

SUBJECT	LEGAL CHANGE	ACTION REQUIRED
Pensions		
Increasing Pension Benefits	The Company Pension Strengthening Act becomes effective on January 1, 2018. It introduces multiple changes, which will increase the number of employees entitled to company pensions.	<p>(1) Become familiar with the changes and amend current practices and policies to ensure compliance.</p> <p>(2) If unsure of how to comply, obtain specialist pension advice as soon as possible.</p>
Equal Pay		
Access to Information to Ensure Equal Pay for Equal Work	<p>A new law requiring pay to be transparent becomes effective on January 6, 2018. From that day, employees can request confirmation of: (a) how much other employees are paid; and (b) the business criteria used to determine those pay rates.</p> <p>The right only applies to employers with more than 200 employees and employees can only request the information every 2 years.</p> <p>Access to information need only be granted in respect of other employees who: (a) work in the same or in a comparable area of service; and (b) who are of the opposite sex.</p>	<p>(1) Check current headcount to work out whether the new rules will apply to you.</p> <p>(2) Update and train HR so they are familiar with the new entitlements.</p> <p>(3) Develop a system to deal with requests to ensure similar treatment for everyone, and for efficiency.</p>
Social Security		
Social Security Contributions	The income thresholds regarding social security contributions will increase on January 1, 2018 as follows: (a) the threshold for Health Insurance will be an annual salary of EUR 53,100.00 (up from EUR 52,200.00); and (b) for pension and unemployment insurance, the threshold will be an annual salary of EUR 78,000 (up from EUR 76,200.00).	Update payroll to ensure new thresholds are taken into account.
Disability		
Disability Representation	Employers with at least 5 employees who are severely disabled, must elect a representative body for those employees. Their main function is to ensure employees with disabilities are suitably integrated into the workplace. From January 1, 2018, employers must consult the representative body before they can dismiss a disabled employee.	<p>(1) If you have 5 or more disabled staff members, ensure: (i) you have an elected representative body; (ii) HR know to consult them before a dismissal.</p> <p>(2) Update any internal policies and procedures to reflect the new rules.</p> <p>(3) If unsure of how to comply, seek specialist labour law advice.</p>

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Maternity		
Maternity Protection	<p>Amendments to the Maternity Protection Act become effective on January 1, 2018.</p> <p>Importantly, the changes will introduce protection for consultants and other self-employed persons if they are economically dependent on the employer.</p> <p>The changes also include a requirement to conduct regular risk assessments for all individual roles. The purpose is to prevent health and safety risks from affecting pregnant or breastfeeding employees. If a risk is detected, the employer must introduce protective measures, which may mean making changes to the role itself.</p>	<p>(1) Become familiar with the new rules and assess how they impact your business.</p> <p>(2) Review and revise current practices and policies to ensure compliance.</p> <p>(3) Implement a set risk assessment procedure and train administering staff on how to use it.</p> <p>(4) If unsure of how to comply with the numerous changes, seek specialist labour law advice.</p>
Representation		
Works Councils	<p>From March 1, 2018, regular works council elections must take place every 4 years to ensure the election of new members.</p>	<p>Diarise the re-election dates if applicable to your business.</p>
Privacy		
EU Data Protection	<p>The General Data Protection Regulation will take effect across Europe on May 25, 2018 introducing stricter rules on processing personal data. Employers operating in Germany must ensure they comply with the Regulation Standards.</p> <p>The new Federal Data Protection Act (known as <i>'Bundesdatenschutzgesetz'</i>) which implements the Regulations into national law, will also apply from May 25, 2018.</p>	<p>(1) Become familiar with the new rules and keep abreast of developments ahead of implementation.</p> <p>(2) Review existing practices/policies/procedures regarding data protection and update accordingly.</p> <p>(3) If unsure of how to comply, obtain specialist advice.</p>