



## Labor Market under the Influence of Covid -19 and the Need for Changes in the Labor Code

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this paper is to show how the labor market has changed after Covid-19, the need to adapt to these changes and the birth of new professions. In Albania, as in other countries in the region and beyond, the spread of covid-19 brought consequences in the field of employment, both in terms of employment levels and new mentalities and job profiles. Analyzed and what size work from home took, can it be one of the newest ways to work being applied by all countries. Undoubtedly Covid-19 brought radical change, it is already certain that the professions and the labor market post Covid-19 will not be the one we are used to and have acted on so far. Obviously all this change will not only require intervention from economic and social actors to adapt to the new conditions, but also need an intervention in the Code of Labor and bylaws for further specification of work from home, or as it is otherwise called telework.*

**Keywords:** labor market, covid-19, telework, work from home

### 1. Introduction

Dealing with Covid-19, a situation not experienced before, would certainly bring uncertainty and often times difficulties in adapting to the new reality. This difficulty in adapting comes from both the economic and human point of view. In many job profiles managers but also employees did not have the proper training. Services would be done online. But not every job profile could be done online or from home. And it was precisely these job profiles that were hit the hardest.

But which were the professions that were hardest hit by the crisis? Here we can mention: professions related to the direct provision of services, which have little or no opportunity to provide services remotely, such as dentists, barbers, lawyers, hotel and tourism services in general, restaurants, bar-cafes, handicrafts, plumbers, mechanics, transport, retail, industrial activities, tailoring industry, call center, financial services, construction, artistic and cultural products and services, sports and fashion related professions, pleasure and relaxation industry etc. It is already certain: the professions and the job market post Covid-19 will not be the one we are used to and have acted with so far. Multidimensional planetary crisis - economic, financial, social, psychological, environmental, sanitary, etc. - caused by the coronavirus, in addition to the extraordinary damage caused, has called into question "the behavior and expected developments in the labor and occupational markets." (Civici: 2020)

## 2. New Professions Born Post Covid-19?

Social isolation and the closure of a large number of businesses or wholesalers and retailers radically changed the nature of trade and payments. The volume of online sales and payments, within a few weeks, increased tremendously compared to the pre-pandemic period. Likewise, the use of online payments and transactions. Professions and specialists in e-commerce, digitalization of offer and services, digitalization of payments, advertising and publicity, communication and consumer psychology, etc., became one of the most valued and demanded during this crisis period.

The most far-sighted and intelligent service businesses and sectors responded immediately to this situation, creating or expanding "telework" for a significant portion of their services, creating new professions related to digitalization, such as digital communication expert ", " Digital project specialist ", " Webmaster ", " Webdesigner ", " digital marketing expert ", etc. Of course, some of these professions existed even before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the emergency situation caused by it, but new situations and challenges gave them a much faster importance and development than the usual pace of time before the pandemic. business, adapting their activity to the new rules of sanitary protocols, adapting to the new ways of consumption of their customers, offering new products, urgently needed in the market and, above all, starting a large-scale retraining of staff with new competencies and knowledge. (Civici: 2020)

Telework together with the mass digitalization of production technologies, services and work processes, is already part of every discussion, project, priority and strategy for the future. These changes require urgency and a rapid evolution of human resource competencies in it all links of management schemes. Remote manufacturing, telecommuting, telemarketing, telecommunications, remote banking, remote control, online event organizers, etc., all through the computer screen, are the best example of this era of re post Covid-19.

## 3. Transformation and Adaptation of Vocational Education Systems

The shift of online learning has already become part of many educational systems in the world, the level of use and the way of using technology in order to achieve the quality of distance or online learning is considered to be variable. This level depends on factors numerous, related to the various parties involved in the realization of this learning format and from the integration of technology in education systems before the period of taking measures for school closures as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. (Duration: 2021)

All this radical change that is happening in real life, pushed forward especially by the Covid-19 crisis, urgently requires radical changes in both the education systems in general and those of vocational training in particular. Education systems, at all levels, but especially universities and vocational colleges, need to respond quickly, in line with new challenges, to anticipate these changes of this new era we have entered. Curricula, content diplomas, syllabi, basic and auxiliary textbooks, teaching methods, forms and models of communication, various laboratories and cabinets, type of knowledge, information and knowledge, research methodology, various academic and scientific publications, etc., should be adapt quickly to the new situation, in order to prepare and produce quality experts and specialists equivalent to new professions and competencies that are developing rapidly. (Civici: 2020)

## 4. Work from Home, Features and Conditions

Regarding work from home, there is a definition of it in the Labor Code of the Republic of Albania.

**Article 15 stipulates** *that with the home employment contract the employer performs his work at home, or in any other place determined in agreement with the employer, according to the conditions agreed between them in the employment contract.*

With the telework contract the employee performs his work at home, or in another place, determined in agreement with the employer, using information technology, within the working time, determined by the employee, according to the conditions agreed between them in the contract of work.

Working conditions for employees working at home or teleworking can not be less favorable, compared to other employees who perform the same or comparable work. For this reason, the employer must take measures:

- a. to facilitate telework, by making available, installing and maintaining the necessary computer equipment for its performance, except in cases when the employee, who performs the telework, uses personal equipment;
- b. to prevent the isolation of the employee, creating conditions to meet with other employees.

An employee shall not be deemed to perform "homework" or "teleworking" if he works in a job other than that agreed upon with the employer or, in special circumstances, with his consent, or under an agreement with to, perform

another type of work, provided in the contract.

So from what is noticed about work at home is mentioned only in one article, without having a wider regulation in the following. This change was realized in 2015. But the post covid situation brought the necessity to further complete the legal framework, making the specifications of appropriate and to further complement it by adapting to new developments.

To have a more complete legal framework, we can rely on the recommendations given by the ILO on the basis of the Employer Guidance regarding workplace management during Covid-19. This guide is a very good source of information to make necessary changes and additions to the Labor Code in our country.

The Guide stipulates that:

*What should employers consider before implementing a work-from-home policy?*

Before deciding to organize work from home, employers should consider whether the work activity is suitable for distance work. If yes, then employers should discuss with their staff to make sure of the following aspects:

- A. providing the proper equipment, technology, and training that are essential to staying connected with colleagues and the organization;
- B. setting clear expectations for managers and employees regarding work and working conditions;
- C. flexibility of time to support employee productivity and enable them to work at convenient times and places;
- D. assessing safety and health risks and taking reasonable preventive measures in relation to work from home (i) if it involves manual tasks, (ii) risks and hazards, (iii) electrical safety and (iv) the general environment as noise, first aid for safety reasons or emergency exits in case of fire, etc .;
- E. assessment of potential risks reported by the employee, including specific risks related to work from home (eg domestic violence);
- F. agreeing on employee obligations in relation to elements and policies such as working hours, confidentiality and safe work practices at home; v providing adequate workspaces;
- G. establishing means of contact between employer and employee and prior organization of means of communication.

*What equipment should be provided to employees to facilitate their work from home (teleworking)?*

Equipment normally used in the workplace, e.g. laptop, mouse, monitor, keyboard and headphones, can also be used to perform work from home (teleworking). If any of the equipment is provided by the employer, it must be in good condition and suitable for the work activity. Suitable equipment already available in the employee's home can be considered for temporary teleworking.

*What precautions should be taken if employees use computers and digital technology while working from home?*

Employers should provide information to employees on matters related to the work to be performed at home. For teleworking, the employer must consider data security: the employer must ensure that data security is maintained in cases where staff work from home. When remote work involves the transmission of confidential data outside the workplace, the employer must ensure that the systems enable the secure transmission of such data.

*What other general support and communication tools should be provided for employees who work from home?*

Working from home can make employees feel isolated, work long hours, and upset work-life balance. It is important for employees to know that they can receive support at any time during working hours.

*Are employees required to comply with company directives to work from home?*

Employees have a legal obligation to cooperate with the employer in order to guarantee a safe and healthy work environment in support of relevant legal provisions, collective agreements or company policies. It is important to reiterate that this obligation remains in force regardless of the informal context, such as a person's home. Employees should take reasonable care to protect their safety and follow the advice of their GP, health care providers and employers.

## 5. Advantages and Disadvantages of Working from Home

Some studies show that office work can not always be transferred to the home and that offices will still exist. Researchers conclude that certain conditions must be created for work from home - such as the right equipment for work at home.

How and where do you work from home? How do employees perceive work at home? How productive is work from home and what is crucial for its success? The reality of work from home and its perception in society differ from each other. Before the pandemic, more people worked from home than previously thought. And another: Mental work can greatly be done from home. More than a third of employees also said, that they are less productive than when working in conclusion offices.

The more satisfied the employees were with the situation and the conditions of the house, the more satisfied and

productive they were at work. According to the study, not only those who have large apartments or work rooms are more satisfied with work at home. Even employees with high salaries and long work experience willingly work from home. (Böhme: 2021)

Regarding the advantages and disadvantages of working from home, the Public Administration has published a report listing some of the advantages and disadvantages of working from home.

### 5.1 Advantages

- *Flexibility* - In addition to the morning schedule, the employee enjoys flexibility in time management, performing a productive and quality work throughout the day.
- *Increases employee freedom and autonomy* - The employee feels freer by working independently.
- *Better organization of time and work* - Sometimes the office is stressful on its own and the development of work at home is more private.
- *Comfortable clothing* - If we do not have a virtual meeting or gathering why should we dress in a jacket or shirt when we can stay in sportswear.
- *Save money* - The employee does not use transportation, does not consume lunch outside, does not drink coffee after work, all this is money saving.
- *Less stress* - Heavy morning traffic is stressful, as well as when you have to close more work than usual within a certain schedule.
- *Produkt more productivity* - To distance yourself from the office and colleagues, and to work in the quiet of the home happens to be productive, as the employee has his own "oasis" and the inspiration to work flows naturally.

### 5.2 Disadvantages

- *Work does not end* - Once the employee has successfully completed a task, a phone call, an e-mail, a question on WhatsApp keeps him nailed all day dealing with work. This endless work pressure can happen because the employee has high expectations of himself, even from the fact that he is working from home, but also from the pressure to show himself that he has the capacity to cope with work even in these conditions.
- *Distraction from various factors* - Noise from household appliances, loud TV, the child who wants attention, the good smell of cooking, etc., makes the employee distracted.
- *Low interaction with the team* - While working in the office, employees ask colleagues who are close for an opinion or idea more, but when working from home, such interaction is lacking.
- *Difficulty in monitoring and measuring performance* - Once the work is completed, the first difficulty encountered is performance measurement. This occurs from lack of constant contact with the superior. Such a situation can pose a problem for the continuation of work, as you are not aware of how the work is being evaluated so far.
- *Difficulty in distinguishing between work and home* - The temptation to do housework, cook recipes that you missed, read a book that previously you did not even have time to take your eyes off, etc. like these, are numerous when working from the house. Of course everything is done, but the employee must clearly and decisively separate the job from the other jobs he wants to do.
- *Lack of willpower* - Work from home happens to become routine. Every day a work plan, progress report, virtual meetings and all these cause the will to fade and the employee starts to work more slowly.

## 6. Conclusion

Covid-19 brought radical changes, both in the way of work, service and the birth of new professions. Occupations and the job market post Covid-19 will not be the one we are used to and have acted with so far.

Telework together with the mass digitalization of production technologies, services and work processes, has become part of every discussion, project, priority and strategy for the future. These changes require a rapid evolution of human resource competencies at all levels. of management schemes.

It should be borne in mind that office work may not in any case be transferred to the home and that the offices will still exist. For work from home, certain conditions must be created with the right technology and all technical means. Work from home, regardless of the work profile, has its advantages and disadvantages.

All this radical change of the labor market brought the necessity of legal changes, to expand and specify further, especially in relation to work from home. Where for the latter there is a short and inclusive legal definition.

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