

Spain: PSA plant in Vigo to resume production at low capacity and set up a new partial unemployment scheme to run until year end

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The Vigo plant of French automobile group PSA is preparing to resume activity from 27 April , following a six-week lockdown in Spain after the state of alert decree issued on 15 March. However, this return to work should be gradual and at low capacity, since order volumes are expected to be diminished. This new business landscape has prompted management to present a temporary job reduction plan (ERTE) to the works council, justified for organisational and production reasons. The plan guarantees 80% of gross salary until 31 December. This proposal was accepted by the SIT and UGT unions but was rejected by CCOO and the Galician nationalist unions CIG and CUT.

The procedure is set to come into force once the plan for partial unemployment in cases of force majeure, which was activated when the state of alert was declared, comes to an end, in accordance with the exceptional arrangements put in place to deal with the crisis, to support companies and prevent them from resorting to redundancies ([see article n°11729](#)).

Partial unemployment for organisational and production reasons. This new ERTE will have to last until 31 December 2020 and will affect 4,640 employees, more than half of the site's 7,400 direct employees. The agreement allows employees with special circumstances (sick leave, paternity or maternity leave, high-risk pregnancy, breastfeeding permits, and leave for the care of a child suffering from a serious illness) to be exempt from the plan. Employees over the age of 55 have also been excluded, so as not to affect their contributions for their future retirement.

The new ERTE, which will last a maximum of 90 working days, will be developed in two phases. The first phase, lasting 70 days, will allow activity to recommence after the lockdown is lifted. This will last until the summer holidays. The second phase, lasting 20 days, will then be effective every Monday until 31 December 2020. It will be implemented once the flexibility established under the usual mechanisms for adjusting working time and the use of time banks has been exhausted.

Unemployment benefits will be topped up to 80% of gross wages (salary and individual supplements). The same calculation will apply to the 13th and 14th months of pay. This will also apply to part-time contracts. Vacation and variable pay will be fully guaranteed. Temporary contracts are not affected by this ERTE but will have a guarantee of payment (80 hours per month that workers will have to make up for later). The ERTE also involves reorganisation of the work of weekend maintenance teams, who will work from Monday to Friday.

Implementation of protective measures. The agreement provides that the resumption of activity at the site will take place in accordance with the health and safety standards laid down in the protection and prevention protocol negotiated by the trade unions and employer organisations in the automobile sector at national level ([see article n°11835](#)). In addition, temperature checks will be conducted using thermographic cameras at the site entrance, while masks, hydroalcoholic gel, goggles and face shields will be given out to staff. Surveillance teams will ensure that safe distances are maintained between workers and that established protocols are respected, while the canteen and changing room areas will be closed to prevent gatherings.

Division among unions. The union response to the management's plan has been varied. The "in-house" union SIT-FSI, which represents 63% of the employees, has expressed agreement, supported by the UGT union. However the CCOO and the nationalist trade unions [CIG](#) and CUT, announced their refusal, rejecting the principle of making employees pay the economic price of the health crisis.

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Par Cécile Thibaud