

SUBJECT	LEGAL CHANGE	ACTION REQUIRED
Working hours		
Changes to Belgium's 'Time Credit' system	<p>Employees must now be aged 60 or over (up from 55 years) to reduce their working hours for the rest of their career, in exchange for payment of an (unemployment) allowance.</p> <p>Effective date: January 1, 2019.</p>	<p>(1) Ensure HR is aware of the increase in age.</p> <p>(2) Amend staff policies and implement once updated.</p>
Employment terms		
Individuals can request change of terms as part of the "soft end-of-career" system	<p>Employees aged 58 or over can individually request amended working conditions to improve their work life balance (e.g. changing from night work to day work). Previously, changes could only be made if a sector or company collective agreement or company work rules permitted this. Individual employee requests were not possible.</p> <p>Effective date: January 1, 2019 (subject to royal decree).</p>	<p>(1) Ensure HR is aware of the changes.</p> <p>(2) Amend staff policies and implement once updated.</p> <p>(3) If an employee requests a "soft end-of-career system", the agreement between you and the employee must be in writing and contain certain provisions. Seek legal assistance with the drafting to ensure compliance.</p>
Unemployment benefits		
Unemployment with company benefits	<p>In 2018, qualifying employees aged 62 plus could leave work with company benefits when their employment terminated. To qualify, you must have worked for the company for a qualifying period. The required service periods have increased as follows: (i) 41 years' service for men (previously 40 years); and (ii) 35 years' service for women (previously 34).</p> <p>However, where employment terminates due to a restructuring, employees must be 59 or older to benefit (increased from 56 years).</p> <p>Effective date: January 1, 2019 (subject to royal decree).</p>	<p>Ensure you are familiar with the new criteria.</p>
Pensions		
Changes to statutory workplace pension plans	<p>Under the new rules:</p> <p>(i) employees must be affiliated to the pension plan from their start date (if they meet the plan conditions); until now, affiliation could be postponed until the employee reached 25; and</p> <p>(ii) employees' rights under the plan vest immediately (previously, the plan rules could delay vesting until one year after affiliation to the plan).</p> <p>Effective date: January 1, 2019.</p>	<p>(1) Familiarise yourself with the new rules and amend internal policies as applicable.</p> <p>(2) Ensure all new joiners are affiliated from day one.</p> <p>(3) Current employees who are under the age of 25 must be affiliated from the effective date, and their pension rights will vest immediately.</p>

This is a high level general update only. Legal advice should be obtained on specific circumstances.