

ECE COVID-19 monitor

Codebook

November 11, 2020

1 BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The database provides an overview of main policy measures adopted in East Central Europe as a response to the pandemic during the first and second waves of the COVID-19 crisis, with a special focus on social policies, labor market, industrial, trade and investment measures, and monetary and fiscal policies. It covers the following countries: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania..

Reference: Dorothee Bohle, Edgars Eihmanis, Nils Oellerich, Jasper Simons, Alen Toplišek, Gergő Medve-Bálint and Dani Sandu (2021): ECE COVID-19 Monitor

2 DATA STRUCTURE

The dataset is organized in three core policy sheets per country which cover different policy areas: social and labor market policies; industry, trade and investment policies, and monetary and fiscal policies. Two additional policy sheets were added to some countries: containing the spread and political institutions.

The data is structured by the following categories (excel columns):

- **ID:** this column provides a unique identification code for a specific cell/policy in the dataset. The logic of the ID number goes as follows: *country abbreviation + sheet abbreviation + number (0000)*. For instance, the code EESL0009 refers to the cell, containing information on Estonian social and labour market policies decided upon/enacted on March 6. This ID then can be used for cross-referencing within and/or across the worksheets (e.g. in case the policy is modified, extended or discontinued);
- **Date:** this column refers to the date when a policy is decided upon and/or enacted (see below). Both are relevant for the database but have to be explicated in the “Date meaning”, “Policy action details” and/or “Additional remarks” columns. The choice for one or the other is selected for each episode individually, depending on the policy specificities and availability of information;
- **Date meaning:** this column specifies whether the given date refers to a decision upon a policy (“Decided”) or its actual implementation (“Enacted”);
- **Sponsor:** this column provides information on the main initiator of the policy. Mostly this includes the government, cabinet of ministers and/or a particular Ministry. However, it might also include other actors, such as political parties, employers’ associations, trade unions and NVOs;
- **Sponsor other:** this column provides information on other sponsors of the policy.

- **Social partners involved:** this column provides any information on the involvement of social partners in the policy deliberation process. This may also include social partners' criticisms for unilateral approach in policy making;
- **Main category:** see the relevant definitions in the coding scheme;
- **Subcategory:** see the relevant definitions in the coding scheme;
- **Policy instrument/type of support:** this column provides information on the technical means of policy; i.e. what policy instruments are used to achieve the stated goal;
- **Generosity:** this column provides information on the scope of the policy, for instance, the amount of funds earmarked or spent on a specific policy goal. This column may also provide relevant ex-post evidence on how the policy measure has (not) worked / implemented. This is motivated by two basic concerns: First, some policies are well meant but do not operate as planned. Second, governments have political incentives to cover all the policy spectrum (i.e. help everybody). However, in practice, some groups benefit more than others;
- The column can also contain relevant regarding implementation of the policy; e.g. regarding whether the adopted policy works as planned;
- **Part of a “major” package?:** A major package refers to large policy events with a name and a vision, typically adopted at the height of the pandemic. This category does not include relatively minor policy measures (even if bundled together). Of course, in practice, discrimination between “major” (or minor) packages is difficult, due to the gradual nature of the policy making process (concrete policies can be more or less direct products of large packages);
- **Policy action details:** This column provides relevant policy details of the policy decided upon/enacted. While the information can be copy-pasted from an English source and/or translated from a national source, it should strike some balance between exhaustiveness and readability. If relevant, the column might also provide information on *almost* adopted policies and/or alternative policy propositions. Such information would be helpful in grasping the relevant political dynamics in a particular country;
- **Action link:** This column provides web link(s) to the relevant information. Use of multiple sources is encouraged;
- **Points of contention:** this column provides information on the political context before and/or after a policy adopted. This includes views on various domestic stakeholders (e.g. parties, businesses, unions, fiscal councils, ombudsmen etc.) as well as international actors (e.g. EC, WHO);
- **Contention link:** self-explanatory
- **Additional remarks:** This column provides relevant information regarding political and/or economic context behind the policy in question

3 CODING RULES AND STRATEGIES

- **Objectives and coverage of the database**
 - The database aims to provide an overview of main policy measures adopted in response to the pandemic. The list of measures aims to be comprehensive, but by no means exhaustive. Selection of policy measures is subject to a

judgement by the coder. Generally, it is expected that coding density is higher at the initial stages of the pandemic, becoming sparser over time.

- Coverage of the dataset might vary across countries and policy areas, depending on the coder's research interests and/or availability of information. However, coverage should not depend on language proficiency (given the large number of languages concerned, coders are encouraged to rely on machine-translation tools: see below);
- Timespan of the database is not fixed but varies from case to case. It depends on health dynamics and policy interventions in a specific country, as well as availability of information;

- **Data sources:**

The main research method is desk-based online searching. We google keywords and search for relevant content/data:

- For “Containing the spread” policies, a great source is the WHO's COVID-19 Health System Response Monitor, compiled by country experts. Besides extremely detailed CS policies in a chronological order, it also covers relevant economic, fiscal and social policies (although coverage varies a lot between countries / experts). For instance, see this on Hungary:
<https://www.covid19healthsystem.org/countries/hungary/livinghit.aspx?Section=6.%20Measures%20in%20other%20sectors&Type=Chapter>.
- For “state-aid” policies post-Covid approved by the European Commission's website:
https://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/what_is_new/covid_19.html
- For a quick and exhaustive review of state-aid policies in any of the member states, see the following (in the link, replacing “Latvia” with any other EU state: https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response/jobs-and-economy-during-coronavirus-pandemic/state-aid-cases/latvia_en
- Another type of source is official (government) websites: e.g.
<https://www.vlada.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/due-to-the-spread-of-the-coronavirus-epidemic--the-government-has-restricted-the-free-movement-of-people-to-the-essential-minimum-180381/>
- For business, investment and, not least, tax policies, good summaries are provided by local branches of the Big-4 consultancies, e.g.:
<https://www2.deloitte.com/ee/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/covid-19--package-of-economic-measures.html>
- For official communication, coalitional politics and political/economic/public health background, indispensable are various national sources—if not in English, then in local languages (see below);

- **Machine translation**

- If chronological and credible policy accounts are not available in English, they can be translated via the Google machine translation tools.
- The procedure goes as follows:
 - translate relevant keywords from English to a national language of interest (e.g. Romanian, Slovak or Bulgarian);
 - *google* these translated keywords;

- the retrieved web content can be directly read-in into English via *Google Chrome* (right click “Translate to English”);
- triangulate across different sources provides for validation and reliability;

- **Coding strategies:**

- In cases where policies are modified, extended and/or repealed, cross-references must be provided (using the relevant ID numbers).
- If a coder works on multiple countries, it is advisable to focus on a specific policy area and code several countries simultaneously. This helps seeing a bigger picture and fine-tune the coding strategies;
- If a policy episode is not resolved (e.g. for a lack of information, non-relevant coding categories etc), it is advisable to use colours, e.g. in order to mark that a policy is transferred to the parliament, amended or missing important information.

- **Colour codes:**

- For easier review of coding, use the following colour codes:

- Green: If an amendment (a policy is a modified version of an earlier policy)
- Red: Not resolved cases (important info missing, ambiguous categories / coding rules)
- Yellow: Adopted by government, waiting for parliament (not entirely clear when the policy would be legislated, if at all)
- Orange: A part of a major package (this would make subsequent analysis easier)

4 CODING CATEGORIES

“Containing the spread” sheet

Main categories	Subcategories	Definitions/examples
Movement restrictions	borders	Border Controls, Closure, or Opening
	flights	International Flight suspension or opening
	ships	
	domestic movements	domestic checkpoints, curfews, domestic travel restrictions, closure of public transport, and gradual lifting
	movement restrictions other	
Social distancing	schools	Closure (and gradual opening) of primary schools, secondary schools, universities, kindergartens
	public gatherings	Limits (and gradual lifting) on public gatherings cancellation of public events
	church	closure or restrictions (and gradual lifting) on church visits
	public space	Closure or restrictions (and gradual lifting) on visiting parks, museums, libraries, zoos, cemeteries
	sports	restrictions (and gradual lifting) on sports and fitness activities
	restaurants, cafes, hotels	restrictions on (and their lifting) on restaurant and cafe services
	social distance other	
	lockdown	workplace
home confinement		restrictions (and gradual lifting) on people to leave their homes
lockdown other		
public health	Masks & protective gear	recommending/making mandatory the wearing of masks, gloves, distribution of masks
	isolation and quarantine	The introduction and enforcement of isolation and quarantine policies
	public information	government campaigns informing about the virus,
	testing	testing policy
	contact tracing	policy concerning (electronic) contact tracing, development of apps
	hospitals	policies concerning the preparation of hospitals (e.g. investment, vacating hospitals, changing governance structure)
	medical personnel	policies concerning medical personnel (e.g. staffing, bringing back doctors and nurses from abroad, bringing back retired medical personal
	vaccines	policies concerning the development or obtainment of vaccines
65+	specific regulations to protect people above 65	

	public health other	
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“Social and labour market” sheet

Main categories	Subcategories	Definition, examples
Labor market	layoffs	changes to layoffs and dismissals regulations
	employment regulation	major changes in labour laws, derogation from collective agreements, employers' managerial prerogatives etc.
	Kurzarbeit	Scheme that allows firms to adjust working time while keeping workers. Usually, workers receive some compensation for their earning losses
	income support other	income support for workers who lose their jobs, for self employed, people in quarantine, informally employed, etc.
	active labour market policies	labour market policies that seek to improve the skills of workers
	public works	state-sponsored work schemes usually in the low skill segment
	labor market other	
Social assistance and transfers	cash transfers	conditional and unconditional cash transfers, including one-offs
	childcare support	care allowance for dealing with unforeseen childcare
	care allowance other	care allowances for dealing with unforeseen care burden other than childcare, e.g. handicapped or sick people
	social assistance other	
	social measures for youth	
	social protection not conditional on tax payments	i.e. covering actors in the informal economy
	social assistance and transfers other	
housing	utility	reduction of utility costs, postponement or reduction of mortgage or rental
	mortgages or rental costs	stop or extension of loan or rental payments, easing of mortgage lending
	evictions	suspension of evictions
	housing other	
Social insurance	Social security	reduction, waiver or subsidy of social security contributions for employees
	pension	e.g. pension top ups, advance payment of pension
	unemployment	extension or top up of unemployment benefits
	social insurance other	

Migration	seasonal workers	policies targeting cross-border seasonal workers
	commuters	policies targeting cross-border commuters
	contract workers	policies targeting cross border contract workers
	migration other	
Essential workers	health care workers	specific measures affecting healthcare workers
	essential workers other	

“Industry, Trade, Investment” sheet

Main categories	Subcategories	Definition, examples
Public investment	Subsidies to the public sector	subsidies to health, education, science, media, culture, sports
	Infrastructure	spending on infrastructure other than health: roads, bridges, buildings, rail, digital etc
	Spending on R&D general	Spending on increasing R&D capacity across the board
	Spending on R&D particular	spending on R&D in specific sectors (e.g. pharmaceutical)
	public investment other	
Statism	(Re)nationalisation	acquiring of private companies
	securitization	involvement of the military in running the economy
	statism other	
State aid to domestic sector	national champions	e.g. state aid to national airlines, big national private companies
	sectoral aid	state aid that targets specific sectors, e.g. tourism, manufacturing (but not export and not foreign enterprises)
	SMEs and the self-employed	state aid for SMEs and the self-employed
	state aid to domestic sector other	
State aid to foreign businesses	major company(ies)	state aid to major foreign owned companies
	sectoral aid foreign business	state aid that targets specific sectors (e.g. banking, car industry, manufacturing...)
	state aid to foreign business other	
Trade & FDI	trade restrictions	e.g. export bans on protective equipment
	special trade relations	e.g. special deals with China, regional groups like the Visegrad countries, or other bilateral relations
	export promotion	e.g. subsidies to exporting companies
	export restrictions	e.g. the banning exports of scarce medical goods, food products,
	FDI restrictions	e.g. measures that restrict foreign ownership in certain sectors or enterprises
	trade other	

“Monetary and Fiscal policies” sheet¹

Main categories	subcategories	definitions & examples
Monetary	rate cuts	cuts in base or policy rates to stimulate the economy
	exchange rate	policy (non)-intervention in the exchange rate to stimulate/stabilize the economy, (e.g. foreign currency exchange risk mitigation, open market intervention to stabilize the domestic currency, changes in forex reserves
	monetary policy other	
Financial	asset purchase	Central Bank purchase of government bonds in secondary markets, purchase and classification of state guaranteed securities as "special collateral" (e.g. those issued by state development banks or other state investment mechanisms), purchase of other securities
	funding for lending	Programs that incentive commercial banks to increase lending, for instance to SMEs or households
	loan payment holidays and restructuring	Programs that allow business or households to either put their loan payments on hold or restructure loans
	credit guarantees	Government guarantees of bonds and other debt issued by financial businesses I.e. in plain English: government tells financial businesses “don’t worry about the debt you’ve issued”
	loan guarantees	Government loan guarantees to nonfinancial businesses I.e. in plain English: government tells nonfinancial businesses “don’t worry about the loans you’ve taken out”
	Financial other	
macroprudential	macroprudential	Changes in supervisory rules or guidance that ease capital requirements, liquidity requirements or other requirements for financial business
fiscal	taxes	Government attempts to increase economic activity by reducing taxes [to avoid repetitions, here we report only measures not mentioned in the other policy sheets]
	stimulus	Government attempts to increase economic activity by increasing government spending [if available, incl. nominal value and as % of GDP]
	borrowing	borrowing from international actors (EIB, EC)
	fiscal policy other	

¹ The coding for this sheet is adapted from Yale Program on Financial Stability, Covid 10 Financial Response Tracker,
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1s6EgMa4KGDfFzcsZJKqwiH7yqkhnCQtW7gl7eHpZuqg/edit#gid=0>

Political Institutions

Main categories	Subcategories	Definitions, examples
political institutions	state of emergency	has a state of emergency been implemented , is it being lifted
	parliament	partial of full disempowerment of parliament
	judiciary	constraints on judiciary
	civil liberties	constraints on civil liberties
	media	constraints on media freedom
	municipal	constraints on municipal or regional governments
	political institutions other	
elections	postponement	postponement of elections
	held	elections held despite the crisis
	rules or procedures	change of election rules or procedures
	elections other	
public opinion	government approval	government approval rates
	policy approval	do citizens approve of the policies or consider them appropriate
	trust	trust ingovernment response
	fairness/burdensharing	do citizens consider the policy responses fair
	public opinion other	
governance	task force	establishment or change of a specific task force dealing with the crisi
	expertise	composition of task force with special focus on expertise role of expertise in the governments task force
	transparency	how transparent is government's communication and response
	capacity	does the government have the capacity to implement the measures
	consistency	are the measures consistent
	governance other	