



Covid-19: end of the suspension of the court deadlines

From 3 June, the court deadlines are no longer suspended. Court diligences will be again in person, even though distance communication means are to be kept whenever possible.

After consecutive months of social and economic restraints, due to the health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, Portugal has gradually returned to normality upon the end of some exceptional measures including, among others, the end of the suspension of the court deadlines.

Law 16/2020 of May 29 establishes the suspension of the court deadlines effective as of 3 June 2020. Consequently, judicial proceedings, which have been stopped since 9 March 2020, will return to their normal course. For example, if, for filing a defense (to be filed within 30 days), a period of 20 days had elapsed on 8 March, the outstanding 10-day period will count from 3 June, which will correspond to the 21st day of the deadline to file the response to the claim.

As for urgent claims (precautionary measures, insolvencies, and special restructuring procedures), the deadlines are no longer suspended from 7 April 2020; they were suspended between 9 March and 6 April 2020. For these and judicial proceedings in general, the diligences to take place in person will also come back, but with some slight differences.

Final hearings and proceedings involving the hearing of witnesses will take place in person, even though the means of distance communication (teleconference, video call or other equivalent) will be kept as optional, if they are not detrimental. In other proceedings (e.g. preliminary hearings), the means of distance communication will be used as a preferred option (except in cases where their use is not feasible), which would be a welcome measure to be kept in the future.

Some exceptional protective measures will however continue in force, *inter alia*:

- (a) The suspension of the debtor's filing for insolvency;
- (b) Suspension of actions and special eviction procedures and proceedings for delivery of leased immovable property, in case of tenant's weakness due to lack of housing or other critical reasons; and
- (c) The suspension of acts to be performed in enforcement or insolvency proceedings related to the judicial delivery of the family residence, as well as the suspension, at the request of the recipient, of court sales of property that may cause harm to his/her sustenance, and provided that the suspension does not cause serious or irreparable harm to the other party.

Regarding the measures taken during the state of emergency, you may also see our previous publications, available [here](#).

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