

## iGlobal Law 2021 Annual Alert : Belgium

| Legal Change   | Effective Date  | Action required   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Temporary 'Corona Unemployment' Scheme</b><br/>Under this scheme employment agreements are suspended, meaning that workers do not have to work and the employer does not have to pay salary. Employees benefit from an allowance from the National Employment Office (NEO) instead.</p> <p>Previously, in order to fall under this scheme, the employer had to prove that there were at least 20% days of temporary unemployment in the second quarter of 2020 or that it belonged to an exceptionally hard-hit sector.</p> <p>On November 6<sup>th</sup> 2020, the federal government decided to introduce a simplified procedure for temporary corona unemployment from October 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021 for all employers and employees. As a result, there are no longer any conditions for applying under this scheme.</p> | <p>Extended scheme ends on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.</p> <p>Publication date has not yet been announced.</p>                                | <p>Keep up to date with the rules and deadlines. The website of the <a href="#">NEO</a> provides good guidance (Dutch and French only).</p> |
| <p><b>Birth Leave Extended to 15 days in 2021</b><br/>The federal government has taken initiatives to promote gender equality. In this context, birth leave, which is the leave that fathers or co-parents can take at childbirth, will be extended.</p> <p>Birth leave currently amounts to 10 days. This will be extended to 15 days as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 and to 20 days as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2023.</p>   | <p>Publication date has not yet been announced.</p>   | <p>Take into account that birth leave is a right. However, there is no obligation for workers to take up birth leave.</p>                   |
| <p><b>Coalition agreement Government Decree I</b><br/>The recently installed government Decree I promises several new measures in terms of employment. The most important contemplated measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reform of the reintegration procedure in case of long-term illness;</li> <li>• evaluation of the different leave systems;</li> <li>• working time flexibility;</li> <li>• new legal framework for telework;</li> <li>• equal pay initiatives.</li> </ul>   | <p>The coalition agreement is a policy document on the basis of which legislative action is taken. Legislation is to be expected in 2021.</p> | <p>Nothing at this stage but keep an eye out for the draft legislation.</p>   |