



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)

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MEMBER STATES	Time limits in civil proceedings	Judicial organization and Judiciary	EU Judicial Cooperation
AUSTRIA (AT)	<p>Law on 22/03/2020 Procedural time limits 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>Limitation periods (e.g. prescription) are suspended between 22/03 and 30/04.</p>	<p>Restriction of contacts between courts and parties.</p> <p>General shutdown of specific courts 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>Enforcement proceedings: 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>		
<p>BELGIUM (BE)</p>	<p>Limitation periods and deadlines for introducing judicial remedies that expire between the 8th of April 2020 and the 17th of May 2020 are extended by one month after the expiration of this period (i.e. postponed to the 17th of June 2020). If need be, the government may extend the final date of this period.</p> <p>Deadlines in judicial proceedings in civil matters that expire between the 8th of April 2020 and the 17th 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 17th 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>Extension by 6 months of the deadlines in the context of judicial sales of immovable properties that expire between the 18th of March 2020 and the 3rd of June 2020.</p> <p>Suspension of some enforcement proceedings against companies between the 24th of April 2020 and the 17th of May 2020.</p>	<p>In civil matters, judicial hearings that were supposed to occur between the 10th of April 2020 and the 17th 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>Oaths may be received remotely between the 4th of May and the 3rd of June 2020.</p> <p>Legal deadlines for meetings foreseen in the notarial law and that expire between the 18th of March 2020 and the 4th of August 2020 are postponed by three months.</p> <p>Notarized powers may be received remotely and electronically (on electronic support and with an electronic identification and signature).</p> <p>Removal of the requirement for witnesses and the presence of several notaries in an authentic</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</p>

		<p>will between the 4th of May 2020 and the 3rd of June 2020.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>handled on a daily basis as before the COVID-19 outbreak.</p>
<p>BULGARIA (BG)</p>	<p><u>Specific legislation:</u></p> <p><i>- Law on the measures and actions during the state of emergency declared by a decision of the National Assembly of 13 March 2020 and on overcoming the consequences. – referred below as “State of Emergency Law”</i></p> <p>Two periods according to the measures and actions are distinguished as follows: the period of the state of emergency (13.03-13.05.2020) and the period of two months after the lifting of the state of emergency (as from 14.05.2020):</p> <p><u>A/ Measures and actions for the period of the state of emergency: 13 March – 13 May 2020</u> (Initially, the period of the state of emergency was fixed from March 13th till April 13th, 2020. This period has been prolonged till May 13th, 2020).</p> <p><u>Procedural deadlines:</u></p> <p>- <u>Suspension of deadlines:</u> All procedural deadlines 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"> 1. Cases for exercising parental rights only in respect of provisional measures; 2. Cases under the Domestic Violence Protection Act only concerning an order for immediate protection or 	<p><u>Court hearings</u></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><u>Registry proceedings</u></p> <p>The services provided by the Commercial Register and Register of non-profit legal entities and other registers are accessible online.</p>	<p>International legal assistance is still provided by the Ministry of Justice and by the courts but might be delayed.</p>

	<p>amendment thereof, as well as in cases where the request for protection is rejected;</p> <p>3. Permits for withdrawal of funds from children's deposits;</p> <p>4. Interim proceedings;</p> <p>5. Evidence preservation cases;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>7. The cases under Art. 62, para. 3 of the Credit Institutions Act. concerning signing a declaration pledging to safeguard bank secrecy;</p> <p>The prescription periods upon the lapse whereof rights are extinguished or acquired for private entities are suspended.</p> <p>B/ Measures and actions for the period of two months after the lifting of the State of emergency (as from 14.05.2020):</p> <p>- <u>Suspension of deadlines:</u></p> <p>Within two months after the lifting of the state of emergency, all announced public sales and coercive seizures of possession, announced against individuals by public and private enforcement agents, shall be suspended and rescheduled, without fees nor expenses. At the request of the individual, made before the expiration of the term under sentence one, the public sales, respectively the coercive seizures of possession shall be rescheduled, without fees and expenses being due.</p>	<p><u>Notarial procedures</u></p> <p>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>	
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	<p>- <u>Extension of deadlines:</u></p> <p>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 and entities, are extended by 1 month as of the end of the state of emergency.</p> <p>- <u>Specific cases:</u></p> <p>During the state of emergency and for up to two months thereafter, bank accounts of individuals and medical establishments, salaries and pensions, medical apparatus and equipment shall be exempted from preservation/ protective measures. No inventory of movable property and real estate owned by individuals shall be made, except for liabilities for maintenance, for damage caused by tort/delict and for claims for maintenance, for damage caused by tort/delict and for claims for salaries. No seizures of bank accounts of municipalities are imposed for two months after the lifting of the state of emergency.</p> <p>Up to two months after the lifting of the state of emergency, no interest and penalties are charged in case of delay in payment of obligations of private entities, debtors under credit agreements and other forms of financing provided by financial institutions under Art. 3 of the Credit Institutions Act, with the exception of the subsidiaries of the banks, including when the receivables are acquired by banks, financial institutions or third parties. The obligation cannot be declared earlier due/payable on demand and the contract cannot be terminated for default.</p>		
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<p>CROATIA (HR)</p>	<p>On 18 April 2020, amendments to the Act on Enforcement over Monetary Assets entered into force : enforcement on accounts of natural persons was suspended for 3 months (with a possible extension of additional 3 months). The calculation of statutory interests were also suspended in this period.</p> <p>From 19 October 2020 enforcement has continued to be conducted regularly. However, Ministry of justice and administration sent recommendations to public notaries asking that they start dealing with enforcement cases submitted in the past six months in three phases- starting October 19, November 20 and January 20. In the first phase, enforcement decisions made on the basis of applications received by June 30 will be issued, those received by August 31 will be issued in the second phase, and in the third phase decisions made on the basis of applications received by October 18 will be issued.</p>	<p>All judicial authorities continue to work. However only those proceedings that have been identified as urgent are carried out by appropriate security measures. Hearings and other non-urgent cases have been postponed until further notice.</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>Communication with parties and all participants in proceedings 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 enforcement related to vacating and handing over of real estate are postponed.</p> <p>Due to the outbreak of epidemic of COVID-19 in Croatia all electronic public auction openings in enforcement and insolvency cases have been postponed, 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>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>

		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 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.	
CYPRUS (CY)	Procedural time limits are suspended until 30.4.2020.	All hearings and other procedures are suspended 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 accepts the filing of an action only if it is supported by an interim order 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.	
CZECHIA (CZ)	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 all court hearings . 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	<u>Office for International Legal Protection of Children (Brussels IIa & Maintenance Regulation)</u> : 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.

		<p>considered by MoJ as delays in the exercise of its supervisory powers.</p> <p>Notarial service still available to the public, but work carried out in restricted mode.</p>	<p>Czech Ministry of Justice (Central authority for Service of Document & Taking of Evidence Regulations) : 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.</p> <p>The only complication is the increasing restrictions on postal services in some States, which we try, in agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to overcome by use of diplomatic channel for service of judicial documents. 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>
DENMARK (DK)	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</p>	In general, the Danish Courts seek to handle as much work as possible from home workplaces during the emergency period.

		<p>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 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>	
ESTONIA (EE)	General information in English can be found on the Government's website	State of emergency from 12/03 to 17/05.	The Estonian Central Authority has been teleworking as of 13 March. Communications (messages and

	<p>Procedural time limits 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 the amount of time or terms for which mentally ill persons are placed in a psychiatric hospital or a social welfare institution have been suspended :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in the case of extended provisional protection, for the duration of the emergency situation; - in the case of placement, for the duration of the emergency situation and up to two months after termination of the emergency situation. <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>In the area of the law of obligations, currently no fundamental changes. The Ministry of Justice has analysed different legal options that are already provided in Estonian law and which could be used during 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 these discussions are still ongoing.</p>	<p>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>No legislative change regarding <u>court proceedings</u>. The Council for Administration of Courts has issued recommendations. The work of Estonian courts has been reorganized: opening hours of the chancelleries 9.00–13.00 and of the courthouses on working days until 14.00.</p> <p>Where possible, cases are handled in writing through the Courts Information System and by means of a digital court file application.</p> <p>Urgent hearings are held and proceedings are conducted by electronic means of communication. If this is not possible, the Court decides on a case-by-case basis whether a hearing or proceedings will be held in court . The following matters can 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 cases, electronic means of communication can be used by the court (or any other means necessary), but generally it is recommended that the courts opt to postpone hearings and/or proceedings.</p>	<p>documents) are established by email (in civil matters and most criminal matters). If needed, original documents will be sent via airmail after the emergency situation ends.</p>
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Under the Code of Civil Procedure, the court in exceptional and urgent cases related to children can issue a preliminary / protective order without hearing the child, and many judges have used this possibility.

It is recommended that procedural **documents be served** preferably by e-File and e-mail.

The **Chamber of notaries** authorized notaries to take all measures necessary, such as use of the remote authentication service e-Notar which allows for the performance of notarial acts using a video bridge. Whereas up until 6 April only certain types of acts could be done remotely (issuing a power of attorney, the sale of shares of private limited companies and a few more) then as of 6 April 6, almost all acts can be authenticated remotely, with the exception of concluding a marriage or a divorce). Thus, even real property can be sold and transferred via online authentication. This will also be the case after the emergency situation is terminated. The **Estonian Bar Association** 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

		<p>adapt quickly to changes in the working environment, show flexibility and innovation and to ensure that the possibilities for requesting extensions for time limits are not abused.</p> <p>The Chamber of Bailiffs and Trustees in Bankruptcy has also announced that bailiffs and trustees in bankruptcy have reorganized their work in order to work remotely.</p>	
<p>FINLAND (FI)</p>	<p>No changes have been introduced to statutory deadlines for court proceedings despite the ongoing crisis.</p>	<p>Courts remain independent. However, the National Court Administration (NCA) gives guidelines and advice to courts on their management.</p> <p>NCA has provided guidelines recommending courts to continue handling cases, with precautionary measures, for instance physical presence should be limited to urgent case. The NCA advises courts to hold hearings by videoconference, or by other available and suitable technological means. The National Courts Administration has also published advice for all courts on using remote connections at a trial. The advice has been drawn up only for the current exceptional situation, and it is not intended to change existing policies, instructions or recommendations. The goal of using remote connections more effectively is to minimise health risks by avoiding gatherings of several people. These, as well as future guidance can be found from here.</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: central.authority@om.fi and maintenance.ca@om.fi (maintenance matters only).</p>

		<p>By 10 May 2020 the Finnish District Courts have suspended the hearing of 1 431 civil cases. Updated information can be found here.</p> <p>Contacts to the courts is encouraged to be made primarily by phone and email.</p>	
FRANCE (FR)	<p>Time limits (procedural), including limitation periods, 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 principle, 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, contractual sanctions of non-performance from debtor (penalty clause, termination clause etc.) are temporarily lifted in order to take account of enforcement difficulties.</p> <p>Contract penalties, renewals and notice periods provided by law are also suspended or extended.</p>	<p>Between March, 17 and May 10, courts have dealt only with urgent cases (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>Courts have progressively resumed activity since 11 May in all matters.</p> <p>In case a court cannot work, another court can be designated to deal with urgent cases.</p> <p>Parties are informed of the court decisions 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>Time periods for enquiry and mediation measures are suspended and are extended by an additional three months as of 23 June 2020.</p> <p>Heads of courts will be able to regulate the flow of people entering the jurisdiction and define the</p>	<p>Regarding judicial cooperation, requests are handled normally.</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 most of the time and come to the office one day per week at least. It means that all the new requests may be sent by post, fax or e-mail.</p> <p><u>Taking of evidence (Regulation 1206/2001)</u>: The requests are normally dealt with. The processing time may be a little bit longer since the caseworker teleworks and comes to the office one day by week to deal with the requests received by post or by fax.</p> <p><u>Service of documents (Regulation 1393/2007)</u>: Under the current circumstances, service of documents may be slowed down. Electronic service can be performed on the condition that the recipient has given prior consent.</p>

		<p>number of people allowed to enter a courtroom to ensure compliance with the rules of physical distancing.</p> <p>They may also be seized by any means of a request from persons wishing to attend the hearing where access is limited.</p> <p>Where an audiovisual or other electronic means of communication is used to hold a hearing, the hearing may not be held in a single location.</p> <p>Finally, it is recalled that the means of communication used must guarantee the secrecy of the deliberations.</p>	<p>The French Central Authority under these three regulations (2201/2003, 1206/2001, 1393/2007) continues to communicate by email (entraide-civile-internationale@justice.gouv.fr) <u>but also by letter or by fax.</u></p> <p>The French Central Authority under regulation (CE) 4/2009 relating to maintenance obligations communicates by email : obligation.alimentaire@diplomatie.gouv.fr</p>
<p>GERMANY (DE)</p>	<p>To date, no measures have been adopted on civil-law time limits; the only provisions relate to prolonged interruptions to criminal proceedings. German law on civil procedure contains flexible provisions on the extension of time limits, stay of proceedings and restitutio in integrum, which help with litigation during the Covid 19 crisis.</p> <p>Further information on legislative measures can be found on the website of the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection: https://urldefense.com/v3/https://www.bmju.de/DE/Themen/FokusThemen/Corona/Corona_node.html;!!DOxrgLBm!TATBtWwEG61BcpaIML88izGI51W1Bh35at7PPZ1vK42isxFajUQaavSe-TNYDSENe1TjDnVXgg\$</p>	<p>Statutory provisions for civil proceedings already provide the courts with a broad scope to react flexibly to the current exceptional situation. It is for the courts and judges concerned to decide what measures to take on a case-by-case basis, e.g. written procedure, dispensing with the taking of evidence, taking evidence via videoconference. Judicial independence is preserved.</p>	<p><u>Family cooperation (Regulation 2201/2003):</u> The Federal Office of Justice has restricted physical attendance by its officials on health grounds. However, the central authority is fully operational in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003. Applications can be submitted in paper form.</p> <p><u>Maintenance cooperation (Regulation 4/2009)</u> Cooperation on matters relating to maintenance obligations (Regulation (EC) No 4/2009): The Federal Office of Justice has restricted physical attendance by its officials on health grounds. The central authority is fully operational in accordance with Regulation (EC)</p>

			<p>No 2201/2003, although delays in the processing of cases are still possible. Applications can be submitted in paper form.</p> <p><u>Taking of evidence (Regulation 1206/2001) and Service of documents (Regulation 1393/2007):</u> The operation of the judicial system in Germany is gradually being broadened to take into account infections and local specificities. Delays to the execution of applications for notifications and the taking of evidence cannot therefore be ruled out. In particular, judges take local circumstances into account when ruling independently on the execution of applications for the taking of evidence.</p>
GREECE (EL)		<p>By Ministerial Decision, all procedures carried out before the Greek courts and their services are suspended until 15 May 2020, with the exception of urgent and significant actions and cases.</p> <p>The procedures carried out before the District Civil Courts and their services were suspended until 10 May 2020.</p> <p>The operation of the judicial services is limited only to the necessary actions to carry out the necessary work and urgent cases.</p> <p>Meetings and any other action related to the operation of the judiciary is carried out remotely, if possible, using technological means. IT communication tools and applications have been provided in order to secure video conferencing,</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 and to ensure the good functioning of the market and the public sector.</p> <p>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.</p>

		<p>and teleworking of judges, prosecutors and other legal actors.</p> <p>Electronic submission of an application for the issuance of certificates is available in some of the major courts. In that case, citizens and lawyers have the opportunity to receive them electronically through a web portal.</p>	<p>Until now, the Central Authority is almost fully operational, although occasional delays in processing some requests are inevitable due to the persisting health crisis.</p>
HUNGARY (HU)	<p>As a general rule time limits continue to run during the period of the state of danger. The only exception on this is where the procedural act in question cannot be carried out in writing or by electronic means (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.</p>	<p>Access to justice and the continuity of the pending proceedings is ensured, there is no recess for courts of justice in Hungary.</p> <p>In the courts procedural acts requiring physical contact are not performed. Special procedural rules facilitate written communication, remote hearing and hearings using electronic means of personal identification.</p>	<p>With regard to judicial cooperation in civil matters, there are restrictions on enforcement procedures during the state of danger. 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.</p> <p>The Central Authorities are operational.</p> <p>Execution of requests for legal assistance may be delayed in comparison to normal circumstances.</p>
IRELAND (IE)	<p>No specific legislation on time limits. 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).</p>	<p>Court offices will remain open, and are accepting urgent papers. 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.</p>	<p>Staff of the Ministry of Justice and Equality and the Central Authorities are mostly working from home. Communication by email only is preferred.</p>

		<p>Civil matters can be adjourned by consent via e-mail. Only urgent cases will go ahead in the coming weeks.</p> <p>Applications relating to urgent Family Law 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>	
<p>ITALY (IT)</p>	<p>Time limits for exercising judicial acts within civil proceedings 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, proceedings relating to the</p>	<p>Most civil hearings 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>Local courts can adopt their own organizational measures (restricted access to buildings, office closed).</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>protection of minors and maintenance proceedings when there is prejudice for the protection of essential needs; compulsory health treatment, VTP, provisional enforceability, electoral proceedings & all matters entailing a risk of serious prejudice to the parties.</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, 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. For the period between 11 May and 31 July 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"> - the carrying out of civil hearings by means of remote connections that require the presence only of lawyers, or the parties or the auxiliary figures of the judge, subject to the respect of the adversarial process and the effective participation of the parties, provided that the judge is physically present in the court office; - the postponement of hearings after 31 July 2020; - the holding of civil hearings that require the participation only of the defendants through written procedure. 	<p>All communications to be sent to ufficio2.dgcivile.dag@giustizia.it</p>
<p>LATVIA (LV)</p>	<p>Written civil procedure if it does not violate rights of parties and court finds it possible. 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>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>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</p>

	<p>Limitation periods (e.g. prescription) are suspended between 12/03 and 01/07.</p> <p>Enforcement proceedings: 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>Commercial pledge. Time limits for taking the decision on delivering the commercial pledge is prolonged from 30 days to 60 days.</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><i>As of 12 May, 2020 courts may resume the court hearings in person, taking into account the requirements set by the Cabinet of Ministers regarding indoor gathering when reviewing cases.</i></p>	<p>Justice. The same is accepted from other countries.</p> <p>Judicial cooperation is still ensured, for example the execution of requests for service of documents or videoconference hearings.</p>
<p>LITHUANIA (LT)</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>Civil proceedings, where possible by written procedure, 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>Oral proceedings in courts are limited 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</p>	<p>Most public authorities’ employees work remotely. International legal assistance is still provided, but some processes can take longer.</p>

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;

In urgent cases, safety recommendations are followed during oral proceedings (social distancing, courtroom disinfection)

Judicial procedural decisions are sent by electronic means of communication, 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 place by electronic means of communication, by telephone.

Upon the **suspension of the direct service** of persons in the courts, procedural documents are received electronically or sent by post.

Bailiffs: 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 www.antstoliai.lt 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 <http://www.antstolai.it/>. During the quarantine period, judicial officers shall also refrain from announcing new auctions.

Regarding the organization of the **notaries' work**, 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 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

		<p>consequences of notarial acts or ascertain a person's identity.</p> <p>Regarding the provision of state-guaranteed legal aid services, 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 practising advocates in Lithuania.</p>	
LUXEMBOURG (LU)	<p>The state of crisis, based on a grand-ducal regulation of March 18,2020 introducing a series of measures in the context of the fight against Covid-19, has been extended for three months by a law on March 24,2020.</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</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>These provisions are taken in strict compliance with the Constitution and Luxembourg's international commitments especially those</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 reduced to allow a maximum of people to work from home.</p>

	<p>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 the council of government on March 25, 2020 a grand-ducal regulation drawn up by the Ministry of Justice suspending time limits in jurisdictional matters and adapting certain other procedural modalities.</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>Time limits in civil and commercial matters</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"> • In tenancy matters, 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. 	<p>relating to fundamental rights. They are applied according to the criteria of necessity and proportionality.</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 separated parents 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 courts 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 notaries 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 lawyers are also continuing their activity and are encouraged -during the crisis -to use electronic means of communication with the courts.</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In matters of civil status, 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. • A specific provision provides for the suspension of deadlines in matters of succession, 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. • It is planned to extend for three months the deadlines for filing and publication of annual accounts, consolidated accounts and related reports of companies. 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. 	<p>As to avoid physical contact, the bailiffs serve documents not on the addressee in person but at the address of the addressees only in their post boxes.</p>	
<p>MALTA (MT)</p>	<p>As from 16 March 2020 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 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</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>

	<p>The suspension of time limits for concluding a sale stipulated in a registered promise of sale agreement that was introduced on the 16th March 2020 was removed on 22 May 2020. A suspension of twenty days applicable from the 22nd May 2020 was introduced relative to promise of sale agreements following which the remaining part of the time period that was suspended will continue to run.</p> <p>On 5 June 2020, the Closure of the Courts of Justice Order 2020 was repealed. Thus, all legal and judicial times, including prescription in civil matters and any peremptory time limits will continue to run. In order to protect the rights of the court users, a short suspension came into force on the 5th June 2020: (i) a twenty day suspension of legal and judicial times for those Tribunals, boards, commissions, committees or entities which do not operate from a building of the Courts of Justice; and (ii) and a seven day suspension of legal and judicial times relative to court or other tribunal, board, commission, committee or other entity which operates from the building of the Courts of Justice.</p>	<p>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>With effect from the 4th May 2020, the registry of all the courts opened for the filing of all judicial acts (not only for urgent cases and cases which are in the public interest).</p> <p>With effect from the 5 June 2020, the Closure of the Courts of Justice Order 2020 was repealed. Thus, all Courts have been reopened, including the superior and the inferior courts, appellate courts irrespective of their competence or jurisdiction, any tribunal established by law, and any boards, commissions, committees or other entities before which any proceedings are heard or procedures undertaken which are subject to legal or administrative time limits for filing any claims, defences or other acts.</p>	
<p>NETHERLANDS (NL)</p>	<p>House of Parliament (Second and First Chambers) agreed upon temporary emergency legislation. With this legislation, it is possible to solve the most urgent problems of the functioning of the judiciary. The legislation is in force since April 24, 2020.</p> <p>Hearings in civil- and administrative law cases Introduction of the hearing by all electronic communication tool if due to COVID-19 a physical hearing is not possible. In all cases the judges decides about the way of hearing.</p> <p>There are no changes of legal limits in civil, administrative or criminal cases.</p>	<p>Between March 17, 2020 and May 11, 2020, all Courthouses were closed with exception of extremely urgent cases. All other cases was dealt with in written procedures or by audio- or videoconferencing.</p> <p>From May 11, 2020, Courts will open again for all cases concerning criminal, juvenile and family law cases. The Judiciary has taken safety and organizational measures in accordance with the advices of the national health authorities.</p> <p>As far as possible, also other cases will be held in the Courthouses physically. If not possible, the</p>	<p>The central authorities in the Netherlands are mostly working in home office. Communication by email is recommended.</p>

		<p>use video conference or another electronic means is possible.</p> <p>Courts, however, will be closed for the public with the exception of cases with a strong public interest. The Courts can also ask the Council for the Judiciary to set up a professional livestreaming if they deem it necessary for the public interest. In all cases, up to three representatives of the media are allowed to attend the hearing. Additionally, the Judiciary is aiming at making more written rulings public online.</p> <p>The judiciary explores the possibilities to fulfill the obligation of public and open hearings while also to adhere to the privacy of the parties involved.</p> <p>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. www.rechtspraak.nl</p>	
POLAND (PL)	<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"> • limitation periods of enforcement of judgements, • time limits in proceedings and for court's actions in legal proceedings, including in enforcement proceedings. 	<p>Specific measures have been adopted to mitigate the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic including.</p> <p>The transfer of cases 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> <p>1. Proceedings concerning minors 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 (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>

- proceedings for the removal of a minor from parental authority or custody;
 - proceedings concerning placement of a foreigner minor in a care and educational institution;
 - proceedings for the establishment of a guardian to represent the interests of a minor in judicial proceedings;
 - proceedings regarding placement or extension of a juvenile's stay in a juvenile shelter;
 - enforcement proceedings involving minors.
2. Proceedings concerning mentally ill and incapacitated persons

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; - could cause serious harm to the public interest; - could cause imminent and irreparable material damage; - and when urgent adjudication on such case is required by the interests of justice.

Detachment of judges 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.

Suspension and postponement of court's proceedings is also possible in certain cases.

<p>PORTUGAL (PT)</p>	<p>The state of emergency was declared between 19.3.20 and 17.4.20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree 14-A/2020 • Decree 17-A/2020 • Decree 2-A/20 • Decree 2-B/20 • Law 1-A/20 and amendments • Decree Law 10-A/20 and amendments <p>The state of calamity was declared between 18.4.20 and 17.5.20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution 33-A/20 • Resolution 33-C/20 • Law 1-A/20 and amendments • Decree Law 10-A/20 and amendments <p>During both the state of <u>emergency</u> and <u>calamity</u>, according to Article 7 of Law 1-A/20 in its consolidated version, the legal regime of judicial terms and deadlines is the ensuing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In judicial processes that are not urgent deadlines are suspended within a period to be ended by Decree Law. • Urgent judicial processes shall run without suspension of deadlines or acts. • Limitation periods and prescription periods are suspended. 	<p>During the State of emergency</p> <p>The main tools of judicial organization adopted were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contingency plans established by the Presidents of each Court • Scales of service in person for urgent processes established by the Presidents of each Court • Virtual court rooms in all courts (first instance, second instance and Supreme Court of Justice) allowing hearings to be held remotely • Digital signature of sentences through the case management system • In case of judgments by a collective court the signature of other judges can be replaced by a statement by the Judge <i>rapporteur</i> confirming the vote of conformity of the other judges (Article 15-A of Decree Law 10-A/20) • Access through VPN (Virtual Private Network) to the case management system <p>Any procedural acts are permitted through tele/video conference.</p> <p>The use of email instead of telephone is recommended to seek information from Courts.</p>	<p>During the state of emergency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EJN Civil contact point's team works from home, processing all the requests for cooperation and information as swiftly as possible notwithstanding the suspension of judicial time limits and periods applied in Courts. • The team has remote access to the files through VPN (Virtual Private network). • Any member of the team is available to go to the workplace whenever it is needed and in urgent cases. • Preference should be given to communication by email to correio@redcivil.mj.pt in cases regarding judicial cooperation. <p>During the state of calamity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Contact Point's team is currently working in partial telework regime with outdated schedules ensuring that at least one member of
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eviction of tenants and enforcement of mortgages that fall on private housing are suspended. • The deadlines set forth for debtors to file applications to open insolvency proceedings are suspended. • Acts in enforcement procedures, including enforcement measures, are suspended unless this causes irreparable damage or endangers the creditor’s livelihood. • Article 15 of Decree Law 10-A/20 provides that in cases of closure of a Court, in a certain area, by determination of the authorities, due to the pandemic, the procedural deadlines are suspended (this happened in a few cases and for a limited period) • The suspension of judicial terms and deadlines ended from 3 June 2020 (Article 8 of Law 16/2020 that repeals Articles 7 of Law 1-A/2020). • Regarding service of documents the collection of the addressee’s signature was suspended and replaced by other suitable means of identification and apposition of the date on which the service was made (Law 10/2020) <p>Final remark: 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</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>The distribution of urgent and non-urgent processes in the Courts of first instance was never interrupted.</p> <p>In Courts of second instance and in the Supreme Court of Justice, until 15.4.20, only urgent processes were distributed. From 16.4.20 all processes, urgent and non-urgent have been distributed.</p> <p>Urgent acts and procedures in which fundamental rights are at stake may be carried out in person (urgent protection of children, procedural acts and trial of imprisoned defendants) or remotely through virtual court rooms.</p> <p>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/virtual court rooms.</p> <p>Judgements in non-urgent cases can be pronounced if all the parties agree that further enquiries by the Court are unnecessary.</p>	<p>the team is working in person at a time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Contact Point falls under the High Judicial Council scales of service and follows the “Measures to reduce the risk of virus transmission in the Courts” that were adopted during the gradual termination of confinement. <p>Outline of the work that have been processed by the Contact Point during both the state of emergency and calamity:</p> <p>The team processed all requests for assistance, urgent and non-urgent, during the state of alarm (remotely, by mail and telephone) and during the state of calamity (remotely and in person), regarding the three networks of judicial cooperation of which Portugal is party: EJM Civil, IberRede (Latin American countries) and the Judicial Network of CPLP (Portuguese speaking countries) .</p> <p>By way of example, the team dealt with cross-border requests for maintenance recovery; requests for transfer of competence regarding parental responsibilities; requests for information on foreign law regarding matrimonial regimes, protection of</p>
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	<p>the Portuguese High Judicial Council, for national Courts or for the Contact Point.</p> <p>Final remark: 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>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.</p> <p>Going to Court is not advised unless for those who are summoned to appear. In that case, according to Article 14 of Law 10-A/20 presentation of a medical certificate of quarantine shall be considered force majeure</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 https://www.csm.org.pt/</p> <p><u>During the state of calamity:</u></p> <p>The main tools of judicial organization adopted were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradual termination of confinement in line with the Resolution of the Council of Ministers 33-C/20. • Adoption of “<i>Measures to reduce the risk of virus transmission in the Courts</i>” – a joint document established by the High Judicial Council, the General Directorate for the Administration of Justice, the 	<p>vulnerable adults, non-contractual civil liability; requests for taking of evidence that had to be facilitated or rescheduled due to the confinement measures.</p>
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- Suspending the movement of first instance judges to the second instance courts without prejudice to proceed with their graduation.

While awaiting the legislative process that determines the end of the suspension of judicial terms in non-urgent processes, the High Judicial Council approved the resolutions mentioned above to stabilize the human resources and the management bodies in the courts of first instance (resolutions of 04.28.2020 and 5.5.2020).

This to allow them to face the workload that will be expected to follow the end of the suspension of judicial deadlines in non-urgent processes.

State of play of maintenance recovery processes during both the emergency and calamity state

Even if it does not result from the internal law that it this processes are urgent (except when there is a decision that declares them urgent or when there is a provisional urgent measure of maintenance) in many Courts they continued to be processed and sentences were issued and enforcement measures were ordered by Judges, giving priority to economically more vulnerable cases in which the Maintenance Guarantee Fund ensures the payment of maintenance to children instead of the debtor.

		<p>Still, the cases of non-compliance pending the hearing of one or more parties, that were not declared urgent by decision of the Court, were suspended by virtue of the suspension of the terms in non-urgent cases.</p> <p>The private bailiffs did not suspend the ongoing enforcement measures to recover maintenance by their own motion; enforcement measures in progress were suspended only at the request of the debtors who invoked loss of income, unemployment or lay-off due to the pandemic.</p> <p>State of play of child relocation processes during both the emergency and calamity state</p> <p>Most cases were treated as urgent processes due to the deadlines established in the 1980 Hague Convention, but the number of cases is probably limited due to the closure of the borders and/or restrictions on traveling.</p>	
ROMANIA (RO)	<p>According to the State of Emergency Decree No. 195/2020 and Decree for Prolongation of the State of Emergency No. 250/2020, limitation and prescription time limits do not commence or they are suspended if they are running, during the state of emergency. Interruption of time limits for lodging appeals.</p> <p>The state of emergency has ended on 15 May 2020.</p>	<p>State of emergency was declared on 16/03, with specific measures regarding the organization of the justice system:</p> <p>Judicial activity in civil matters is suspended, except for urgent cases, which are determined by decision No. 417/24.3.2020 of the Council of Magistracy;</p> <p>Decisions continue to be drafted, as well as the registrations of documents from 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, electronic communication of requests of judicial cooperation to the Central Authority is strongly encouraged. Documents sent in hard</p>

		<p>Use of videoconference is encouraged – including through letter rogatory, as well as hearings closed to the public, where the situation permits.</p> <p>All the documents of the parties are sent to the courts by electronic means, 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>Where the panel of judges cannot be completed, delegation of judges from another division of the court is allowed.</p> <p>After 15 May 2020 (end of state of emergency), in all civil cases, procedures will resume ex officio. Within 10 days after the state of emergency has ended, the courts will take the appropriate measures in order to reschedule the hearings and to summon the parties.</p>	<p>copy will be processed with significant delays.</p> <p>The Ministry of Justice acts on the basis of Article 3 c) of the Service of Documents and Taking of Evidence Regulations 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> <p>The following e-mail addresses can be used: dreptinternational@just.ro, ddit@just.ro.</p> <p>As of the end of the state of emergency (15 May 2020), in general terms, the Ministry of Justice, acting as Central Authority will carry out all its activities in the same manner as during the state of emergency.</p>
SLOVAKIA (SK)	<p>Legal deadlines, enforcement proceedings, statutory interest rates:</p> <p>On 27 March the Act No 62/2020 Coll. on certain extraordinary measures in connection with COVID-19 outbreak and on measures in the justice area (hereinafter the “COVID Act”) (https://www.slovlex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2020/62/) entered into force which introduced restrictive and other measures that required statutory legal basis.</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>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 -</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>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"> - restrict the movement of the public within the court - introduce compliance with hygienic preventive measures - provide information via telephone/email - limit participation of public in court hearings - limit the conduct of hearings only to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o custodial matters, conditional release o proceedings related to minors and o matters where failure to act would cause irreparable damage <p>Courts reduced working time and allowed work from home</p>	<p>the court letters addressed even to EU member states were returned undelivered.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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"> - the central authority for the Regulation (EC) No 1393/2007 and the Council Regulation (EC) No 1206/2001 (Ministry of Justice): civil.inter.coop@justice.sk - the central Authority for the Council Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003 and the Council Regulation (EC) No 4/2009 (The Centre for International Legal Protection of Children and Youth): info@cipc.gov.sk
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<p>SLOVENIA (SI)</p>	<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, procedural deadlines 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 until 1 July 2020.</p> <p>The Law introduced provisions for all time limits (material and procedural). 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 Act Amending the Provisional Measures Act in Relation to Judicial, Administrative and Other Public Law Matters to Control the Spread of the Infectious Disease SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) was adopted on 29 April.</p>	<p>The Act Amending the Provisional Measures Act in Relation to Judicial, Administrative and Other Public Law Matters to Control the Spread of the Infectious Disease SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) presents a legal basis for judicial and administrative bodies and other public authorities to hold oral hearings, hearings, decide and serve in non-urgent matters, but still under conditions of uninterrupted security, work for employees and for clients.</p> <p>Courts and other judicial bodies, which during this time also made many decisions in cases that were not defined as urgent, will send or serve these decisions to parties who are otherwise acquainted with them, but are not obliged and bound by the entry into force of this Act do nothing if they do not want to, as deadlines, both procedural and material, are still not running. However, if they wish, they can take individual actions that will enable the institutions to function smoothly and thus be able to obtain their rights sooner.</p> <p>In the area of enforcement, enforcement is suspended. After the amendment enters into force, courts will also be able to issue enforcement and insurance orders and serve them on clients in non-urgent cases that began to run before the introduction of measures due to the epidemic. In these cases, the parties will not be obliged to respond immediately, as the deadlines in non-urgent cases do not run, and the legal solution according to which enforcement is still in force (except in urgent cases, such as the recovery of maintenance) will</p>	<p>The Central authority for Regulation (EC) No 1393/2007 and the Council Regulation (EC) No 1206/2001 (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: gp.mp@gov.si. Due to these special circumstances, transmitting of requests in paper mail to competent courts may be delayed.</p> <p>The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Central Authority under the Council Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003 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 gp.mddsz@gov.si. They strongly encourage keeping all communications by electronic means. Outgoing requests will be sent exclusively by electronic means.</p> <p>Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia, the Central</p>
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	<p>Procedural and material deadlines are still not running, and the measures enable a gradual transition to further normal operations and at the same time protect the weakest.</p>	<p>still be in force, for enforcement proceedings which were stopped or postponed during the epidemic. Of course, this does not mean that the party that would like to respond is limited in this.</p> <p>In the classical civil or litigation field, the courts will be able to issue a judgment and also serve it on the parties if they are in a non-urgent lawsuit before the introduction of the measures before the main hearing. The parties will therefore be served with the judgment, but the time limits are not running. In this way, we will make an important contribution to the gradual elimination of the stalemate in the operation of the courts.</p> <p>Also in the field of land registry matters, the Ministry's proposal enables the gradual release of cases. The decision on the land registry proposal can become final, although the deadlines do not run, but only if, for example, all parties waive the right to appeal. The same applies to entries in the land register. The parties have so far been able to submit a land registry proposal and thus ensure the protection of the order.</p> <p>The new proposed regime, for the duration of the epidemic, allows insolvency parties to submit their application, statement or document after the deadline, the reason for the delay is the COVID 19 epidemic and the court has not yet ruled, such a late application is still considered and does not reject it after the deadline. Such an intervention legal basis, which loosens the severity and irreversibility of acts in insolvency proceedings, will also be an important</p>	<p>Authority under the Council Regulation (EC) No 4/2009 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: jpsklad@jps-rs.si. The Central Authority will also communicate and send requests via email.</p>
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circumstance in the eventual assessment of the President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia to determine insolvency proceedings as urgent proceedings.

The Decree of 5 May of the President of the Supreme Court that supersedes the previous decrees:

The courts will continue to decide and hold hearings in urgent cases, in accordance with the provisions of Article 83 of the Courts Act and the order of the President of the Supreme Court. With the new order, the President of the Supreme Court has been expanding the range of urgent cases since 5 May 2020. The latter also include cases of compulsory settlement and bankruptcy, in which a decision on the commencement of proceedings was issued by 30 March 2020.

During the duration of the special measures, the parties, their proxies and other persons who want information related to a particular procedure and have not received a summons to appear in court, must be notified in advance during public hours via publicly published e-mail addresses and telephone numbers.

1. Decision-making of courts in urgent and non-urgent cases

Due to the occurrence of an extraordinary event, i.e. epidemic of infectious disease SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) - coronavirus, which can greatly impede the smooth or regular exercise of jurisdiction and to prevent the spread of viral infection epidemic of infectious disease SARS-

CoV-2 (COVID-19) - coronavirus, protection health and life of people and ensuring the functioning of the judiciary, all courts from 5 May 2020 hold hearings, decide and serve court documents

a) in cases which are not urgent in accordance with Article 83 of the Courts Act and which are not considered as urgent in accordance with this Order, if the courts may ensure the performance of these acts in accordance with the conditions laid down in this Order and in other measures ,determined on the basis of this order by the President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia, and in such a way that the viral infection and the guaranteed health and life of people are not spread, and

b) in urgent matters, as provided for in Article 83 of the Courts Act, of which the following, however are **not** considered as **urgent**:

b.1. in matters of insurance, acts requiring the personal contacts of bailiffs, interested parties and other persons in these proceedings and the performance of such acts is not necessary in order to avert the danger to human life and health or to property of greater value,

b.2. bill of exchange and check protests and bill of exchange lawsuits,

b.3. inventory of the decedent's property,

b.4. compulsory settlement and bankruptcy cases in which no decision to initiate proceedings has been issued by 30.3.2020 inclusive,

2. Basic measures for the smooth exercise of judicial power in the matters refer:

2.1. Access to the court

The courts shall determine the point of entry into the court building for the parties, their proxies and other persons, and the point of entry into the court building for judges and court staff, where it is spatially possible. At the entry points, all necessary preventive measures shall be taken to prevent viral infection and a written notice shall be published for all entrants of the preventive measures in force in force on the court premises.

Except in cases of urgency during the duration of the special measures of a party, their proxies and other persons shall: 1. submit applications only by post or via the national e-Justice portal in procedures where this is possible, 2. use published e-mail addresses and telephone numbers during office hours to communicate with the courts.

During the duration of the special measures, the parties, their proxies and other persons who request information regarding the proceedings and are not summoned to court must notify the previously published e-mail addresses and telephone numbers during office hours.

2.2. Court sessions, sittings of the court and hearings

Court sessions, sittings and hearings shall, if the technical and spatial conditions are met, normally be conducted by videoconference.

		<p>At court sessions, sittings and hearings not held by videoconference, the distance to other persons has to be at least two meters, all must wear protective equipment and the room must be disinfected.</p> <p>2.3. Participation of public in the main hearing</p> <p>In order to prevent the spread of viral infection, to protect human health and life and to ensure the functioning of the courts and to ensure the exercise of rights and obligations, a judge or the presiding judge may temporarily exclude the public from all or part of the main hearing.</p> <p>2.4. Other measures</p> <p>Other measures are additionally determined for all courts by the President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia, and for an individual court by each President of the Court.</p> <p>Validity of the order and other measures</p> <p>This order and other measures determined on its basis shall remain in force until the publicly announced revocation of the President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia.</p>	
SPAIN (ES)	<p>All terms are suspended, and time limits provided for in the procedural laws for all jurisdictional orders are suspended and discontinued. The calculation of the time limits will be resumed at the moment that the extensions of Royal Decree 463/2020 become invalid.</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>Spanish central authority cannot guarantee normal processing of incoming requests (especially paper requests). Requests must be sent by electronic means.</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>For updates on the measures taken by the Spanish authorities to prevent the spread of the virus the Spanish General Council for Judiciary has published on its website a dedicated section entitled: <i>General information COVID-19</i>, available under the following link:</p> <p>http://www.poderjudicial.es/cgpi/en/Services/Information-COVID-19/General-information-/</p> <p>That website provides complete information including general Information, guides and protocols, agreements of the Permanent Committee (from 11th Mars 2020 to 5th May 2020), Case Law, Information from the Ministry of Justice and General State Prosecutor's Office, Information from Ministry of Health, Head of State, and the High Courts of Justice Monitoring Committee.</p>	<p>Public Notaries and Public Registries are considered as an essential public service and they are guaranteed.</p>	<p>- Taking of evidence (art 3 of Regulation 1206/2001 : Serious and urgent requests will be processed, requests must be sent to rogatoriascivil@mjusticia.es . 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. (sustraccionmenores@mjusticia.es) (SGCJIAlimentos@mjusticia.es)</p>
SWEDEN (SE)	<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</p>	

		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.	
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