Information on agreements/measures in response to the Covid-19 crisis - DENMARK

On February 27, the first case of covid-19 was detected in Denmark. The number rapidly increased and Wednesday 11th March the number was 517 and it led to the following announcement from the Danish Government (link to the numbers and monitoring of the outbreak here):

- Students in all public youth and higher education are sent home as soon as possible and no later than by Friday. Private educational institutions are encouraged to do the same. Provisional two weeks from Friday, March 13, 2020.
- All schools and daycare facilities will be closed from Monday, March 16, 2020 and for a fortnight. Municipalities establish emergency care.
- All public servants who do not perform critical functions will be sent home from work on Friday, March 13, 2020 and for the next two weeks. They should work from home as far as possible. All public servants are paid. Critical functions include health personnel, the elderly and care sector, police and emergency services.
- All indoor public cultural institutions, libraries, leisure facilities and the like are now closing. Private offers of the same nature are encouraged to do the same. Provisional two weeks from Friday, March 13, 2020. Public service providers are exempt from news and emergency preparedness.
- Employees in the private labor market are encouraged to work from home, walk or vacation, as far as possible.
- Limit use of public transport
- Visits to nursing homes and hospitals should be limited with immediate effect.
- The government proposes urgent legislation that allows for especially necessary measures - such as closing schools and daycare centers.
- Assemblies for over 100 are prohibited once the emergency legislation is passed, indoor gatherings of over 100 people are banned.

Then followed several other initiatives:

- A national level tri-partite agreement is set to mitigate imminent financial and labour market consequences. The government pledged to cover 75 percent of a full-time employee’s monthly salary, up to a limit of 23,000 DKK (3,100 Euros) per month, with the remaining 25 percent paid by the company, when employees are in risk of being laid off. For short-term/ temporary workers, the government offers to cover up to 90 percent of the salary for hourly paid people, up to a limit of 26,000 DKK (3,500 Euros) per month. So far, the agreement covers private businesses that otherwise would have to lay off at least
30 percent or more than 50 employees. The new wage compensation scheme will be valid until June 9 2020 with effect from March 9 2020. (March 15) Read more here (Danish)

- At a press conference on March 17, our Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen came up with several other restrictions to stop the spread of the coronavirus. Cafes, restaurants, bars and discos must now also remain closed. In the future, the Danes may not gather in groups of more than 10 people - neither outside nor inside. In addition, all companies with close body contact as with the hairdresser, masseur, tattoo artist, sports center and fitness center must stay closed - for the period up to 30 March.

- An agreement in the hospitality sector has been now complimented by a commitment of the government to cover up till 90 percent of employees’ salary in the hotel- and restaurant sector for workers who are laid off (March 17).

- The compensation for self-employed was addressed as part of new government measures that were welcomed by unions as this was not covered by the tripartite agreement. The new measures will offer compensation to self-employed who loses 30 percent or more of their turnover. The government will offer a 75 percent compensation with a max of 3,100 Euros per month (extended to 4,660 euros if the spouse is co-worker). (March 18)

- At a press conference on March 23, our Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen announced that the lock down of Danish society in line with the announcement on March 11th and March 17th will be extended to 13 April. In this way, the current lock down of large sections of society continues with, among other things, closed schools, day care centers, libraries, restaurants and much more. It also means that the restrictions on not meeting more than 10 people continue, which has led to stripes of cancellation of events.

- As a kind of follow-up to the private sector national level tri-partite agreement announced on March 15 talks are now taking place between the government and the public trade unions representing public employees in the State sector including central administration, authorities and higher education in order to reach an agreement regarding work related issues during the Corona crisis.

More specifically within the Public Sector, the following is worth mentioning:

New agreement between Public Employers and Public employees (Municipalities):
KL (Local Government) and Forhandlingsfællesskabet (T. U. Negotiation Community) - which negotiates general agreements for workers in municipalities and regions- have discussed how to best use the resources. This has led to a new agreement (Mach 19) that allows some public sector employees to be moved to a different job than they normally have. These may be home-educated kindergarten educators who may be asked, for example, to care for children at night or mentally ill children in residences. The goal is to ensure staffing for the most critical functions during the corona crisis. (The full text attached in Danish)

Common manifestation between Public Employer and Public Employees (Regions):
The Danish Regions and Forhandlingsfællesskabet (T. U. Negotiation Community) has declared a common manifestation, that ongoing dialogue and adaptation of solutions is a necessity for the healthcare system to handle the efforts in relation to COVID-19. The Employees' frameworks and conditions for performing the work will be affected, but the consideration of employees and patients must at the same time be secured as best as possible. Read the Manifestation here (Danish)

More specifically within the Health Sector, the following is worth mentioning:

**Safety for the employees – lack in supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
The Danish Medicines Agency has a coordinating role to ensure the supply of PPE to the health system. The Danish Regions, Local Government Denmark (KL) and the Danish Medicines Agency have established a new logistics center to strengthen the overview of critical medical equipment and protective equipment in municipalities and regions and the logistic center will redistribute as needed. Read here

Several employees in the health sector have experienced a lack of PPE. The trade unions have called for immediately action – “We need to take care of the Health Professionals, if they shall take care of the patients”. The authorities have acknowledged that there, unfortunately, is a challenge with the supply of PPE in some parts of the Health System. They have declared different initiatives and actions.

**Ensuring a sufficient work force - Regional job banks**
The regions have set up job banks so that unemployed or retired nurses, doctors and other health professionals and nursing students, medical students and educators can sign up. The purpose is to ensure a sufficient work force. The trade unions support but underline that we must not compromise when it comes to safety and guidelines must be drawn up. Almost 8.000 have signed up for the regional job banks.

**Testing of COVID-19 in Denmark (safety of employees and a sufficient work force):**
On March 12, Denmark switched to testing only patients requiring hospitalization. It has received criticism from the WHO. Furthermore, the trade unions have been fighting for increased opportunity for testing of the health professionals. On March 22, the authorities have acknowledged that test capacity must be increased. Testing of health professionals is important for safety reasons but also to ensure sufficient work force.

**New agreements - Critical functions must remain in the healthcare system under COVID-19**
Danish Health Authority has described critical functions in the health care system. There are many critical functions in the health care system and shutdown of these should only be done in an urgent need. New agreements are made to minimize the consequences for sick and vulnerable citizens. An example is patients with chronic diseases. Instead of physical consultations at the General Practitioner or Nurse, they can now have tele- or video consultations. Read here (Danish)

**Latest figures from Denmark**
24 March 12.843 persons in Denmark are tested
1.577 are infected
301 are in hospital
69 are in intensive care
24 are dead