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Reimbursements on a flat rate basis for business trips

Reimbursements on a flat rate basis for business trips abroad that employers grant to their employees and managers are considered to be a non-taxable reimbursement of costs proper to the employer.

However, in order to qualify as a tax free reimbursement of costs proper to the employer, the amounts may in principle not exceed the 'daily flat-rate subsistence allowances' that the Belgian government grants to its public servants.

Each year a ministerial decree determines the daily flat-rate subsistence allowances per country, the so-called "country list".

This list contains daily flat-rate subsistence allowances for "short business trips" and "long business trips":

- a *short business trip* is a short-term assignment abroad of maximum 30 calendar days;
- a *long business trip* is a stay abroad of more than 30 consecutive calendar days, with a maximum of 24 months.

The Belgian government recently announced that the country list will not be adjusted in 2019. The amounts of the subsistence allowances that were published since July 6, 2018 remain thus applicable.

Please contact us for any further information regarding the conditions of the daily flat-rate subsistence allowances and the country list.

Sectoral labour agreement 2019 – 2020 for JLC 200

The social partners concluded a new sectoral labour agreement applicable for employers and employees falling under the scope of the Joint Labour Committee 200 (abbreviated JLC 200).

This agreement foresees an increase of the actual salaries by 1,1% as from September 2019. Consequently, all Belgian employers with employees falling under the scope of JLC 200 are in principle obliged to increase the salary of August 2019 with 1,1% as from September 2019.

The abovementioned increase of the actual gross salaries is not applicable if the company provides for an equivalent benefit to the employees in the period between January 1st, 2019 and December 31, 2020.

Such an equivalent benefit could be an actual salary increase and/or other benefits increasing the employee's purchasing power (e.g. increase of the value of the meal vouchers, annual gross premium,...).

Note however that annual salary increases received by the employees based on job scales applicable in the sector or in the company (e.g. mandatory indexation of the salaries in January 2019) are not to be taken into account for the 1,1% increase of the actual salaries.

Furthermore, it is important to note that in case an equivalent benefit is granted to the employees, this benefit needs to be recurring as from 2021 onwards.

How to introduce equivalent benefits should be checked based on the company's situation. For more information in this respect, please contact us.

Bicycle allowance

The sectoral labour agreement agreed on July 1, 2019 for JLC 200 stipulates that a lump sum bicycle allowance of 0,10 EUR per kilometer with a maximum of 4,00 EUR per work day (equalling a maximum distance of 40 kilometers per day) should be granted and will be considered as tax free.

This bicycle allowance will enter into force on July 1, 2020.

Reduction of the employer social security contributions

New Belgian employers could benefit from a reduction of the Belgian employer social security contributions for the first six employees.

Since January 2016, no employer's social security contributions are due for the first employee which is hired between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2020. The target reduction should be used within 20 quarters starting from the first quarter in which the employer first had the right to this reduction.

For our existing payroll clients, this verification is done at start-up of the payroll, but for other employers, in case you would like us to verify whether your company is (still) entitled to these reductions, please contact us.

13th month salary or year-end premium

Depending on the applicable JLC, employees could be entitled to a 13th month payment (payable in December for JLC 200). The conditions for this payment have been stipulated in concerned collective labour agreement.

The 13th month payment is subject to Belgian social security contributions and Belgian wage withholding taxes. The wage withholding taxes are calculated based on brackets applicable exceptional remuneration.

For e.g. JLC 200, the payment of the 13th month depends on the seniority within the company.

Your payroll consultant at Mazars is aware of these rules and will apply this – for our existing clients - in the December payroll.

Leave for informal carers

Initially, as from October 1, 2019, a new form of thematic leave – next to parental leave, medical assistance leave or palliative leave – could be applied for by employees who are recognized as informal carers (i.e. "mantelzorger" in Dutch or "aidants proches" in French).

An informal carer is a person who continuously (or regularly) supports a person with a need of care. To be recognized as an informal carer, the following (cumulative) conditions need to be taken into account:

- He or she should have:
 - a relationship of trust with the assisted person; and
 - a permanent and actual residence in Belgium; and
 - be registered in the municipal register or the register of foreigners at the local commune ; and

The assistance should be provided on a non-professional basis and free of charge in cooperation with a professional caregiver.

If these conditions are met and with the consent of the assisted person or his legal representative, the carer can submit an application for recognition to the health insurance fund.

The leave for informal carers should be taken as follows:

- Full suspension of work; or
- Half-time suspension of work (only full-time employees); or
- 1/5 suspension of work (only full-time employees).

The duration of the leave for informal carers depends on the form of suspension the employee wishes to take.

Employees who take leave for informal carers, will receive an allowance from the health insurance fund. However, the amount of this allowance is still to be determined. At this moment, the allowances that apply to leave for medical assistance are taken into account for the leave for informal carers.

However, although a lot of rumour was given to this new thematic leave, due to the absence of the proper legal framework at this moment, it is not yet possible to apply this new thematic leave yet. We will inform you as soon as the date of entering into force is known.

Our legal specialists can provide you with more advice regarding the regulations about thematic leave.

New level of CO² emissions for company cars

Since September 1, 2018, the European Commission has made it obligatory for car manufacturers to use a new method for determining the CO² emission of cars, which has an impact on the determination of the benefit in kind for tax and social security purposes.

The level of CO² emissions for new vehicles is determined based on the "Worldwide harmonized Light vehicles Test Procedure" (WLTP) method and should replace the old NEDC ("New European Driving Cycle") method.

Until December 31, 2020, car manufacturers will be required to mention two values on all official car documents: the level of CO² emissions based on the WLTP standard and a conversion into the value under the NEDC method.

The CO² emissions of the car determine the CO² percentage, which is taken into account for the calculation of the taxable benefit in kind for the personal use of a company car.

For vehicles with two levels of CO² emissions (WLTP and NEDC), the NEDC standard can be taken into account until December 31, 2020, for the calculation of the benefit in kind. As from January 2021, the NEDC standard will automatically be replaced by the corresponding WLTP standard.

Furthermore, the new WLTP standard also has an impact on the calculation of the special social security contribution, which is also based on the level of CO² emission in g/km. The Belgian National Social Security Office stipulates that the NEDC standard must be used to calculate the CO² contributions until the end of 2020. As from January 2021 the WLTP standard should be taken into account.

Should you have any questions related to this topic or would like us to calculate the impact for your employees as from January 2021, please contact us.

No wage withholding tax on the last three months salary for school-leavers

In case your company would hire a school-leaver in October, November or December, no wage withholding taxes will have to be paid during the last quarter of 2019. Please note that the following conditions must be met:

- The young employee is no longer subject to compulsory education;
- The young employee has ended every study with a full course of study or full apprenticeship;
- The young employee has ended all activities imposed by a study, apprenticeship or training program;
- The young employee starts the employment in October, November and/or December;
- The gross taxable income does not exceed 3.350,00 EUR per month.

If all aforementioned conditions are met, the young employee will not reach the taxable income limit and will thus not be subject to personal income taxes at the end of the year.

Conversion of eco vouchers of 2020 before October 31, 2019

The collective labour agreement concerning eco vouchers for employees falling under JLC 200 has been concluded for an indefinite period. Consequently, as an employer, in principle you will have to grant eco vouchers to your employees again in (June) 2020!

However, it is also possible to reward your employees by granting another equivalent benefit instead of eco vouchers. Another equivalent benefit can be e.g. the implementation of meal vouchers or increasing the nominal value of the current meal vouchers, implementation of a collective medical expense / hospitalization insurance, ...

The implementation process depends on the presence or absence of a trade union delegation within your company. Employers who want to convert their eco vouchers of 2020 into another equivalent have time until October 31, 2019!

Please contact us, in case you would like our advice or assistance relating to this conversion.

Transfer of vacation days

The Belgian labour legislation stipulates that all (legal) vacation days of 2019 must be taken before the end of 2019.

Please find below the regulations regarding the mandatory inclusion of the vacation days:

- Employees are in principle not allowed to transfer vacation days that have not been taken in the present calendar year, to the next calendar year. In principle, all vacation days have to be taken in the present calendar year (i.e. December 31, 2019).
- In case the employees were unable to take their vacation days in the calendar year (for instance because of sickness), the employee lose definitely the right to take these vacation days, but they do not lose the right to the payment of their holiday pay.
- Employees are obligated to take the vacation days they are entitled to. The fact that employees do not ask for their vacation days does not affect the obligation for the employer to grant these days.

We would like to inform you that the above regulation also applies to the inclusion of overtime days (if applicable), as well as the inclusion of the recuperation days of legal holidays.

Please make your employees aware of these regulations, to avoid discussions and concerns by the end of the year.

Replacement days for public holidays

As 2019 is gradually coming to an end, we would like to draw your attention to the rules applicable to replacement days for public holidays.





As a general rule, private sector workers cannot be required to work on statutory public holidays, but they nevertheless remain entitled to receive their normal pay for those days. There are ten public holidays, and their dates plus the dates of the replacement days awarded for them must be set out in the employment regulation.

If a public holiday coincides with an official non-working day (e.g. a Saturday or a Sunday), employees are in principle entitled to a replacement day off. Therefore, in 2020, employees will be entitled to take a replacement day for the Assumption (Saturday, August 15th) and the All Saints' Day (Sunday, November 1st).




If there is no agreement on company level about the replacement date, this public holiday will automatically be replaced by the first normal working day worked by the business after the public holiday. If the company wants to fix another replacement date, the decision must be taken on company level and needs to be displayed on the company premises, before December 15, 2019. A copy of the notice must be annexed to the works rules and must be sent to the Social Legislation Inspectorate.

Don't miss the deadline !





-  Wage withholding taxes (quarterly basis)
-  Wage withholding taxes (monthly basis)
-  Belgian social security contributions
-  Actions

October 2019




-  15 Wage withholding taxes Q3/2019 (July - September)
-  31 Balance social security contributions Q3/2019 (July - September)
-  31 Conversion of eco vouchers of 2020

November 2019





-  5 Social security contributions 1st advance of Q4/2019
-  15 Wage withholding taxes October 2019

December 2019


Year-end premium / 13th month

-  5 Social security contributions 2nd advance Q4/2019
-  15 Wage withholding taxes November 2019
-  15 Deadline announcement of the replacement days for public holidays to employees

January 2020

-  5 Social security contributions 3rd advance Q4/2019
-  15 Wage withholding taxes Q4/2019 (October - December)
-  15 Wage withholding taxes December 2019
-  31 Balance social security contributions Q4/2019 (October - December)

February 2020

-  15 Wage withholding taxes January 2020

CONTACT

Mazars ALTOS
Bellevue 5 / 1001
B-9050 GENT

payroll@mazars.be

Tel.: +32 (0)9 265 83 20
Fax: + 32 (0)9 265 83 23



Mazars Belgium



@MazarsBelgium



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