

*Events, developments, and opportunities in the international marketplace.*

### Singapore



In times as challenging as a pandemic, employers and organizations have a crucial part to play in supporting employees' needs. Yet, a recent global survey identified that Benefits, 56% of employees in Singapore reported that they did not receive strong support from their employers.

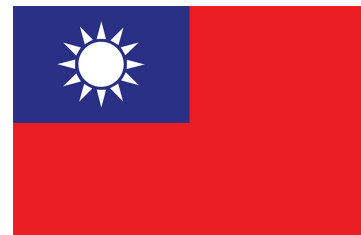
Compared to the 51% of workers globally and 46% in Asia who indicated the same, Singapore fared below global benchmarks in lending support to employees during the

pandemic. This could pose a problem for many local organizations as employees who feel supported and cared for during the pandemic are significantly more energized and less likely to want to leave their job, the survey noted. Additionally, the pandemic has only added to workplace stress and even burnout for many employees in Singapore. In particular, more than half (55%) of Singapore employees reported experiencing everyday stress, which was higher than the 50% across the globe and 51% in Asia. Further, almost one-fifth (16%) of employees reported feeling lonelier and more isolated during the pandemic, and close to one-third (26%) said they were financially worse off than the previous year.

While mental health issues are seemingly more common, only 10% of Singapore employees indicated that they felt comfortable discussing mental health challenges with family, friends, and healthcare professionals. This was lower than the global and Asia average of 19%.

### Taiwan

The new policies will allow pregnant employees to take up to seven days of paid leave for prenatal health checks, up from the current five. For married couples, male spouses of pregnant women are now entitled to seven instead of five days of paid paternity leave, which they can also use to accompany their wives on prenatal appointments, the MOL said. The MOL said a government budget of NT\$620 million (US\$22 million) has been allocated for the expanded policy, which takes effect immediately and is expected to benefit 102,000 female and 119,000 male workers. The new policy was



implemented under the Act of Gender Equality, which was amended in the Legislature last month to boost parental perks. Employers will need to pay for the additional two days of their workers' parental leave and then apply to the Bureau of Labour Insurance for reimbursement. In addition, the new rules will allow employees working at companies with fewer than 30 employees to request more flexible working hours if they have children under the age of three years, the ministry said, according to Focus Taiwan.

### Netherlands



Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in spring 2020, more and more people with jobs in the Netherlands have warmed to the idea of switching to a hybrid working style, where they split their work week between the office and their home. The ongoing pandemic and government advice to work from home as much as possible means millions of people continue to work (predominantly) from home - and while this does have certain benefits (less time spent commuting to and from work, for example), there are certain disadvantages. Namely, employees have noted an increase in their



shopping and utility bills, as they spend more time at home and consequently spend more money on household items such as toilet paper and coffee, and use more gas or electricity to warm their homes. In order to compensate for these costs, last September the government announced the new tax-free work from home allowance (thuiswerkvergoeding), which came into effect on January 1, 2022. Under Dutch law, employers can now provide their workers with a tax-free allowance of up to two euros per day.

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