

OUR OWN TIME

European Work-Time Network Newsletter

March 2025

Welcome

The debate on working time is one of the most salient topics on work and politics across Europe today, and there is a growing movement that is pushing for a more just distribution of labour and leisure time.

The European Network for the Fair Sharing of Working Time coordinates organisations, be they trade unions, political parties or civil society organisations, around the subject of working time reduction and adaptation.

This newsletter collates and shares the latest information on working time reduction from across Europe. The newsletter is released quarterly, and this is the **23rd issue**. If you would like to see the previous issues, please use [this link](#).

The newsletter is produced by the Autonomy Institute, and is supported by ATTAC (Germany – Group ArbeitFAIRTeilen), the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung's Brussels Office and funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.

If you would like to subscribe to receive this email, please sign up [here](#).



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Network Updates

Join us!

The European Work-Time Network is open to new members!



We are working for a Europe where the normal full-time working week is shortened, such as a 4-day working week, without reduction of pay. The Network consists of individual and organisational members.

The conditions of membership are as follows:

- Relevant professional or extracurricular interest and/or engagement with working time reduction.
- Subscription to the quarterly newsletter and mailing list (with an annual renewal).
- Contribution (sending updates on national debates, campaigns, trials etc.) to the quarterly newsletter where relevant.
- Attendance at Network events when possible, including monthly webinars and our annual members' event.

The Network's activities consist of:

- Quarterly newsletters
- Monthly webinars
- Biannual conferences
- Annual members' meetings
- Membership coordination

You can find out more and join the Network [here](#).

Next webinar - 30th April



[Sign up](#) for our next webinar on 30th April, 14:00 CEST. We will be joined by Maria del Carmen Barrera Chamorro, President of the Spanish Economic and Social Council and Vice-President of the European Economic and Social Council's Workers' Group. She will present the EESC Opinion on working time.

[Register here.](#)

In March, we were joined by Ruby Alden Gibson talking about how the PCS union in Scotland won the shorter working week. Watch the recording [here](#).

You can watch the recordings of our previous webinars on our website [here](#).

Call for submissions

The newsletter is dependent on contributions from the Network's members and our dedicated Country Leads.

If you would like to become a Country Lead, or have any information you think should be included in the next newsletter, please contact the Network Coordinator, India, at: workingtimenetwork.europe@gmail.com.

France

Showcase of 15 French organisations working a four-day week

15 organisations in France are showcased for their four-day week pilots or transitions. Ranging from biometric tech companies to restaurants, furniture manufacturers to software developers, read about their approaches and experiences [here](#).

The French pilot that began mid-2024 appears to have finished, but 4-Day Week Global, 4 Jours and Emylon Business School - the organisers - have not yet published results.

Working time reduction gaining attention in HR and legal services

Whilst four-day week trials and pilots remain uncommon in France, guidance is growing from HR and legal service firms. Since January, several of these organisations have published blogs, guides and information packs on working time reduction and the four-day week. As attention has grown internationally, the French business world appears to be gearing up to working time reduction arriving at its doors.

See Juritravail's [article](#).

See Taleez's [blog](#).

Germany

Margareta Steinrücke, Attac! Germany

In the collective bargaining negotiations at the postal service, the trade union Ver.di won not only wage increases but also an additional day off (demanded three days) per year. Several strikes were necessary in these negotiations.

In the ongoing collective bargaining negotiations in the public sector, in addition to an 8% wage increase, three additional days off per year and a flexible working time account are demanded. Since employers aren't open to negotiations on this front, warning strikes are repeatedly taking place in daycare centers, public transport, garbage collection and other areas.

The designated chancellor Merz and his conservative party CDU are stirring up sentiment against people's desire for shorter working hours. In the coalition negotiations between the CDU and the SPD, the abolition of the daily maximum working time of 8 hours (exceptionally 10 hours) in favour of a maximum weekly working time is being discussed. The German trade unions confederation DGB is protesting strongly and argues that the abolition of the maximum daily working hours poses a threat to the health of the employees.

There is a conflict over the recording of teachers' working hours, which, according to the ECJ ruling, must be done just like all other employees, because the state education ministers try to circumvent it.

The VW Group has reached an agreement with the trade union IG Metall to reduce 35,000 jobs without layoffs to improve competitiveness. This includes forgoing wage increases and bonus payments, as well as potentially reducing working hours to up to 28 hours (instead of the agreed 35).

The Bremer Arbeitszeitinitiative, together with the KWA of the protestant church, produced t an ABC of working time reduction (to be read and downloaded [here](#)).

Poland

Labour law changes in 2025

There have been a [number of changes](#) in Employment Law in Poland in 2024 that have triggered a number of obligations on the part of employers. This includes:

- An increase in the minimum wage.
- New law on collective agreements.
- Subsidies for employers wishing to hire employers over 60 years of age.

Reducing working hours was not included in the change to the law, but may be implemented before/during 2027.

Portugal

Azores to trial the four-day week in the public sector

In 2024, the Azorean government [announced](#) that it plans to begin testing the four-day workweek in the public sector in 2025, as they claim this move will increase productivity through a sense of responsibility.

The government announced intentions to have a design by the end of 2024 so that during 2025 pilot projects could begin. More recent updates have not been shared.

Portuguese businesses against the four-day week

A survey by the Portuguese Industrial Association [found](#) 70% of companies were against the introduction of a four-day week. 523 companies were polled between October and November 2024.

Spain

Spanish ministers agree to cut legal working week to 37.5 hours

Social partners have [successfully](#) won ministerial sign-off for a reduction in the legal working week to 37.5 hours. Spanish ministers agreed in February to cut the legal working week to 37.5 hours with no change in salary, forging ahead with one of the coalition government's flagship measures despite opposition from employers' associations.

The policy now needs support from across Congress to be implemented in law.

Sweden

Hampus Andersson, Kommunal

In Sweden, the push for working time reduction is gaining significant momentum. Following a unanimous decision at the 2024 LO Congress to prioritise this issue, a large-scale investigation was launched. The first sub-report has already been published, aiming to challenge the narrative that Swedes work fewer hours or are less industrious than others. Several more sub-reports will be released over the spring to continue shaping the debate, with the final report due on May 15th, 2025.

This investigation aims to build pressure for a negotiated reduction in working hours, with LO leadership committed to pushing this issue forward. The strong stance taken by LO's leadership makes it challenging for the unions to backtrack without securing some form of reduction, given the level of commitment and resources already invested in the process.

In parallel, the Social Democratic Party Congress will be crucial. There is a delicate balance for the union movement in advocating for a solution through collective agreements under the Swedish model while also pushing the Social Democrats to take a clear stance. The need for political support is clear: a negotiated solution will require significant political pressure to become a reality, given the employer opposition.

United Kingdom

200 UK Companies Adopt Permanent Four-Day Week

The 4 Day Week Campaign has evolved into the 4 Day Week Foundation, as 200 UK companies have [adopted](#) a permanent four-day week.

Together the companies employ more than 5,000 people, with charities, marketing and technology firms among the best-represented, according to the latest update from the 4 Day Week Foundation.

New Four-Day Week Councils Pilot Programme launched

The 4 Day Week Campaign and the Autonomy Institute have [launched](#) a new four-day week Pilot Programme for local councils in 2025, building on the success of South Cambridgeshire District Council's trial and the government's [new approach](#) of giving councils more autonomy over workforce management.

The pilot programme kicked off in March 2025 with training and workshops led by experts and consultants that have supported hundreds of companies in the public, private and third sector to successfully adopt a four-day working week, with no loss in pay.

Europe

Eurofound tender launched: working time reduction case studies

Eurofound has [launched](#) a call for tenders on: “Reduction of working time in Europe: Case Studies”. Deadline 22nd April.

The main purpose of this tender is to engage a contractor to carry out case studies of companies and other workplaces which have introduced a reduction of working time (4-day work week or other model of working time reduction) to obtain information on issues including the rationale behind the reduction of working time, reasons for the model of working time reduction chosen, how it was implemented and its impact on company revenues, productivity, competitiveness, innovation, workforce structure, work organisation, working conditions and job quality, skills development employee wellbeing and work-life balance.

EU Horizon call to launch on working time reduction

EU Horizon will be launching a call for a project on working time reduction in May: HORIZON-CL2-2025-01-TRANSFO-03: Working time reduction: barriers, challenges, benefits and policy implications.

Alongside other outcomes, projects should contribute to the following expected outcome:

“Deepen the understanding available to policy makers, employers, trade unions and other stakeholders regarding the impacts and implementation of the working time reduction, including its implications on social, economic or environmental outcomes in the society”.