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Fresh round of the consultation on the review of EU working time Directive

21/12/2010

As part of its review of the EU working time Directive, the Commission has launched the mandatory second stage of consultation with workers' and employers' representatives at EU level.

It also presented a detailed Report on the legal implementation of the Working Time Directive in Member States.

The second stage consultation paper asks social partners for their views on two alternative approaches based on either a narrower or a broader scope for the review. It seeks opinions on detailed options that cover key themes such as:

- on-call time
- timing of minimum rest periods
- tackling excessive working hours
- better reconciliation of work and family life and
- clarifying areas whether the law appears unclear.

A wide consensus emerged from the replies of the EU-level workers' and employers' representatives to the first stage consultation. The clear message has been that changes to the current working time rules are urgently needed. There is also a high degree of consensus that EU working time rules should allow greater flexibility for workers' and employers' representatives to negotiate on the details of implementation at the appropriate level.

At the same time, the Commission has presented a detailed Report on the implementation of the current Directive in the Member States. It sets out the current state-of-play, identifying the main areas of non-compliance or of legal uncertainty in the various countries.

The Commission has also presented the first findings of independent studies on the economic and social impact of working time rules and of research on relevant changes in working patterns. These findings mention issues like the detrimental effects that excessive working hours can have on health; the current spending constraints of Member States; and the issue of skills shortages as public and private employers find ways to reduce the impact of the working time rules.

The study also suggests that the Directive can act as a catalyst for efficiency gains and a better work-life balance. The Commission will be publishing these results to facilitate the social partners' replies to the consultation.

Related documents

Communication: Reviewing the Working Time Directive

(Second-phase consultation of the social partners at European level) [de](#) [en](#) [fr](#)

Report on the implementation by Member States of the "Working Time Directive" [de](#) [en](#) [fr](#)

Detailed report on the implementation by Member States of the "Working Time Directive" [en](#)

Overview of the replies received from the social partners at European level to the first-phase consultation on Reviewing the Working Time Directive [en](#)

Study to support an Impact Assessment on further action at European level regarding Directive 2003/88/EC and the evolution of working time organization [en](#)
