

**EFFAT**

EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM TRADE UNIONS

Austria

Impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in the EFFAT sectors and measures taken to deal with the consequences of the pandemic

EFFAT affiliates: PRO-GE, VIDA, GPA, GÖD

Governmental measures

Information about governmental measures can be found on the websites of the respective Ministries, e.g. Labour, Family and Youth <https://www.bmafj.gv.at/public.html>; Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection <https://www.sozialministerium.at/public.html>; Digital and Economic Affairs <https://www.bmdw.gv.at/public.html>.

Impacts in the EFFAT sectors and specific measures adopted to deal with them:

Information for workers can be found on a joint website of the Austrian TUC (ÖGB) and the Chamber of Labour (Arbeiterkammer) <https://jobundcorona.at/>.

Agriculture sector:

On 9 March 2020, the Austrian Federal Government adopted the first measures. All systemically relevant farms will remain in normal operation. In agriculture, securing the food supply has top priority. At present, the vegetable and fruit growing sectors see problems with future harvesting operations in the coming weeks. It is assumed that many harvest workers from the surrounding countries (Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, etc.) will not be allowed to enter Austria. At present, more and more workers from the above-mentioned countries are leaving the country to avoid getting "stuck" in Austria.

The PRO-GE trade union is working to ensure that companies carrying out activities which cannot be delayed, such as agricultural companies which supply essential goods, take care of the health and safety of workers and minimise the risk of infection. Instructions for action have been drawn up to this end: ten points for more protection in production plants.

Food, Drink and Tobacco sector:

No information

HRCT sector:

Since 17 March 2020, all restaurants, clubs, bars, discos and all other tourist establishments except hotels are closed, health resorts and rehabilitation facilities throughout Austria will follow soon. The business activity of companies is almost at "ZERO", the occupancy in the hotel industry is between 0 to 4%.

The developments in the tourism labour market are dramatic: within 48 hours (23-24 March), 20,000 of the 220,000 employees in the industry have been laid off, and with more to come as companies with more than 20 employees have a 30-day delay if they want to lay off more than 10% of their employees.

The equity ratio of many companies is so low that they cannot afford to pay dismissal indemnities and all related payments to the workers, but neither can they afford the continuation of employment. Therefore, the social partners and the federal government have created a variety of different measures, e.g. bridging loans, state guarantees for companies in unprecedented amounts.

One measure to keep workers in employment is the short-time work scheme which the social partners have revised and adapted to the crisis. It guarantees that workers receive 80 to 90% of their net wage, but the company only pays the working hours that it really needs. The

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working time can even be partially reduced to zero hours, but it has to be 10% on average (= 52 hours in 3 months if full time is 40 hours). The employers are exempted from paying non-wage labour costs.

<https://www.facebook.com/gewerkschaftvida>

Measures adopted in specific companies:

- **NH Hotels Austria**

In the city hotels and conference centres, 100% of bookings are cancelled, at the airport hotels, room occupancy is at 20%. From 1 April 2020, most of the hotels will be closed, employees have been all retained, NH will apply for short-time work from 01.04.2020, Labour Market Service (state) will compensate 80 to 90% of wages and salaries, leave and time credits are reduced.

Notifications are put up in workplaces on e.g. hygiene measures, distance between persons, only 5 persons with a minimum distance of 2 meters, gloves, disinfectant as far as available. Masks no longer available.

For more information on the measures adopted in transnational companies please check the main page