent workers.

Measures specific to the tourism sector :

The government has created a Tourism Sector Committee to monitor the effects of the crisis on the sector and define a specific aid plan. However, it has been decided that restaurants, cafes and bars, as well as places of culture shall remain closed at least until the end of May.

The government recently announced the reinforcement of the current emergency measures in favor of the tourism, hotel and catering sectors and these measures include :

- retention of partial recourse to partial activity after the resumption of activity for the tourism, hotels, cafés, restaurants, events and culture sectors ;
- extension of the conditions to benefit from the solidarity fund for companies with up to 20 employees and a turnover of up to 2 million euros. The ceiling for grants under the second strand of the fund will be raised to €10,000 instead of €5,000 ;
- exemption from social security contributions for VSEs and SMEs in these sectors during the closure period. It will apply automatically to all these companies, whether or not they have already paid their contributions ;
- long deferral of social security contributions and tax deferrals for medium-sized and large companies in these sectors not benefiting from the automatic exemption. Cancellations may be requested on a case-by-case basis;

- deferred payment of the Cotisation foncière des entreprises (CFE) for the year 2020. The government will authorize local authorities to exempt the fixed part of the tourist tax;
- cancellation of rents and fees for occupying the public domain due to public landlords for VSEs and SMEs in the tourism, hotels, cafés, restaurants, events, culture and sport sectors for the period of administrative closure./.