On March 11, the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) called on the authorities and employers to take all necessary urgent measures to prevent violations of workers’ labor rights when imposing any restrictions and anti-epidemic measures. Besides, the KVPU urged to provide all needed safety measures for workers.

As for 20 of March, the KVPU and its regional and branch organizations are continuing to monitor the situation with labour rights and work strenuously to address such problems as providing workers with personal protection equipment and sanitizers, ensuring a transport to and from work and providing payments during the employee’s idle time/vacation due to the quarantine and restrictive measures implementation.

In social media, the KVPU started the campaign “What is your quarantine situation?” to show best practices at enterprises, highlight violations of workers’ rights and urge workers to inform about their problems.

The Chairperson of the KVPU Mykhailo Volynets said:

“At the local level, KVPU organizations are negotiating with employers on transfer problems and payments during the workers' idle time.

At the same time, I appealed to the Prime Minister of Ukraine on the issue of transporting people to workplaces and back home. Due to restrictions on traffic and the inability of some employers to give their employees an opportunity to work from home, I suggest finding a compromise and arranging transfers for people who are forced to work in quarantine time.

Also, as a member of the parliament of Ukraine, I appealed to the Social Insurance Fund of Ukraine on the jurisprudential contradiction regarding the procedure for issuing documents proving temporary disability in quarantine time for people whose work is connected with services to the population, who have been in contact with infected people. The disability certificate needed for paid leave is issued by an infectious disease doctor or treating physician according to the report of the doctor-epidemiologist of the local Sanitary and Epidemiological Service. However, according to Government Resolution No. 348 of March 29, 2017, the State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service were eliminated.

In this regard, I asked for a clarified answer on the procedure for issuing documents certifying temporary disability in quarantine.”
On March 17, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted laws to combat the spread of COVID-19 in Ukraine According to their provisions:

- Penalties won't be applied for violations of tax legislation committed during the period from March 1 to April 30, 2020;
- A moratorium on documentary and factual tax inspections established on the period from 18 March to 30 April 2020;
- The deadline for filing the annual declaration of wealth and income extended to July 1, 2020
- The land payment is not accrued or paid between 1 March and 30 April 2020;
- A non-residential real estate owned by natural or legal persons is not subject to real estate (other than land) tax from March 1 to April 30, 2020.
- The possibility of working at home for employees and civil servants of local self-government bodies and granting leave with their consent is providing;
- The owners have a right to change the working modes of bodies, institutions, enterprises, organizations, in particular, regarding the reception and servicing of individuals and legal entities with the obligatory informing about this on websites and by other communication means;
- The legal fact of the introduction of quarantine is attributed to force majeure;
- A number of measures carried out to protect the rights and interests of internally displaced persons, preventing the termination of housing subsidies, registering the unemployed, etc.;
- A prohibition on the conduct of state supervision (control) of planned measures for the implementation of state supervision (control) in the field of economic activity was imposed.

The KVPU is monitoring the situation with possible amendments to labor law. The draft law No2708 “On Labour”, which narrowing workers’ and trade unions’ rights, was withdrawn, which was welcomed by trade unionists. At the same time the Chairwoman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Social Policy and Veterans’ Rights, Ms. Galyna Tretyakova claimed that changes to the labor law will be done. Furthermore, on 16th of March the President of Ukraine in his address on coronavirus counteraction emphasized that “in the situation of the global pandemic and the threat of the global financial crisis, the Parliament of Ukraine must pass vital laws for the economy, implement tax, land, labor reforms”.

The KVPU Chairperson Mykhailo Volynets:

“...The KVPU demanded to withdraw not only draft law “On Labour” (No. 2708) but bills “On Amendments to the Labour Code of Ukraine concerning Additional Grounds for Dismissal” (No. 2584), “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine (Concerning Some Issues of Trade Union Activity)” (No. 2681), “On Mandatory funded pension provision” (No. 2683 of 27.12.2019) that can be voted by the Parliament. As there is still a possibility of introducing a detrimental to labor and social rights laws the KVPU is ready to urgent mobilization”.

On 18th of March the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy claimed:

“We also have information that many business executives force employees to write a letter of resignation. It’s illegal. People, no one can force you to voluntarily resign unless you have the desire. Do not be afraid and take it on the chin. If the business executive puts pressure on you, call the police immediately
As for the state and municipal enterprises. There was a conversation with executives, they were warned about responsibility for pressure on employees. If the situation continues, they will be punished.Regarding private companies. I urge businessmen not only not to break the law, but above all to remain human. Coronavirus will pass. Crisis will pass. Profits will return. But honor and respect cannot be restored.”.
THE FREE TRADE UNION OF MEDICAL WORKERS OF UKRAINE (VPMPU)

In the context of combating the COVID-19 pandemic, the VPMPU called on the authorities to:

- Immediately carry measures to stop speculation on prices of such important goods as masks and disinfectants;
- To provide public healthcare workers with protective clothing and other personal protective equipments;
- To supply hospitals with all needed medicines and equipment;
- To allocate funds from not only from local, but state budgets for additional payments to healthcare workers;
- To provide transport for healthcare workers, because due to the restrictions of public transport traffic they can’t get to their workplaces.

HEALTHCARE

According to official statistics, in Ukraine the average wage in health care and social assistance spheres amounts to UAH 7 297 (EUR 243).

THE PARLIAMENT OF UKRAINE INSTRUCTED the Government to establish additional wage supplements for medical and other employees directly engaged in work to eliminate COVID-19 of up to 200 percent of wages during the period of implementation of measures to prevent the occurrence and spread of COVID-19, as well as extra payments to certain categories of workers in essential areas of life.

NEWS FROM REGIONS

The primary trade union organization of the All-Ukrainian Trade Union “Protection of Justice“ of employees of the KP “Single Settlement Center” in Ivano-Frankivsk is actively protecting workers’ rights during the quarantine.

The trade union Chairperson Oleksandr Kachanko informed that employees of certain departments would be paid salaries during idle time. Those who want to get paid annual leave will have all relevant guarantees provided by the CBA.

The trade union informed that people who’re performing work had been provided with personal protective equipment and sanitizers.

The Primary Trade Union Organization at the LEONI Wiring Systems UA GmbH of the KVPL informed that the employer ensured safe and hygienic working conditions at factories. Within the dialogue trade union and employers were agreed on the working schedule of enterprises in quarantine.

The organization of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine in Ivano-Frankivsk region informed about the lack of tests for COVID-19 in public hospitals on March 19. The healthcare workers are concerned about the lack of personal protective equipment and artificial lung mechanical ventilators. Moreover, they concerned that the local Infectious Hospital, that was built in 2010, should close in April.

EMPLOYEES OF THE PUBLIC HOSPITAL №6 IN DNIPRO reported to the KVPU that their workplaces were not prepared for quarantine. They work have been worked for 2 months without disinfectants.

The administration requires staff to have masks and caps, but it does not provide workers with them. Doctors are forced to buy these things at the pharmacy on the ground floor of the hospital and pay for this by themselves.
The passenger railway traffic was suspended till 3 April. Now measures to counteract the spread of COVID-19 infection are being carried out at the JSC “Ukrzaliznytsia”. Chairman of the Free Trade Union of Railways of Ukraine (VPZU) Volodymyr Kozelsky informed that the VPZU was monitoring the situation with labour rights and coordinate work of its regional organizations. Trade unions highlighted main problems: ensuring OSH rules and remuneration of those workers who cannot work now because of restrictions.

The VPZU leaders remained managers that according to the Labour Code of Ukraine, railway workers should be paid at least 2\3 of wage or average wage.

The cargo transportation hasn’t stopped and workers continue to work. At the same time, many employees of Ukrzaliznytsia live remotely from enterprises. That’s why special buses or trains started to transport workers. The VPZU monitors, how safety measures are provided at the Ukrzaliznytsia. Some primary trade unions informed that workers hadn’t been provided with masks, gloves and hand sanitizers. VPZU’s organizations are trying to solve these problems.

According to the Chairman of the Poltava Regional Organisation of the KVPU, train driver Maksym Moskalets, the medical examination of train drivers is carried out in the same manner as before quarantine. At the same time, there is a problem of supplying train drivers with special uniform, masks and sanitizers.

In Kremenchuk workers of railway depots, repair shops were given handmade masks made of paper towels.

"According to rules, locomotive crews should be provided with masks at the calculation one unit per three hours and 100ml of hand sanitizer for one person. We understand that depot’s management, as well as employees, faced unpredictable situations. However, why it seems that JPS Ukrzaliznytsia isn’t addressing the problem of the protection of workers?" - said Maksym Moskalets.

The primary trade unions of the VPZU at the depot bought sanitizers and masks for their members. However, they can’t fulfill all workers’ demands and require an employer to ensure all safety measures in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.

"There are different collective agreements at the production unit and branch of JSC "Ukrzaliznytsia" and some of them contain provisions that during periods of employee's idle time/leave, they are paid 100% of their salaries, but without bonuses. Our organizations requested management on this issue and received official confirmation of such paid leaves. Some local executives tried to force people to go on unpaid leave, but our leaders insisted that they shouldn’t agree on it, as it contradicts CBA’s or the Labour Code of Ukraine".

Since March 18, intercity and interregional automobile, railway, and air passenger traffic stopped; On buses, trolleybuses and trams cannot be more than 10 passengers. In Kyiv, Kharkiv, the Dnipro metro suspended.

Since March 23 public transport will transport only employees of those enterprises and organizations that will work due to their high importance for city and country.

"We’ve identified that the main problem of metro employees who are still working during the quarantine is getting to workplaces. There is no legislation or regulation that obliges the employer to provide transportation for people to/from work. We’re going to negotiate this issue with the employer and find the best solution". 
The Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine (NPGU) informed that demands the wage arrears payment and ensuring the electricity supply to state coal mines. The total debt amounts to UAH 1.315 billion.

According to the NPGU Chairperson Mykhailo Volynets, some mines of state-owned coal enterprises in Luhansk and Volyn regions were disconnected from power. As for now, there is still a threat of electricity outages at coal mines.

“In time of pandemic and crisis people need money to buy food and medicine, that’s why payment of wages is very important now. The cutting off power at mines is dangerous. I was informed that miners couldn’t take shower and employees couldn’t use computers at some mines where was problems of electricity supply. We are working with government officials on this and wage arrears problems” – informed Mykhailo Volynets.

WAGE ARREARS AND ELECTRICITY OUTAGES

The management of the state-owned enterprise Lvivvugilliya (Lviv region) decided to suspend coal production. During the quarantine regime, the small number of people will work to maintain the important operations, as pumping water from mines.

Less miners are working at the SOE Myrnogradvugillia (Donetsk region), but its mines are continuing coal extraction.

Also, the NPGU primary organizations confirmed that the SOE “Selydivvugillia”, the Mine named after Surhay and Ltd “Dobropillyavugillia” (Donetsk region), and PJSC Pavlogradvugillia (Dnipropetrovsk region) continue to work.

MEASURES AT MINES

The Ministry of Energy and Environmental Protection appealed to coal mines, independent mines, design and research institutes with recommendations for period of the quarantine regime, in particular:
- To provide decontamination of premises and vehicles,
- Prohibition to hold large public events, and business trip,
- Ensuring isolation of persons with signs of illness.
- Minimizing the number of employees involved in work.

WOMEN’S WORK

NPGU Deputy Chairperson Natalia Levytska: “At mining enterprises, women usually work at support staff jobs. Last week a lot of them started to carry out special disinfection and cleaning. Also, some women can contact with groups of miners during their shifts. In this regard, our women committees monitor the observance of safety norms.

For example, last week we saw a video of woman disinfecting premises of mine without a proper respirator and safety glasses at a mine in Kryvyi Rih. The NPGU immediately appealed to employers on this case. Women performing such important work to protect miners’ health must be protected. We demand to implement and maintain all safety regulations effectively”.

The video: https://www.facebook.com/MykhailoVolynets/videos/826595097853024/