

OUR OWN TIME

European Work-Time Network Newsletter

June 2026

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 **28th 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) and the Alex Ferry Foundation.

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Network Updates



New email address! info@worktimenet.eu

The European Work-Time Network is moving away from using the Google Suite for ethical and environmental reasons. We have set up a new email account with Proton.

You will receive emails from the Network going forward from info@worktimenet.eu, and you should use this email address if you wish to get in touch with us.

EWTN Annual Members' Event

The Network's annual members' event will take place on **25th September**, as part of the University of Porto's International Conference on Working Time Reduction. The event is open to all members of the Network, and is an opportunity to discuss the Network's activities, strategy and goals for the following year.

Register your interest to attend the members' event [here](#).

If you're not a member of the European Work-Time Network, join us [here](#)!

New working groups

At the Members' Event in November 2025, we decided to establish working groups to increase the European Work-Time Network's capacity and engage members. Four working groups were agreed:


1. Advocacy/European Parliament engagement
2. Online info/data catalogue
3. Conference 2026
4. Webinars

The working groups are open to the Network's members. Please find more information and indicate your interest to join one [here](#).

EWTN Monthly Webinars

The next webinar will take place on **Wednesday 29th July at 1pm CEST**, with a presentation on the hidden labour of free time and the class politics of working time reduction from **Emma River-Roberts** from the [Working Class Climate Alliance](#).

Register for the event [here](#).



The graphic features a light blue background with a green curved line on the left. At the top right is a circular logo with a clock face and a green leaf. The text is arranged in two columns: 'SPEAKER:' followed by the speaker's name and organization, and 'DETAILS:' followed by the date, time, and platform. The bottom right corner contains the text 'European Work-Time Network Webinars'.

Free Time Isn't Free: The Class Politics of Work Time Reduction

SPEAKER:
Emma River-Roberts,
Working Class Climate Alliance

DETAILS:
29th July 2026
13:00 (CEST)
Online
via Zoom

European Work-Time Network Webinars

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

These include:

- **April:** Catherine Negus from the Mental Health Foundation presented their 32-hour working week pilot. Watch the recording [here](#).
- **May:** Dr Tatiana Pignon from the Autonomy Institute and Joe Ryle from the 4-Day Week Foundation joined us to discuss the history of the 5-day week and the campaign for the 4-day week - 100 years on since the Fordist 5-day week. You can watch the recording [here](#).
- **June:** Michel Cermak talked about the little-known Loi de Robien, a piece of French 4-day week legislation that supported 400 companies to transition. You can watch the recording [here](#).

European Work-Time Network General Assembly 2026

On 22nd June, the Network held its annual General Assembly. The Board was elected, activities and finances of the Network presented and discussed, and future projects debated.

Support the Network

The European Work-Time Network is a community built by and for people who care about working time reduction. To help sustain and strengthen our movement, we invite our members to consider making a small monthly or annual donation to the Network.

A regular monthly contribution would help secure the Network's future and enable us to strengthen our activities, including:

- Increasing paid coordinator time to support and develop the Network
- Maintaining and improving the website
- Creating a shared knowledge database of working time reduction resources
- Expanding the reach and quality of our webinars, conferences, and newsletter
- Deepening our work on the connections between working time and environmental, gender, disability, and racial justice

By contributing, you will not only help sustain a Network that supports your own work and interests - you will also strengthen a collective European effort to advance working time reduction and achieve fairer, healthier, and more sustainable working lives.

Please use the links below to make a regular donation via Stripe:

- [Monthly donation](#) - €4 per month
- [Annual donation](#) - €50 per year

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](#).

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: info@worktimenet.eu

Europe

International Conference on Working Time Reduction

University of Porto, Portugal
24-25 September 2026

The University of Porto is organising an [International Conference on Working Time Reduction](#), bringing together leading scholars to present cutting-edge research and engage with contemporary debates on working time reduction.

The European Work-Time Network is organising the event in partnership with the University.

#MyTimeMatters - Citizens' Initiative and Campaign

In May 2026, the Time Use Initiative [led a campaign](#) to translate complex time-use data into accessible messages, helping citizens understand how time-related challenges directly impact their everyday lives.

The initiative involved 20 cities and regions in 7 EU countries (Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain), who jointly contributed to amplifying the message, adapting content to their local contexts while maintaining a shared European narrative. As a result, the campaign reached 300,000 unique users from 25 EU countries, including all the above-mentioned countries.



100-year anniversary of the 5-day week - time for change

To mark the 100-year anniversary of the five-day working week on 1 May 2026, the 4 Day Week Foundation ran a [bold public campaign](#) to educate the public on the genesis of the 5-day week and how organised workers played a role in winning it, and to demonstrate why the move to a four-day, 32 hour working week today is necessary, achievable, and long overdue. The Foundation carried out an action outside Ford's Dagenham HQ. See the post on X [here](#).

European Work-Time Network activities

As part of the campaign, the European Work-Time Network published a video on the history of working time reduction and held a webinar on the topic.

Watch the video [here](#). Watch the webinar recording [here](#).

Labour Day and celebrating the weekend

On International Workers' Day this year, the European Trade Union Institute commemorated "what can be considered the 100th anniversary of something that is now self-evident to most workers: the weekend"

Read Andrew Watt's, ETUI General Director, comments [here](#).

Working Time: Workers, Firms and Legislation Workshop

The University of Birkbeck organised a one-day BCAM workshop at Birkbeck, University of London, bringing together leading international economists to discuss the economics of working time.

Topics include global working hours, health effects, firm-level impacts, gender-specific restrictions, and insights from legislative reforms such as the French 35-hour week and recent four-day week trials.

See the programme on the webpage [here](#), and the Youtube links to watch the recordings of the interventions below.

[Introduction: Working Time: Workers, Firms and Legislation](#), Pedro Gomes (Birkbeck, University of London)

[Global Working Hours](#), Amory Gethin (World Bank)

[Should Friday be the New Saturday?](#), Laura Pilossoph (Duke University)

[Flexible Work, Firm Response, And Welfare: Evidence From Germany's Part-Time Reform](#), Gabriele Lucchetti (ROCKWOOL Foundation Berlin)

[Beyond the Clock: Labor Market Effects of Lifting Gender-Specific Hours Restrictions](#), Chris Vickers (Auburn University)

[Working Hours and Health](#), Martin Karlsson (University of Duisburg-Essen)

[Firm-Level Effects of Reductions in Working Hours](#), Kentaro Asai (Vienna University of Economics and Business)

[Revisiting the Workweek Reduction Debate: Lessons from France's 35-Hour Policy](#), Pauline Carry (Princeton University)

[Unconventional Effects of Working Time Reduction](#), Pedro Gomes (Birkbeck, University of London)

Austria

Agreement in the electrical and electronics industry

Eva Scherz, GPA union

Health days have been agreed in trade union negotiations for the first time in the electrical and electronics industry.

The introduction of health days for employees over 40 years of age or after 20 years of service was achieved, covering 60,000 workers. Furthermore, additional leave for parents of children with disabilities was negotiated and wages, salaries and allowances were increased.

A Century of Weekly Working Time Reductions: A Systematic Literature Review and Meta-Analysis

Quirin Dammerer, Ludwig List

In a recently published paper, Quirin Dammerer and Ludwig List use a meta-regression analysis to look at the impacts of weekly working time reductions on employment.

They compile a comprehensive database of studies that estimate the economic effects of WWTR based on empirical data. They then analyse parts of the literature, namely the impact on employment, through a meta-regression analysis (MRA).

Across all countries and time periods, the employment effects of WWTR are generally statistically insignificant, and we find no evidence of publication bias. They further find that positive employment effects are historically just one among many goals of WWTR. Other cited motivations include improvements in health, well-being, working conditions, work-life balance, work-family reconciliation, welfare, productivity, and broader structural economic reforms.

Read the study [here](#).

Germany

Plans to change the working time law

Margareta Steinrücke, Attac! Germany

At the end of June, the minister for labour/SPD will present proposals for a reform of the working time law. The Conservatives/CDU want a complete flexibilisation with the liquidation of the 8 hours maximum per day and only a weekly maximum hours limit of 48 hours, promising a better reconciliation of work and private life.

There is widespread opposition among the trade unions, women's organisations and medical workers. The DGB is organising the campaign: DGB-Kampagne "[Mit Macht für die 8!](#)".

In some trade unions, especially in ver.di, women are demanding further working time reduction as an offensive strategy against the trials to prolong working hours.

“Lifestyle-Teilzeit” Debate, part-time work and working time reduction

At the same time more people than ever are working part-time: 32% of all working people, and 50% of women. Part-time workers are accused of engaging in "lifestyle part-time work". However, many people are part-time to meet caring responsibilities, due to the exhaustion of work and to have more time for meaningful activities instead of "bullshit jobs".

At the same time a lot of enterprises introduce a 4-Day week or 32-hour week with full compensation of wages. Impressive and successful examples are a nursing home of the DRK (Red Cross Germany) in Sangerhausen/Thüringen and a small installation company, Rocco Funke in Sachsen-Anhalt, both from industries where WTR is considered less feasible.

ver.di branch concludes its first Working-Time Academy

Philipp Frey, KIT

The service sector union ver.di has carried out a four-day week training programme for trade union activists to help them advance working time campaigns in their workplaces. The course took place over the course of May, with training sessions held on every Monday, in order to unilaterally implement a four-day workweek over the course of a month. The Academy was developed and hosted by ver.di Mittelbaden-Nordschwarzwald in the southwest of Germany.

Annual Arbeitszeitgesellschaft Symposium announced

On 15th and 16th October 2026, the Arbeitszeitgesellschaft will organise its annual symposium "Arbeitszeit und Kompensation - zwischen Ausgleich, Anreiz und Gesundheitsschutz" in Dortmund.

Greece

Greece works the longest hours in Europe

According to recently [released](#) 2025 Eurostat data, Greece recorded the longest average working week in the European Union in 2025, with employees working nearly four hours more than the EU average.

The figures cover both full-time and part-time employment among people aged 20 to 64. Workers in Greece averaged 39.6 actual working hours per week, compared with the EU average of 35.9 hours.

The data comes before the implementation of Greece's new labor law introducing the 13-hour workday in early 2026.

Greece remained at the top of the EU ranking, ahead of Bulgaria and Poland, where workers averaged 38.7 hours per week, and Lithuania, where the average stood at 38.4 hours.

At the other end of the scale, the Netherlands recorded the shortest working week in the bloc, with employees working an average of 31.9 hours.

Portugal

Portugal's parliament rejects labour reform

In a blow to the centre-right minority government in Portugal, the Portuguese parliament [rejected](#) its labour reform proposal, which had sparked two general strikes.

The main opposition parties — far-right Chega and the centre-left Socialist Party — joined forces to block the bill, which the government argued was crucial to boosting productivity and economic growth. Unions have dismissed the proposed overhaul of the labour code as favouring employers at the expense of workers' rights and have staged two general strikes against it in the past six months.

Spain

Time Use Week 2026, Barcelona

The [Time Use Week](#) is the international event for the promotion and exchange of knowledge and success stories about time policies. Researchers, political institutions, companies, social organisations, and citizens from around the world will participate and collaborate, each contributing from their different fields of knowledge and expertise, to achieve improvement in the social organisation of time.

Time Use Week 2026, its thirteenth edition, will take place under the framework “The Right to Time and Social Acceleration” and will hold its central events from 19 to 21 October in Barcelona. It aims to reflect on the concept of social acceleration as a growing phenomenon in our society, whereby the exponential increase in the speed of social, technological, and cultural processes in late modernity generates a widespread feeling of lack of time, exhaustion, and alienation.

Switzerland

Veit Hailperin, Researcher and Consultant

White paper: 4-day week in the banking sector

Carsten Meier and Veit Hailperin published a [white paper](#) on the 4-day week in the banking sector. The paper looks at 4-day week pioneers in the banking sector, and opportunities to solve skills shortages.

November 2026: Initial results of Swiss 4-day week pilot

The initial results of the Swiss 4-day week pilot will be [presented](#) in Bern on 19th November. Prof. Dr. Caroline Straub will present the results on employee metrics, productivity and team dynamics. Veit Hailperin will show how companies put the shorter working week into practice concretely and successfully. Company representatives will also share their hands-on experience with the model.

Rejected proposal for regional state-funded 4-day week pilot

In June, there was a [proposal](#) in the Canton of Vaud by Céline Misiego for a regional working time reduction pilot, funded by the state. Unfortunately, the proposal was rejected.

4-Day Week at Climate Week Zurich

At Climate Week Zurich, Veit Hailperin, Mathilde Neau and Fabian Schneider held an [event](#) titled “Boosting Productivity & Sustainability: The 4-Day Week”.

United Kingdom

James Reeves, the 4 Day Week Foundation

How a four-day week might benefit disabled workers

The 4 Day Week Foundation, Disability Rights UK and Patchwork Hub published a [report](#) highlighting how the four-day week can be helpful within accessible working.

The briefing is targeted at people who:

1. Want to create disability inclusive work environments; and
2. Those already working a four-day week or beginning a shift towards a four-day week

The release of the report was covered by the [Mirror](#).

4-day week in political news

South Cambridgeshire District Council, famed for being the first ever local authority in the UK to introduce a four-day week with no loss of pay for staff, [won a huge victory](#) in the UK's recent local elections.

In a Scottish Parliament debate in Holyrood, Scottish Greens Leader Gillian Mackay MSP [asked](#) first minister John Swinney about expanding the four-day week in the public sector during a debate on taxation powers.

BBC radio series on the history of the working week

BBC Radio 4 [Tick Tock: The Working Week in 5 Days](#) charts the history of the working week through five episodes.

Beyond Europe

Working time reduction included in UN Roadmap to Eradicating Poverty Beyond Growth

Former UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty, Olivier De Schutter, has published his [Roadmap to Eradicating Poverty Beyond Growth](#).

It will be submitted to the UN Human Rights Council on 25 June 2026 and contains a [policy profile on Working Time Reduction](#) co-authored by James Reeves from the 4 Day Week Foundation and Erin Quigley from New Economies for Eradicating Poverty (NEEP).

This paper sets out the case for working-time reduction as a policy response, summarising the rationale, likely benefits and implementation issues for shorter-hours reform.