



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL JUSTICE AND CONSUMERS

Directorate A: Civil and commercial justice  
Unit A.1 : Civil justice

## COMPARATIVE TABLE ON COVID-19 IMPACT ON CIVIL PROCEEDINGS

(Information collected by DG JUST)

**DISCLAIMER:** This document is an overview of COVID-19 related measures and certain other measures taken by Member States as of March 2020 and serves for information purpose only. As an overview document it cannot reproduce the relevant measures adopted by Member States in their entirety, with all details and exceptions. This general overview document in no way binds the Member States or the European Commission. For a more detailed information, please refer to the published and legally binding texts published by Member States. This disclaimer adds to the general disclaimer available at [https://e-justice.europa.eu/content\\_legal\\_notice-365-en.do?init=true](https://e-justice.europa.eu/content_legal_notice-365-en.do?init=true).

MEMBER STATES	Time limits in civil proceedings	Judicial organization and Judiciary	EU Judicial Cooperation
AUSTRIA (AT)	<p><a href="#">Law on 22/03/2020</a></p> <p><b>Procedural time limits</b> open on 22/03 or time limits that under normal circumstances would have started to run after this date are interrupted and will be suspended until 30-04-2020. They will start running again. That means that a 14-day time limit will end on 15/05 and a 4-week time limit will end on 29/05.</p> <p><u>Exceptions (inter alia):</u> payment deadlines, forced psychiatric admission. In cases of imminent danger for safety or personal freedom as well as in cases of irretrievable damages, the court can end the interruption earlier.</p> <p><b>Limitation periods</b> (e.g. prescription) are suspended between 22/03 and 30/04.</p>	<p>Restriction of contacts between courts and parties.</p> <p><b>General shutdown of specific courts</b> if need be, accompanied by the possibility to direct urgent cases to other courts.</p>	<p>Case workers of Central Authorities are working from home : communication by email is recommended</p>

	<p><b>Enforcement proceedings:</b> Enforcement orders are only carried out in the event of imminent danger to life, limb, security or freedom or to avert substantial and irretrievable damage. Possible stay of a forced auction of movable and immovable property if the debtor faces economic difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Evictions can be suspended upon request if the debtor would otherwise become homeless.</p>		
<b>BELGIUM (BE)</b>	<p><u>Adopted measures (8 April 2020):</u></p> <p><b>Limitation periods and deadlines for introducing judicial remedies</b> that expire between the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2020 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2020 are extended by one month after the expiration of this period (i.e. postponed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2020). If need be, the government may extend the final date of this period.</p> <p><b>Deadlines in judicial proceedings in civil matters</b> that expire between the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2020 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2020 and the expiration of which could lead to forfeiture or any other damage, are extended by one month after the expiration of the crisis period (i.e. postponed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2020). If need be, the government may extend the final date of the crisis period. This doesn't apply to urgent matters.</p> <p><u>Foreseen measures:</u></p> <p>Extension by 6 months of the deadlines in the context of judicial sales of immovable properties that expire between the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 and the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2020.</p> <p>Suspension of enforcement proceedings against companies.</p>	<p><u>Adopted measures (8 April 2020):</u></p> <p>In civil matters, judicial hearings that were supposed to occur between the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2020 and the 3<sup>th</sup> of June 2020 (this may be extended by the government) are cancelled when all parties have already sent their written conclusions. The judge shall take a decision without hearing, solely on the basis of the written conclusions, unless the parties oppose. If the parties oppose, the case will be postponed.</p> <p>Civil courts have resorted to using video conference tools when continuing to proceed with handling cases in court.</p> <p><u>Foreseen measures:</u></p> <p>The following regime should be finalised soon. Legal deadlines that apply to notaries and that expire between 3 April 2020 and the entry into force of the foreseen royal decree are extended by one month. Notarized powers received from March 13, 2020 to June 30, 2020 and which take effect only from March 13 until June 30, 2020 will be free of charge. Notarized powers may be received remotely and electronically (on electronic support and with an electronic identification and signature). Removal of the requirement for witnesses and the presence of several notaries in an authentic will.</p>	<p>Following the COVID-19 outbreak, the modality of work and the organisation of the Belgian Central Authorities in civil matters have not changed, with the exception that most Belgian Central Authority caseworkers only operate via telework. A few agents continue to be present 1 day per week, to check incoming post and secure outgoing post, for instance with regard to service of documents.</p> <p>A message has been sent out via the European judicial network to all contact points indicating that communications can continue to be sent exclusively by e-mail to the caseworkers. The Belgian Central Authorities remain available by telephone and e-mail. It has been advised to send new requests to the functional mailboxes with regard to child abduction, taking of evidence, legal aid, maintenance obligations, and child protection.</p> <p>The treatment of individual cases could be delayed as a result of lower staffing. So far, all agents remain active and cases continue to be handled on a daily basis as before the COVID-19 outbreak.</p>

<p><b>BULGARIA (BG)</b></p>	<p><b><u>Specific legislation:</u></b>  - <i>Law on the measures and actions during the state of emergency declared by a decision of the National Assembly of 13 March 2020</i>, adopted on 23 March 2020 and amended on 6 April 2020.</p> <p><b><u>State of emergency: 13 March – 13 May 2020</u></b>  Initially, the period of the state of emergency was fixed from 13 March until 13 April 2020. This period has been prolonged until 13 May 2020.</p> <p><b><u>Procedural deadlines:</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Suspension of deadlines:</u></b>  <b>All procedural deadlines</b> in civil judicial, arbitration and enforcement proceedings are suspended <u>except in the following civil and commercial litigation cases:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cases for exercising parental rights only in respect of provisional measures;</li> <li>2. Cases under the Domestic Violence Protection Act only concerning an order for immediate protection or amendment thereof, as well as in cases where the request for protection is rejected;</li> <li>3. Permits for withdrawal of funds from children's deposits;</li> <li>4. Interim proceedings;</li> <li>5. Evidence preservation cases;</li> <li>6. Requests under the Electronic Communications Act and in connection with termination of registry proceedings on the basis of an act of the court under the Law on the Commercial Register and the Register of Non-Profit Legal Entities;</li> <li>7. The cases under Art. 62, para. 3 of the Credit Institutions Act. concerning signing a declaration pledging to safeguard bank secrecy;</li> </ol> <p>The prescription periods upon the lapse whereof rights are extinguished or acquired for individuals are suspended.  All public sales and coercive seizures of possession, announced by public and private enforcement agents, shall be suspended.  After the lifting of the state of emergency, the public sales and</p>	<p><b><u>Court hearings</u></b></p> <p>Until the state of emergency is lifted, court hearings, may be held remotely, ensuring direct and virtual participation of the parties and participants in the proceedings. Minutes shall be drawn up for the meetings held and shall be published without delay and the minutes of the meeting shall be kept until the deadline for amendment and completion of the minutes. The court shall inform the parties when the hearing will be held at a distance.</p> <p>The Supreme Judicial Council has issued orders for the provision of the necessary precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the virus in court buildings, for filing documents to courts by mail or electronically, as well as for consultation on the phone or electronically. For the mentioned hearings, summons is served by telephone or electronically.</p> <p><b><u>Registry proceedings</u></b>  The services provided by the Commercial Register and Register of non-profit legal entities and other registers are accessible online.</p> <p><b><u>Notarial procedures</u></b>  Notarial procedures are limited only to the emergency ones. Notarial proceedings shall be limited to urgent matters while complying with the hygiene requirements. The Notary Chamber shall provide notaries on duty in a proportion of at least one notary per 50,000 residents for the area of practice concerned.</p>	<p>International legal assistance is still provided by the Ministry of Justice and by the courts but might be delayed.</p>
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the coercive seizures of possession shall be scheduled anew without levying new fees and costs.

**Extension of deadlines:**

Deadlines established by law (**except in the cases mentioned above**), expiring during the times of the state of emergency and which are related to the exercise of rights and obligations of private persons, are extended from 1 month as of the end of the state of emergency.

**Specific cases:**

The bank accounts of natural persons and of medical-treatment facilities shall be immune to preservation orders, labour remunerations and pensions shall be immune to attachment orders, protective measures shall not be imposed against medical apparatus and equipment, and an inventory shall not be taken of corporeal movable things and corporeal immovables owned by natural persons, except for maintenance obligations, for damages sustained as a result of a tort or delict, and for claims for labour remunerations.

Exempted from preservation/ protective measures shall be bank accounts of individuals and medical establishments, salaries and pensions, medical apparatus and equipment. No inventory of movable property and real estate owned by individuals shall be made, except for liabilities for maintenance, for damage caused by illicit injury and for claims for salaries.

The fulfilment of an obligation to surrender a child or the subsequent return of a child in accordance with the Civil Procedure Code shall not be suspended.

**Until the state of emergency is lifted in case of delay in payment of obligations of individuals**, debtors under credit agreements and other forms of financing (factoring, forfeiting and others) provided by banks and financial institutions under Art. 3 of the Law on Credit Institutions, including when receivables are acquired from other banks, financial institutions or third parties, and under leasing contracts, **no interest and penalty interest are charged, the obligation cannot be declared early due and the contract it**

	cannot be terminated by default and no property can be seized.		
<b>CROATIA (HR)</b>	<p>On 18 April 2020, amendments to the Act on Enforcement over Monetary Assets entered into force : <b>enforcement on accounts of natural persons are suspended for 3 months</b> (with a possible extension of additional 3 months).</p> <p>The calculation of <b>statutory interests</b> is also suspended for the same time period.</p>	<p><b>All judicial authorities continue to work.</b> However only those proceedings that have been identified as urgent are carried out by appropriate security measures. <b>Hearings and other non-urgent cases have been postponed until further notice.</b></p> <p>In cases where judges can make decision as single judges or in which the hearing is not required, it is first of all necessary to make decisions from home and then arrange for their dispatch. Heads of the judicial authorities have the mandate to allow employees to work from home where possible.</p> <p><b>Communication with parties and all participants in proceedings</b> is done electronically in all cases where that is possible. In cases requiring meeting or hearing, all precautionary measures imposed by the health authorities should be taken. In each situation, the technical means of distance communication available to judges and courts, including within the court (email, videolink, etc.) should be used.</p> <p>It is also recommended that enforcement proceedings, especially <b>enforcement related to vacating and handing over of real estate are postponed.</b></p> <p>Due to the outbreak of epidemic of COVID-19 in Croatia all <b>electronic public auction openings in enforcement and insolvency cases have been postponed</b>, except those in which the bidding has begun by March 24, 2020 at the latest, which are to be finished according to published Calls for participation in Electronic Public Auction.</p> <p>All requests for sale received after the 13th of March, 2020, which have not been processed, will be processed upon termination of special circumstances of epidemic of COVID-19. All published Calls for down Payment for Costs and Calls for Participation in the</p>	<p>Parties must send their inquiries, requests and applications to the Ministry of Justice during regular office hours by email, telephone and postal service providers.</p> <p>International legal assistance is still provided but might be delayed.</p>

		Electronic Public Auction will be put out of force and will be reissued under the same conditions of sale by the end of the special circumstances of outbreak of epidemic of COVID-19.	
<b>CYPRUS (CY)</b>	<b>Procedural time limits are suspended</b> until 30.4.2020.	<b>All hearings and other procedures are suspended</b> until 30.4.2020. Exceptions: application for extremely urgent interim order, extradition proceedings and other proceedings dealing with restrictions to personal freedom (e.g. illegal detention, detention in a psychiatric institution.) The Registrar <b>accepts the filing of an action only if it is supported by an interim order</b> application and provided that it is urgent for it to be heard. The matter of urgency is to be examined and decided by the judge.	
<b>CZECHIA (CZ)</b>	Several measures have been taken to alleviate the most urgent difficulties of citizens with regard to court proceedings, executions or insolvency proceedings. Extensive use of existing provisions of the codes of procedure on waiver of missed time limits in court proceedings, if the time limit was missed due to limitations resulting from the extraordinary measures (mandatory quarantines, restrictions on movement and gathering of persons).	The Ministry of Justice recommended postponing <b>all court hearings</b> . If postponement not possible, it must be carried out strictly in line with the Government Regulation on State of Emergency. Public is excluded in court hearings and its movement within the court building restricted. Information provided by courts via telephone/email.  Delay in legal proceedings resulting of the application of this recommendations will not be considered by MoJ as delays in the exercise of its supervisory powers.  <b>Notarial service still available</b> to the public, but work carried out in restricted mode.	<a href="#">Office for International Legal Protection of Children ( Brussels Ila &amp; Maintenance Regulation)</a> : The Office's agenda will be carried out in the state of emergency mode; all personal contact with the Office shall be replaced by written (written or electronic) and telephone contact; Office hours shall be limited to Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 am to 12 pm.  <b>Czech Ministry of Justice (Central authority for Service of Document &amp; Taking of Evidence Regulations)</b> : Staff members (including all contact points) are currently mostly working from home. Electronic communication/distance communication are strongly recommended. All time limits should be kept.  The only complication is the increasing restrictions on postal services in some States, which we try, in agreement with

			<p>the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to overcome by use of diplomatic channel for <b>service of judicial documents</b>. Foreign Central authorities should advise the courts/competent authorities to send all requests on service of documents and taking of evidence directly to the competent courts and not via Central Authority (Ministry of Justice) as this will currently significantly shorten the time limits for successful execution of the request.</p>
<b>DENMARK (DK)</b>	No measures directed at legal proceedings have been introduced so far.	<p>The Danish courts have initiated an emergency procedure in order handle certain critical areas. The critical areas, which continue to be dealt with locally by the courts, are particularly by law time-bound cases or are particularly intrusive.</p> <p>It is up to the courts to make an assessment in each case whether a case fulfills the conditions to be 'critical', and it is also up to the courts to organize the work taking into account the circumstances.</p> <p>The decision to prioritize critical cases entails that a number of significant case types, including cases with physical court meetings, will not be prioritized. These cases are postponed until further notice.</p> <p>The Danish Courts seek to handle as much work as possible from home workplaces during the emergency period. The Danish Court Administration has secured the possibility of establishing home workplaces for all employees. In addition, court employees can (to a limited extent) be physically present in the courts in order to ensure that they themselves and others can solve tasks from home.</p> <p>As far as possible, the courts use telephone conferences to prepare cases in several areas of law, including civil cases and bailiff cases. The family</p>	<p>In general, the Danish Courts seek to handle as much work as possible from home workplaces during the emergency period.</p>

		<p>courts handle cases as far as possible without physical attendance. There are also certain probate cases that can be processed by phone.</p> <p>The Crisis Committee (consisting of The Danish Court Administration and a group of Presidents of the courts) have also called for the courts to consider, as far as possible, whether the current situation gives rise to further use of video conferencing, if it is deemed sound from a rule of law perspective.</p>	
<b>ESTONIA (EE)</b>	<p>General information in English may be found at the Government's <a href="#">webpage</a></p> <p><b>Procedural time limits</b> are extended by courts on a case-by-case basis. Courts will take in to account the additional burden, tasks or difficulties for parties to a proceeding due to the crisis.</p> <p>No legislation on the extension of deadlines, judges have the discretionary power to set longer deadlines in the future or to extend existing deadlines.</p> <p>However, in order to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus by avoiding physical human contacts in care facilities <b>the terms for which mentally ill persons have been placed</b> in a psychiatric hospital or a social welfare institution as well as hospitalisation of persons suffering from a communicable disease will be suspended (<b>MoJ proposal</b>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in the case of extended provisional protection, for the duration of the emergency situation;</li> <li>- in the case of placement, for the duration of the emergency situation and up to two months after termination of the emergency situation.</li> </ul> <p>This is without prejudice to the obligation to terminate any placement and any application of provisional legal protection after the prerequisites for placement have ceased to exist or it becomes evident that the prerequisites were not fulfilled.</p>	<p>State of emergency from 12/03 to 01/05.</p> <p>In general, virtual meeting rooms have been created to raise the capacity of the Ministry of Justice, courts, prosecution offices and prisons to hold <u>video conferences</u>. This solution can also be used to hold oral hearings with parties to proceedings. In addition, available video conference equipment has been relocated to support the increase in demand within courthouses and prisons.</p> <p><b>No legislative change regarding court proceedings.</b> The Council for Administration of Courts has issued recommendations. The work of Estonian courts is reorganised (opening hours 9.00–13.00) and courthouses on working days until 14.00.</p> <p>Where possible, cases are handled in writing through the information system of courts and by means of a digital court file application.</p> <p><b>Urgent hearings and cases are held by electronic means of communication</b>, and if not possible, the Court decide on a case-by-case basis. The following cases could be considered as urgent : placing a person in a closed institution; separating a child from his or her family; establishing guardianship for an adult. In non-urgent case, electronic means of communication can be used by the court (or any other means</p>	<p>The Estonian Central Authority has been teleworking as of 13 March. <b>Communications (messages and documents) are established by email</b> (in civil matters and most of the criminal matters). If needed, original documents will be sent via airmail after the emergency situation ends.</p>



	<p>In the area of <b>law of obligations</b>, currently no fundamental changes. The Ministry of Justice has analysed different legal options already provided in Estonian law and could be used in this difficult time. The focus has been on providing explanations and on answering information requests. There have also been proposals for amending certain rules in the area of law of obligations, but that discussion is still ongoing.</p>	<p>necessary), but generally the court would postpone the hearing and/or the procedural act.</p> <p>According to the Code of Civil Procedure the court in exceptional and urgent cases related to children can give preliminary / protective orders without hearing them – many judges have used this possibility.</p> <p><b>Service of procedural documents</b> are preferably executed by e-File and email.</p> <p>The <b>Chamber of notaries</b> authorized notaries to take all measures, such as the remote authentication service e-Notar which allows for the performance of notarial acts using a video bridge: while up until April 6 only certain types of acts could be done remotely (power of attorneys, sells of shares of private limited companies and a few more) then as of April 6 all kinds of acts can be remotely authenticated (the only exceptions are concluding marriages and divorces). So, even real estate can be sold now via online authentication. And this does not apply only during the crisis, but also after the quarantine is over. The clients can do it from wherever they are (if the notary agrees with it - the remote authentication is still voluntary for the notaries, i.e. they may refuse to do it).</p> <p>The <b>Estonian Bar Association</b> has also encouraged its members to work remotely and to use all technical means of communication to continue providing legal counsel. It has also stressed the need to ensure attorney-client confidentiality. The Bar Association has further emphasized that limitations on rights imposed due to the emergency situation must be justified and should be challenged if this is called for in a particular case. Attorneys also have a duty to adapt quickly to changes in the working environment, show flexibility and innovation and to ensure that the</p>	
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		<p>possibilities for requesting extensions for time limits are not abused.</p> <p>The Chamber of <b>Bailiffs and Trustees in Bankruptcy</b> has also announced that bailiffs and trustees in bankruptcy have reorganized their work in order to work remotely.</p>	
<b>FINLAND (FI)</b>		<p><b>Courts remain independent.</b> However, the National Court Administration (NCA) gives recommendations to courts on their management.</p> <p>NCA has provided guidelines recommending courts to continue handling cases, with precautionary measures, for instance <b>physical presence should be limited to urgent case</b>. The NCA advises courts to hold hearings by videoconference, or by other available and suitable technological means.</p> <p>Many court sessions scheduled in the coming weeks are cancelled.</p> <p>Contacts to the courts is encouraged to be made primarily by phone and email.</p>	<p>International legal assistance is still provided, but Courts prioritise cases according to the resources available.</p> <p>Most of the caseworkers in the Finnish Central Authority (Regulations 2201/2003, 4/2009, 1393/2007 and 1206/2001) are currently teleworking. There is limited presence in the office for urgent cases. Communication by email is recommended when possible:  <a href="mailto:central.authority@om.fi">central.authority@om.fi</a>  and  <a href="mailto:maintenance.ca@om.fi">maintenance.ca@om.fi</a> (maintenance matters only).</p>
<b>FRANCE (FR)</b>	<p><b>Time limits (procedural), including limitation periods,</b> expiring between 12/03 and the end of the state of emergency period +1 month are extended. At the end of the aforementioned period, all time limits resume normally but within a limit of 2 months. The extended period does not however restrain parties to seek remedy or to exercise their rights of action in any possible manner during the state of emergency period, to the extent possible.</p> <p>In principal, performance duties and time limits provided for in contracts are not affected, national law being applicable to specific circumstances (force majeure etc.) will apply. However, <b>contractual sanctions of non-performance from</b></p>	<p><b>Courts deal with urgent cases</b> (hearing regarding civil freedom and custody in civil matter, enforcement, child protection, family court urgent case, including protection orders, and emergency interim proceedings).</p> <p>Non-urgent hearings are cancelled or postponed, sometimes <i>sine die</i>. In this case courts inform parties by all means, including by electronic communications.</p> <p>In case a Court cannot work, another court can be designated to deal with urgent cases. <b>All hearings and sessions can be closed to public or canceled.</b> Parties</p>	<p>Regarding judicial cooperation, requests continue to be dealt with but competent authorities prioritize urgent cases. Central authorities have to be seized by e-mail.</p> <p><u>Family cooperation (Regulation 2201/2003)</u>: In the field of international child abduction and protection of children, the French central authority caseworker telework and continue to deal with ongoing cases and new requests received by e-mail. For urgent</p>

	<p><b>debtor</b> (penalty clause, termination clause etc.) are deemed ineffective within the state of emergency period, and will only enter into force after a period of one month following the end of the state of emergency period, if the obligation has not been performed by that time.</p> <p>Contract penalties, renewals and notice periods provided by law are also suspended.</p>	<p>can seize the court only in writing. <b>Any type of communication (including phone, emails or letters) can be used for the judge to inform/hear the parties</b> during the course of the proceedings. Cases can be dealt by a single judge.</p> <p><b>Parties are informed of the court decisions</b> by all means, in particular by email or by phone (decisions will not be considered as served to the recipient).</p> <p>Concerning protective measures for children and adults, those that expire during the state of emergency period are automatically extended, unless the judge decides otherwise.</p> <p>Enquiry and mediation measures are suspended and are extended by an additional two months after the end of the state of emergency period + one more month.</p>	<p>requests, caseworkers will be physically present in the office. All other central authorities have been informed about this new temporary organization. Concerning child abduction, some courts hold hearings for cases reported as urgent, while other courts prefer postponing. Enforcement of decisions is postponed to the end of the health crisis, except for specific cases.</p> <p><u>Taking of evidence (Regulation 1206/2001)</u>: French central authority deals with ongoing cases and new requests through electronic means and replies, where needed by email. However courts will only execute taking of evidence requests after the end of the emergency state.</p> <p><u>Service of documents (Regulation 1393/2007)</u>: Under the current circumstances, service of documents is significantly slowed down. Electronic service can be performed on the condition that the recipient has given prior consent. Where electronic service is not possible, the service of document might be postponed if not urgent.</p> <p>The French Central Authority under these three regulations (2201/2003, 1206/2001, 1393/2007) communicates by email: <a href="mailto:entraide-civile-internationale@justice.gouv.fr">entraide-civile-internationale@justice.gouv.fr</a></p> <p>The French Central Authority under regulation (CE) 4/2009 relating to maintenance obligations communicates by email :</p>
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<b>GERMANY (DE)</b>	<p>So far, <b>no measures on civil time limits</b>, only provisions regarding the longer interruption of criminal proceedings was adopted.</p> <p>(German civil procedure law contains provisions regarding the extension of time limits, stay of proceedings and the restitutio in integrum which help in litigation during the Covid 19 crisis</p> <p>For further information on legislative actions the webpage of the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection can be consulted <a href="https://www.bmju.de/DE/Themen/FokusThemen/Corona/Corona_node.html">https://www.bmju.de/DE/Themen/FokusThemen/Corona/Corona_node.html</a></p>	<p>Statutory provisions for civil proceedings already provide the courts with an extensive scope to react flexibly to the current exceptional situation. It is for the respective courts and judges to decide what measures are taken in each individual case. Judicial independence is preserved.</p>	<p><u>Family cooperation (Regulation 2201/2003)</u>: The Federal Office of Justice as German Central Authority under Regulation 2201/2003 (Brussels IIa) has reduced physical presence of staff for protective health reasons, but is otherwise fully operable on reduced capacity.</p> <p><u>Maintenance cooperation (Regulation 4/2009)</u> The activities of the Central Authority for the cross-border recovery of maintenance are limited; processing of cases is delayed and parties are asked to refrain from asking for status updates on ongoing cases. The Central Authority will follow up on all cases as soon as possible considering the limited activities.</p> <p><u>Taking of evidence (Regulation 1206/2001) and Service of documents (Regulation 1393/2007)</u>: It should be noted that especially the execution of request for the taking of evidence remains at the discretion of the judge. In general it can be said that the working capacities of the courts are severely limited do to absence of judicial personnel.</p>
<b>GREECE (EL)</b>		<p>By Ministerial Decision, <b>all procedures carried out before the Greek courts and their services are suspended until 27 April</b>, with the exception of urgent and significant actions and cases. The operation of the judicial services is limited only to the</p>	<p>Precautionary and containment measures have been adopted by the Greek Government in order to address the danger of the spread of the coronavirus, its socio-economic impact</p>

		necessary actions to carry out the necessary work and urgent cases. Meetings and any other action related to the operation of the judiciary is carried out remotely, if possible, using technological means.	and to ensure the good functioning of the market and the public sector. The Ministry of Justice, in its capacity as Central Authority under Civil Law Conventions/Treaties and in compliance with EU Regulations on Judicial Cooperation in Civil and Commercial Matters, has established a mixed system of remote working and physical attendance at the workplace in rotation. Until now, <b>the Central Authority is almost fully operational</b> , although occasional delays in processing some requests are inevitable due to the persisting health crisis.
<b>HUNGARY (HU)</b>	<b>As a general rule time limits continue to run</b> during the period of the state of danger. The only <b>exception on this is where the procedural act in question cannot be carried out in writing or by electronic means</b> (i.e. procedural acts which require personal contribution and cannot otherwise be carried out) which brings the proceedings to a halt. In this case the period until the obstacle has been removed or the period until the end of the state of danger shall not be counted in a time limit.	<b>Access to justice and the continuity of the pending proceedings is ensured, there is no recess for courts of justice in Hungary.</b>  <b>In the courts procedural acts requiring physical contact are not performed.</b> Special procedural rules facilitate written communication, remote hearing and hearings using electronic means of personal identification.	With regard to judicial cooperation in civil matters, <b>there are restrictions on enforcement procedures during the state of danger.</b> With regard to the enforcement measures, for example no on-site proceeding and no auction of real estate may be conducted. Enforcement measures may not be ordered in respect of acts of transfer of children in cases of illegal child abduction and on the basis of Brussels IIa.  The Central Authorities are operational.  Execution of requests for legal assistance may be delayed in comparison to normal circumstances.
<b>IRELAND (IE)</b>	<b>No specific legislation on time limits.</b> Issue of proceedings where the statutory time limit to issue will expire before the end of the “restriction” period are considered essential business (see second column).	<b>Court offices will remain open, and are accepting urgent papers.</b> Drop boxes are being provided for documents to be left in, reducing the need to interact with staff at the public counter. Court offices can continue to be contacted by email or by post.	Staff of the Ministry of Justice and Equality and the Central Authorities are mostly working from home. Communication by email only is preferred.

		<p><b>Civil matters can be adjourned by consent via e-mail.</b> Only urgent cases will go ahead in the coming weeks.</p> <p>Applications relating to <b>urgent Family Law</b> matters are allowed, including protection orders, interim barring orders, emergency barring orders, extension of orders.</p> <p>Applications can also be filed for essential business such as urgent wardship matters or urgent judicial review applications.</p> <p>Videolink appearances are being facilitated from prisons for all people currently in custody following order of President of the High Court.</p> <p>Piloting underway to facilitate courts hearings remotely and by video with the consent of the parties.</p>	
<b>ITALY (IT)</b>	<p><b>Time limits for exercising judicial acts within civil proceedings</b> were initially suspended for the period 9/03 to 22/03 (then postponed to 15/04). Decree Law No 23 of 8 April 2020 extended the postponement of hearings and the suspension of procedural deadlines until 11 May 2020.</p> <p>Where a time limit would normally begin during the period of suspension, the starting point is delayed until the end of the latter period.</p> <p>Exceptions: adoption of children, unaccompanied minors, foster care, compulsory health treatment, VTP, provisional enforceability &amp; all matters entailing a risk of serious prejudice to the parties.</p>	<p>Most <b>civil hearings</b> scheduled between the day following the entry into force of the decree (9 March 2020) and 22/03 (then 15/04, and finally 11 May) will not take place due to a mandatory postponement.</p> <p>All hearings scheduled during the crisis period will be postponed (except urgent case).</p> <p><b>Local courts can adopt their own organizational measures</b> (restricted access to buildings, office closed).</p> <p>In particular, for non-suspended activities (those that have been declared urgent on a case by case basis or those considered by the law as top priority), civil hearings that require the presence of lawyers or parties only, subject to the respect of the adversarial process and the effective participation of the parties,</p>	<p>A significant part of case Ministry of Justice staff members are working from home.</p> <p>The judicial cooperation in civil matters will be affected for an unpredictable period of time. Electronic communication of requests of judicial cooperation (including request for information on foreign law under the London 1968 Convention). The documents sent in hard copy may be processed with a significant delay.</p> <p>All communications to be sent to <a href="mailto:ufficio2.dgcivile.dag@giustizia.it">ufficio2.dgcivile.dag@giustizia.it</a></p>

		<p>may be held through remote connections. For this purpose, a decision by the Heads of the judicial offices is necessary, after hearing the advice of the Bar Association.</p> <p>For the period between 11 May and 30 June 2020, the Heads of the judicial offices are than expected to take a series of organisational measures in order to avoid close gatherings and contacts between people within each office space.</p> <p>These measures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the carrying out of civil hearings by means of remote connections that require the presence only of lawyers or the parties, subject to the respect of the adversarial process and the effective participation of the parties;</li> <li>- the postponement of hearings after 30 June 2020;</li> <li>- the holding of civil hearings that require the participation only of the defendants through written procedure.</li> </ul>	
<b>LATVIA (LV)</b>	<p><b>Written civil procedure if it does not violate rights of parties and court finds it possible.</b> Instead of postponing court hearings Latvia has switched to written court procedure unless it is absolutely necessary to hold a proper court hearing or there is high urgency to examine the case or there is high risk of grave infringement of rights.</p> <p><b>Limitation periods</b> (e.g. prescription) are suspended between 12/03 and 01/07.</p> <p><b>Enforcement proceedings:</b> the maximum term of voluntary fulfillment of obligations under the judgment concerning the returning of goods, recovery of debt, evictions from premises is prolonged from 10 days to 60 days except the cases when judgment should be enforced immediately.</p> <p><b>Commercial pledge.</b> Time limits for taking the decision on delivering the commercial pledge is prolonged form 30 days to 60 days.</p>	<p>The Republic of Latvia has issued <i>Guidelines for the organization of the work of the district (city) and regional courts during the emergency</i>. Those guidelines recommend that in urgent cases, hearings in the event of an emergency shall, where possible, be organized by means of a video conference</p> <p>If the hearing is organized in person, the necessary distance shall be provided between the persons at the hearing and other precautions shall be taken (rooms to be ventilated, etc.).</p>	<p>In the event of emergency all the requests and attached documents are accepted sent electronically (via email) maintaining a moment of credibility. MLA requests are scanned and transformed to PDF form and forwarded to foreign countries from the official e-mail of the Ministry of Justice. The same is accepted from other countries.</p>

<p><b>LITHUANIA (LT)</b></p>	<p>Lithuania has not adopted official legal acts suspending or extending procedural deadlines in civil cases. The renewal or extension of procedural time limits is decided on a case-by-case basis by the court hearing the case.</p> <p>The Judicial Council circulated recommendations to courts, urging Lithuanian courts to <i>“flexibly assess requests from individuals to renew a missed deadline for submitting a procedural document or to perform a procedural action”</i> during and after the quarantine period if said actions were impeded by the emergency state declared in the Republic of Lithuania and subsequently altered organization of work in state institutions. The person requesting to renew missed deadlines shall provide the court with the data substantiating such circumstances together with the request</p>	<p>Judicial Council has issued recommendations to the Chairpersons of the Courts regarding the organization of work in their respective courts during quarantine period, leaving the specification of the recommendations to the discretion of each Chairperson.</p> <p><b>Civil proceedings, where possible by written procedure</b>, take place in the normal way. In civil cases where an oral hearing is mandatory and the parties have expressed a position that they wish to take part in the hearing, the scheduled oral hearings shall be adjourned without a date, informing the participants in the proceedings, agreeing on possible preliminary hearing dates with the parties.</p> <p><b>Oral proceedings in courts are limited</b> to civil cases that must be dealt with immediately, such as civil cases concerning the court's permission to extend involuntary hospitalization and/or involuntary treatment, the removal of a child from an unsafe environment, cases provided for by the CPC and giving priority to the organization of oral meetings remotely if the court has the means to do so;</p> <p>In urgent cases, safety recommendations are followed during oral proceedings (social distancing, courtroom disinfection)</p> <p><b>Judicial procedural decisions are sent by electronic means of communication</b>, giving priority to the judicial information system. In exceptional cases, documents are sent by e-mail and regular mail to persons who do not have access to the judicial information system. Procedural documents and other correspondence are sent to non-participants in the proceedings (e.g. bailiffs, notaries) via the state E-delivery system or by e-mail, and only in exceptional cases by post. Communication/cooperation takes</p>	<p>Most public authorities’ employees work remotely. International legal assistance is still provided, but some processes can take longer.</p>
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		<p>place by electronic means of communication, by telephone.</p> <p>Upon the <b>suspension of the direct service</b> of persons in the courts, procedural documents are received electronically or sent by post.</p> <p><b>Bailiffs:</b> After transitioning to working remotely as of 16-03, judicial officers are continuing to provide most of their regular services to creditors and debtors during the quarantine period. While direct contact is limited, judicial officers and their employees will communicate with participants of proceedings by phone, e-mail, via the website <a href="http://www.antstoliai.it">www.antstoliai.it</a> or by regular mail. The current quarantine is also not an obstacle for the submission of new enforcement orders: written enforcement orders may be submitted to judicial officers by mail, and electronic enforcement orders – by e-mail or via the Internet by logging into the Judicial Officers' Information System at <a href="http://www.antstoliai.it/">http://www.antstoliai.it/</a>. During the quarantine period, judicial officers shall also refrain from announcing new auctions.</p> <p>Regarding the organization of the <b>notaries' work</b>, draft amendments to the Law on the Notarial Profession and the Civil Code are being prepared. They provide that the majority of notarial services will be moved online and provided remotely. The draft amendments propose granting notaries the right to perform remote notarial acts and execute them as electronic notarial documents. The information will be transmitted to operating state registers and information systems. Visits to notary offices would be reserved solely for the direct identification of a person or expressed will. It is also planned to refuse the participation of a notary in approving some simpler mandates and enable electronic registration of mandates for which a notarial form is not required. The remote notarial services will exclude certification</p>	
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		<p>of wills and their acceptance into custody, as well as authentication of the fact that a person is alive. Also Notaries should not provide remote services if they believe that they would be able to ensure better protection of a client's legitimate interests only when meeting with him or her in person or in case they need to document a person's will, explain the consequences of notarial acts or ascertain a person's identity.</p> <p>Regarding the provision of <b>state-guaranteed legal aid services</b>, recommendations have been published on the State-guaranteed legal aid service webpage. It is strongly advised to avoid personal contact and organize the provision of legal aid using remote working tools, i.e. send all request by e-mail, provide consultations by phone, online or use other means of telecommunication. In urgent cases when the participation of an advocate is necessary in certain pre-trial investigation actions or court proceedings, act with due care, follow national guidelines for preventing the spread of Covid-19 (safe distance, hygiene, etc.), refuse to attend proceedings if adequate protective measures have not been taken (e.g. the room is not ventilated, there is no disinfectant, suspicions regarding the health of others in the room arise).</p> <p>The Lithuanian Bar has also published similar recommendations to all <b>practising advocates</b> in Lithuania.</p>	
<p><b>LUXEMBOURG (LU)</b></p>	<p>The <b>state of crisis, based on a <a href="#">grand-ducal regulation of March 18,2020</a></b> introducing a series of measures in the context of the fight against Covid-19, has been <b>extended for three months by a <a href="#">law on March 24,2020</a></b>.</p>	<p>The Judicial Administration has put in place the necessary measures at this stage of the pandemic to, on the one hand, to guarantee a reduced functional service and on the other hand to safeguard as much as possible the health of all employees.</p>	<p>All instruments in the field of judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters are executed and emitted by the central authority, the Prosecutor General. The working rhythm has been somewhat</p>

	<p>The parliament cannot be dissolved during the state of crisis, preserves all its legislative powers and can at any moment, during the period of three months, adopt a law to end the state of crisis. The decrees adopted during this period legally cease to exist the day the state of crisis ends.</p> <p>The government adopted at <b>the council of government on March 25, 2020 a <a href="#">grand-ducal regulation</a> drawn up by the <a href="#">Ministry of Justice</a> suspending time limits in jurisdictional matters and adapting certain other procedural modalities.</b></p> <p>A general provision suspends all the time limits prescribed in the proceedings before the judicial, administrative, military and constitutional courts. The text provides for some exceptions concerning the deprivation of liberty for which swift decisions must be taken.</p> <p><b>Time limits in civil and commercial matters</b></p> <p>Luxembourg suspended deadlines in legal proceedings and extended certain deadlines in specific procedures.</p> <p>Luxembourg also set some exceptions particularly for urgent matters that cannot suffer suspensions of deadlines.</p> <p>The time limits for appeal or opposition are suspended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In <b>tenancy matters</b>, the enforcement of eviction sentences has been suspended. The provision provides for the suspension of evictions in the area of residential leases. The deadlines for the execution of evictions in terms of commercial lease were also suspended, as were those for foreclosures and forced sale.</li> <li>• In <b>matters of civil status</b>, the period of 5 days within which birth declarations must be made is suspended. For marriage certificates, the possibility of dispensing with the publication of banns eliminates any time constraint.</li> </ul>	<p>These <b>provisions are taken in strict compliance with the Constitution and Luxembourg's international commitments especially those relating to fundamental rights</b>. They are applied according to the <b>criteria of necessity and proportionality</b>.</p> <p>As part of the fight against coronavirus, many member states have imposed restrictions on movement. Luxembourg has done so too, whilst providing for a number of exceptions to these restrictions (for instance for workers in the healthcare sector and other essential sectors in the current crisis).</p> <p>One of these exceptions provides that <b>separated parents</b> are still allowed to leave their home for the exercise of their parental responsibility especially for the exercise of the right of access vis-à-vis their child.</p> <p>The <a href="#">courts</a> in Luxembourg are functioning at a reduced pace but maintaining a sufficient level of activity to process the essential and urgent matters. During the period of the state of crisis, requests and requests addressed to the chambers of the council of the district courts and of the Court of Appeal are judged based on a written procedure.</p> <p>The <a href="#">notaries</a> continue their activity. Measures were taken to grant derogations in certain legal procedures in order to reduce the need of physical contact.</p> <p>The <a href="#">lawyers</a> are also continuing their activity and are encouraged -during the crisis -to use electronic means of communication with the courts.</p> <p>As to avoid physical contact, the <a href="#">bailiffs</a> serve documents not on the addressee in person but at the address of the addressees only in their post boxes.</p>	<p>reduced to allow a maximum of people to work from home.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A specific provision provides for the suspension of deadlines in <b>matters of succession</b>, outside any judicial procedure. It is important to preserve the rights of citizens, insofar as the liquidation of successions is a very formalistic procedure with many delays.</li> <li>• It is planned to extend for three months the <b>deadlines for filing and publication of annual accounts, consolidated accounts and related reports of companies</b>. This only applies to financial years closed on the date of end of the state of crisis and for which the deadlines for filing and publication had not expired by March 18, 2020.</li> </ul>		
<b>MALTA (MT)</b>	<p>As from 16-03 all legal and judicial times, including prescription in civil matters and any peremptory time limits have been suspended until seven days after the Order for closure of the Courts is lifted.</p> <p>Apart from this, all ex lege time limits imposed upon Notaries Public have also been suspended during the time when the Courts are closed. The time limits for concluding a sale stipulated in a registered promise of sale agreement were also suspended. The suspension of time limits concerning Notaries shall last until twenty days after the Order for the closure of the courts is lifted.</p>	<p>With effect from the 16-03 the Courts of Justice and registries were closed - including the superior, inferior and appellate courts; any tribunal established by law operating from the building of the Courts of Justice; and any boards, commissions, committees or other entities, also operating from the same building of the Courts, and before which any proceedings are heard.</p> <p>Despite this closure, the Courts have nevertheless been given the power to order the hearing of urgent cases or of cases where the Court deems that the public interest should prevail in having the case heard. This was of course, however subjected to any specific arrangements for the guarding against the spread of the virus as the court may determine.</p>	<p>Cross-border judicial cooperation continued on a business as usual basis - of course as far as this is possible under the present circumstances particularly in the context of reduced activity in the Courts and reduced international travel.</p>
<b>NETHERLANDS (NL)</b>		<p>Following the measures announced by the Dutch government on March 15, 2020, up to and including April 6, to combat the spread of COVID-19, the judiciary has accordingly taken the following measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The courthouses have been closed since March 17, 2020. This means that physical sessions will</li> </ol>	<p>The central authorities in the Netherlands are mostly working in home office. Communication by email is recommended.</p>

		<p>not take place from that date until April 6, unless there is an urgent need for a hearing.</p> <p>2. Urgent matters will continue, but as much as possible with the use of audio-visual means. Urgent matters include far-reaching decisions such as placing children out of the house, supervision orders and the detention of aliens for the purpose of deportation.</p> <p>3. Justice is a vital process in the democratic constitutional state and must therefore continue in this crisis. The Judiciary does this by handling as many cases as possible in writing or with the aid of audio-visual means.</p> <p>4. On March 31, 2020, the Dutch Government decided to continue the measures previously taken until April 28, 2020. In line with this, the Judiciary has decided to continue the measures previously taken, but also to increase the number and type of cases that are handled using audio-visual resources. In this way, it is possible to prevent the work stocks becoming too big.</p> <p>5. Extending the handling of cases is possible, because many extra possibilities have been realized in recent weeks to make the use of audio-visual means and the digital submission of procedural documents.</p> <p>6. The Judiciary has provided for a temporary adjustment of the procedural regulations for all jurisdictions and has created a page on its website with all current overview and instruction on how to work during the COVID-19 crises. <a href="http://www.rechtspraak.nl">www.rechtspraak.nl</a></p> <p>7. The Dutch government is working on an emergency law that will, among other things, temporarily enhance the possibility of making use of audio-visual means in the Judiciary and facilitate the progress of cases.</p>	
<b>POLAND (PL)</b>	<p>The Polish special legislation provides, among other things, for the suspension of a not yet started and postponement of commenced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>limitation periods of enforcement of judgements,</b></li> </ul>	<p>Specific measures have been adopted to mitigate the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic including.</p>	<p>Ministry of Justice employees working in the central authority are teleworking.</p> <p>All communication to the Polish Ministry of Justice as the Central Authority</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>time limits</b> in proceedings and for court's actions in legal proceedings, including in enforcement proceedings.</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>transfer of cases</b> among Polish courts (by judicial authority and for a defined period in urgent cases as defined by the special legislation concerning mitigating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Polish justice system) has been made possible.</p> <p>The category of urgent cases is defined as following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proceedings concerning minors including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- proceedings for the removal of a minor from parental authority or custody;</li> <li>- proceedings concerning placement of a foreigner minor in a care and educational institution;</li> <li>- proceedings for the establishment of a guardian to represent the interests of a minor in judicial proceedings;</li> <li>- proceedings regarding placement or extension of a juvenile's stay in a juvenile shelter;</li> <li>- enforcement proceedings involving minors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Proceedings concerning mentally ill and incapacitated persons</li> </ol> <p>The president of each competent Polish court may order that any case be considered urgent if the failure to adjudicate on such a case: - could cause danger to human or animal life or health;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- could cause serious harm to the public interest;</li> <li>- could cause imminent and irreparable material damage;</li> <li>- and when urgent adjudication on such case is required by the interests of justice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Detachment of judges</b> to other courts is simplified. Decisions in that regard are taken by judicial authorities, in accordance with the principle of independence of judges and for a period of time defined in advance. Such procedures will enable to provide support courts experiencing a heavier caseload.</p>	<p>(including service of documents and taking of evidence), or Polish EJM contact point must be sent through electronic means with necessary attachments in the form of scanned copies.</p>
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<b>PORTUGAL (PT)</b>	<p>The state of emergency was declared. The national legislation concerning the Judiciary is: Decree 14-A/2020, Decree 17-A/2020 and Law 1-A/2020 amended by Law 4-A/2020.</p> <p><b>In judicial processes deadlines are suspended within a period to be ended by Decree Law.</b></p> <p><b>Urgent judicial processes shall run without suspension of deadlines or acts.</b></p> <p><b>Limitation periods and prescription periods are suspended.</b></p> <p>Eviction of tenants and enforcement of mortgages that fall on private housing are suspended.</p> <p>The deadlines set forth for debtors to file applications to open insolvency proceedings are suspended.</p> <p>Acts in enforcement procedures, including enforcement measures, are suspended unless this causes irreparable damage or endangers the creditor's livelihood.</p> <p><b>Final remark:</b> Although this information was carefully collected, it does not exempt from consulting the applicable legal texts and their further amendments. In light of Article 5(2)(c) of Decision 2001/470/EC, this information is not binding for the Portuguese High Judicial Council, for national Courts or for the Contact Point.</p>	<p>Any procedural acts are permitted through <b>tele/video conference</b>.</p> <p>The use of email instead of telephone is recommended to seek information from Courts.</p> <p>Telework is mandatory whenever the nature of the work allows it.</p> <p>Judges keep doing their normal work from home where they have access to the case management system. They remain available to go to Court whenever it is necessary.</p> <p><b>Urgent acts and procedures in which fundamental rights are at stake are carried out in person</b> (urgent protection of children, procedural acts and trial of imprisoned defendants).</p> <p><b>Trials and procedural acts that are not urgent have been adjourned except when Judges deem it necessary to hold hearings, namely to avoid irreparable harm or in cases where all the parties agree on using tele/video conference.</b></p> <p><b>Judgements can be pronounced if all the parties agree that further enquiries by the Court are unnecessary.</b></p> <p><b>Acts and procedures carried out in person shall take place in adequate rooms that were made available in each district Court, with protection and disinfection material. The number of attendants shall be adjusted by the Judge to the limits recommended by the health authorities.</b></p>	<p>EJN Civil contact point are currently working from home, processing all the requests for cooperation and information as swiftly as possible. However the suspension of time limits and periods set forth Portuguese special law applies.</p> <p>EJN Civil contact points will go to their workplace whenever it is needed and in urgent cases.</p> <p>Preference should be given to communication by email to <a href="mailto:correio@redecivil.mj.pt">correio@redecivil.mj.pt</a> in cases regarding judicial cooperation.</p>

		<p>Going to Court is not advised unless for those who are summoned to appear (presentation of a medical certificate of quarantine = force majeure).</p> <p>In case of Court closure, which has happened in a few exceptional cases, periods and time limits are suspended.</p> <p>The Portuguese High Judicial Council stresses that Courts must remain the ultimate guarantor of fundamental rights.</p> <p>Practical information on the functioning of national courts during the emergency period is available in the website of the High Judicial Council  <a href="https://www.csm.org.pt/">https://www.csm.org.pt/</a></p>	
<b>ROMANIA (RO)</b>	<p>According to the State of Emergency Decree No. 195/2020 and Decree for Prolongation of the State of Emergency No. 250/2020, <b>limitation and prescription time limits do not commence or they are suspended if they are running</b>, during the state of emergency.</p> <p><b>Interruption of time limits for lodging appeals.</b></p>	<p>State of emergency declared on 16/03, with specific measures regarding the organization of the justice system:</p> <p><b>Judicial activity in civil matters is suspended</b>, except for urgent cases, which are determined by decision No. 417/24.3.2020 of the Council of Magistracy; Decisions continue to be drafted, as well as the registrations of documents from the parties.</p> <p><b>Use of videoconference is encouraged – including through letter rogatory</b>, as well as hearings closed to the public, where the situation permits.</p> <p><b>All the documents of the parties are sent to the courts by electronic means</b>, exception being allowed where these persons have no such means.</p> <p>Transfers of files from a court to another is made by electronic means; also the notification of judicial documents to the parties.</p>	<p>Part of the personnel of the Ministry of Justice is entitled to work from home. Judicial cooperation in civil matters will be affected for an unpredictable period of time. In order to minimise the delays, <b>electronic communication of requests of judicial cooperation</b> to the Central Authority is strongly encouraged. Documents sent in hard copy will be processed with significant delays.</p> <p>The Ministry of Justice acts on the basis of Article 3 c) of the <b>Service of Documents and Taking of Evidence Regulations</b> as transmitting/receiving authority in exceptional cases. All requests (service of documents, taking of evidence, maintenance cases, child abduction cases etc.) are currently dealt by the Ministry of Justice as usually, with no prioritisation.</p>



		Where the panel of judges cannot be completed, delegation of judges from another division of the court is allowed.	The following e-mail addresses can be used: <a href="mailto:dreptinternational@just.ro">dreptinternational@just.ro</a> , <a href="mailto:ddit@just.ro">ddit@just.ro</a> .
<b>SLOVAKIA (SK)</b>	<p><b>Legal deadlines, enforcement proceedings, statutory interest rates:</b></p> <p>On 27 March the <b>Act No 62/2020 Coll.</b> on certain extraordinary measures in connection with COVID-19 outbreak and on measures in the justice area (hereinafter the <b>“COVID Act”</b>) (<a href="https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2020/62/">https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2020/62/</a>) entered into force which introduced restrictive and other measures that required statutory legal basis.</p> <p>§ 1 of the COVID Act temporarily (until 30 April 2020) suspended the running of the limitation and prescription periods in private law or introduced a waiver of such deadlines in specified cases</p> <p>Pursuant to §2 of the COVID Act the same applies to procedural deadlines on the part of the parties to the proceedings. If the extension of the deadline is not possible due to threat to life, health, security, freedom and possible significant damage, the court has a discretion not to apply this provision and continue within the set deadline.</p> <p>No changes to statutory interest rates were introduced (yet).</p> <p>Restrictive provisions in the COVID Act are limited in time (30 April 2020). Possible extension will be subject to future consideration (consent of the Government and the Parliament will be required to amend the law).</p>	<p>Article 3 of the COVID Act limited the necessity to conduct hearings in courts and the public participation if such hearings do take place during the emergency situation. In case the court hearing is conducted with the exclusion of public, there is a legal obligation to make an audio recording of the hearing which should be made accessible as soon as possible after the hearing.</p> <p>the law was complemented by guidelines for courts issued by the Ministry of Justice that instructed the courts to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- restrict the movement of the public within the court</li> <li>- introduce compliance with hygienic preventive measures</li> <li>- provide information via telephone/email</li> <li>- limit participation of public in court hearings</li> <li>- limit the conduct of hearings only to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o custodial matters, conditional release</li> <li>o proceedings related to minors and</li> <li>o matters where failure to act would cause irreparable damage</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Courts reduced working time and allowed work from home</p>	<p>In the area of cross-border judicial cooperation in civil matters COVID Act did not introduce any specific restrictions, however general restrictions applies.</p> <p>The central authorities are mostly working from home.</p> <p>At the end of April we encountered first problems with postal delivery - the court letters addressed even to EU member states were returned undelivered. In the absence of a secure electronic delivery the use of e-mails can be legally acceptable only in certain cases. Moreover, when using e-mails, there is a risk of breach of security and a risk of a leak of sensitive personal data. There is also a problem with the proof of delivery / service of documents. Slovakia would welcome a uniform EU approach that would meet the criteria required for cross-border judicial cooperation.</p> <p>General requests/ questions to central authority may be sent via email:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the central authority for the <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1393/2007</a> and the <a href="#">Council Regulation (EC) No 1206/2001</a> (Ministry of Justice): <a href="mailto:civil.inter.coop@justice.sk">civil.inter.coop@justice.sk</a></li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the central Authority for <b>the <a href="#">Council Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003</a></b> and the <b>Council Regulation (EC) No 4/2009</b> (The Centre for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth): <a href="mailto:info@cipc.gov.sk">info@cipc.gov.sk</a></li> </ul>
<b>SLOVENIA (SI)</b>	<p>The Decree of March 13 of the President of the Supreme Court on the basis of a proposal by the Minister of Justice, determined that except in the urgent matters, <b>procedural deadlines</b> are suspended.</p> <p>A Law on temporary measures in judicial, administrative and other public matters in order to damage control of the spreading of the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) was adopted on 20 March 2020 and came into force on 29 March 2020. All the measures determined in this law and any other measures taken on the basis of this law are valid until it is established by the decision of the Government, that the reasons for these measures have ceased, but at the longest <b>until 1 July 2020</b>.</p> <p><b>The Law introduced provisions for all time limits (material and procedural).</b> Time limits to bring up a claim in judicial proceedings), which are determined by law, are suspended as from 29 March 2020. Deadlines in judicial proceedings (procedural deadlines) are also suspended as from 29 March 2020, except in judicial matters that are established as urgent.</p> <p>In addition, the deadline to lodge the constitutional complaint is suspended.</p> <p>Time limits will continue to run after the measures determined by the Law will expire.</p>	<p>The 13 March Decree invoked special measures stipulated in the Courts' Act that can be used in cases of natural disasters and large epidemics.</p> <p><b>Main hearings will only be held and decisions will only be taken in urgent matters</b> (what is urgent matter is established in the Courts act. The law authorised the President of the Supreme Court with the power to further limit the list of urgent procedures.</p> <p>Second Decree of the President of the Supreme Court was issued on 31 March 2020 further limiting the list of urgent matters.</p> <p><b>Urgent civil matters are currently the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- security matters (i.e. securing evidence, withholding the payment, execution of forbidding of certain actions) except the actions where personal contact of the enforcement officers, parties and other persons is needed under the condition that these actions are not urgent in order to prevent danger for life and health of citizens or their property of higher value,</li> <li>- civil enforcement regarding child custody and alimony,</li> <li>- non-contentious matters regarding detention in psychiatric establishments,</li> <li>- Claims regarding publishing of correct information.</li> </ul> <p>All main hearings, sittings of the court and hearings of witnesses/parties in urgent matters are to be held via videoconference, if the technical and spatial conditions are fulfilled.</p> <p>All scheduled hearings in non-urgent matters are cancelled.</p>	<p>The Central authority for <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1393/2007</a> and the <a href="#">Council Regulation (EC) No 1206/2001</a> (Ministry of Justice) established a system of teleworking. Therefore, communication should be transmitted as much as possible via e-mail instead of paper mail, to the following e-mail address: <a href="mailto:mgp.mp@gov.si">mailto:mgp.mp@gov.si</a>. Due to these special circumstances, transmitting of requests in paper mail to competent courts may be delayed.</p> <p><b>The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Central Authority under the <a href="#">Council Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003</a></b> has established a system of remote working, reducing physical presence at workplaces to a minimum. In view of the current situation, and as long as this situation persists, the Central Authority cannot guarantee the normal processing of all incoming requests. Processing of incoming applications can only be guaranteed when received by e-mail to <a href="mailto:gp.mddsz@gov.si">gp.mddsz@gov.si</a>. They strongly encourage keeping all communications by electronic means. Outgoing requests will be sent exclusively by electronic means.</p>

		<p><b>Communication with parties.</b> Except in urgent matters, during the time when special measures are in place, parties and their representatives and other persons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are not allowed to enter court buildings,</li> <li>2. All applications, in the proceedings where this is possible, are to be filed by a postal way or via portal e-Justice,</li> <li>3. For the communication with courts, published email addresses or phone numbers are to be used during official hours.</li> </ol> <p>During the time when special measures are in force, parties and their representatives and other persons who in urgent matters request information regarding their proceedings, have to give notice using the published e-mail addresses and phone numbers during the official hours.</p> <p>In all cases, that are not included in the examples from the first and the second paragraph of this point, courts determine one access to the court building, where all preventive measures against the COVID-19 infection are taken.</p> <p><b>Judicial documents are not served as from 16 March 2020.</b></p> <p><b>Enforcement of the decisions</b> is suspended, from the day of the entering into force of the COVID-19 law, except in cases of enforcement of maintenance claims, and in cases for damages for lost maintenance because of the death of the providing person. The suspension comes into effect by operation of law, therefore courts and tax authorities will not issue any decisions during this time.</p>	<p><b>Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia, the Central Authority</b> under the <b>Council Regulation (EC) No 4/2009</b> is currently operating remotely from home. Therefore, the Central Authority would appreciate if the communications were sent via e-mail to the following e-mail address: <a href="mailto:jpsklad@jps-rs.si">jpsklad@jps-rs.si</a>. The Central Authority will also communicate and send requests via email.</p>
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<p><b>SPAIN (ES)</b></p>	<p><b>All terms are suspended, and time limits provided for in the procedural laws for all jurisdictional orders are suspended and discontinued.</b> The calculation of the time limits will be resumed at the moment that the extensions of Royal Decree 463/2020 become invalid.</p> <p>Suspension of procedural deadline don't apply to a number of specific proceedings, including the protection of children.</p> <p>The judge or court may agree to conduct any judicial proceedings that are necessary to avoid irreparable damage to the rights and legitimate interests of the parties to the proceedings.</p>	<p>The work within judicial premises has been significantly reduced. I.T. solutions and communication tools have been provided or reinforced, in order to facilitate teleworking of judges, prosecutors, and other legal actors.</p> <p>Public Notaries and Public Registries are considered as an essential public service and they are guaranteed.</p>	<p>Spanish central authority cannot guarantee normal processing of incoming requests (especially paper requests). Requests must be sent by electronic means.</p> <p>- Taking of evidence (art 3 of Regulation 1206/2001 : Serious and urgent requests will be processed, requests must be sent to <a href="mailto:rogatoriascivil@mjusticia.es">rogatoriascivil@mjusticia.es</a> . All the rest must follow the usual procedure by sending them directly to the competent Spanish Court in paper.</p> <p>- Child abduction and maintenance recovery : Processing of requests can only be guaranteed when received by email. Enforcement shall be subject to urgency, taking into account the limitation of movement imposed on citizens. (<a href="mailto:sustraccionmenores@mjusticia.es">sustraccionmenores@mjusticia.es</a>) (<a href="mailto:SGCJIAlimentos@mjusticia.es">SGCJIAlimentos@mjusticia.es</a>)</p>
<p><b>SWEDEN (SE)</b></p>	<p>No measures directed at legal proceedings have been introduced so far.</p>	<p>The Swedish courts, that are independent from the Government, have taken diverse measures to face the current situation. In general, more hearings than usual have been cancelled, primarily due to illness of parties, lawyers and witnesses. The courts have increased the use of video- and telephone conference. The existing rules are used to carry on business as safe and effective as possible.</p>	

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