

Review of the Working Time Directive (Directive 2003/88/EC)

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Identifying information

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Please specify:

European Association of over 10,000 Service providers for Persons with Disabilities.

Your sector(s):

Public services

Register ID number (if you/your organisation is registered in the Transparency register):

If you would like to register, please refer to the following webpage to see how to proceed:

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Your reply:*

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- cannot be published - keep it confidential (The contribution will not be published, but will be used internally within the Commission)

Nota bene

Please note that:

- The Working Time Directive only sets minimum standards and Member States are always allowed to provide higher levels of protection for workers in their national laws and regulations.
- Filling in the questionnaire, please keep in mind that the Working Time Directive only applies to workers and not to self-employed persons. Also keep in mind that it does not set levels of pay for working time, which is a purely national responsibility.
- The background document provides useful information regarding the concepts used in the following questionnaire. Please refer to it as necessary.
- There are a number of questions offering the possibility of making additional contributions under each point, and also a longer opportunity to express your opinion at the end.

*

Please confirm you have read through these important elements.

1. Objectives and approach to the review of the Working Time Directive

1. A. Impact of the Working Time Directive

In your opinion, what is the impact of the **current Working Time Directive** giving workers the right to a limit to average weekly working time (currently set at 48 hours) and to minimum daily and weekly rest periods?

	Fully disagree	Tend to disagree	No opinion	Tend to agree	Fully agree
It protects the health and safety of workers and people they work with*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It ensures a level playing field in working conditions across the Single Market, avoiding that countries lower their labour standards to gain a competitive advantage*	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It boosts productivity notably by fostering a healthy European workforce*	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It allows flexible organization of working time*	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It allows workers to reconcile work and private life*	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It impacts on job creation*	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-employment is used to circumvent the application of the limits imposed by the Directive*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
It impacts the costs of running a business*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
It has no major impact*	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please elaborate on your opinion with regard to the impact on health and safety of workers and people they work with

300 character(s) maximum

[Optional]

Please elaborate on your opinion with regard to the impact on job creation

300 character(s) maximum

[Optional]

Our biggest concern is that it has raised costs for service providers running 24h care/support, without additional financial support from Public Authorities. This in turn has negative effects on the recruitment & retention of staff.

Please elaborate on your opinion with regard to the impact on the cost of running a business

300 character(s) maximum

[Optional]

Having to pay passive on-call time workers a full salary has increased the cost of running 24h services (both residential or personal and individualised) for persons with disabilities. For smaller service providers, this has led to cases of resinstitutionalisation to save costs.

If you see another impact, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

[Optional]

Our biggest concern is that it has raised costs for service providers running 24h care/support. More support to social partners and adequate financing is essential if WTD is to improve quality of services & unlock job creation of social sector.

2. Thematic questions

2. A. Scope

Concurrent contracts

A single worker may be employed under several concurrent contracts. Should the limits provided in the Working Time Directive apply to all contracts taken together or to each contract separately?

If the Directive applies per worker, this means for example that all the hours worked under the different contracts should be added together and cannot exceed 48 hours on average (unless the worker signed an opt-out).

If the Directive applies per contract, this means for example that the worker can work 48 hours on average under each separate contract without an upper limit. *

[only one answer possible]

- It is up to Member States to decide whether working time rules shall apply per worker or per contract
- The Directive should stipulate that working time rules shall apply per worker in situations where a worker has more than 1 contract with the same employer
- The Directive should stipulate that working time rules shall apply per worker in situations where a worker has more than 1 contract in any event
- The Directive should make it clear that it only applies per contract
- Other
- Do not know

2. B. Concept of working time

On-call time

On-call time corresponds to any period where the worker is required to remain at the workplace (or another place designated by the employer) and has to be ready to provide services. An example could be a doctor staying overnight at the hospital, where he can rest if there is no need to attend to patients.

Under the current Working Time Directive, as interpreted by the Court of Justice, on-call time is fully regarded as working time for the purpose of the Directive, regardless of whether active services are provided during that time. The period of on-call time within which the worker actively provides services is usually referred to as 'active on-call time', while the period within which services are not provided can be referred to as 'inactive on-call time'.

(See in particular Cases [C-303/98 Simap](#), [C-151/02 Jaeger](#), [C-14/04 Dellas](#))

Please give your opinion on the following options as regards possible changes in the treatment of on-call time under the Working Time Directive:

	Very undesirable	Undesirable	No preference	Desirable	Very desirable
No change to the current rules*	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Incorporate the interpretation of the Court into the Directive (i.e. codification to clarify that all on-call time has to be counted as working time)*	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Set the principle that defining "on-call time" should be agreed in each sector by national social partners, for example determining that only part of inactive on-call time will be counted as working time*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

If you would like to add comments or indicate another option, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

[Optional]

The CoJ's decision on on-call time has led to increased costs for running 24h services, whilst not always improving working conditions. Decisions should be based on collective agreements made by sector's Social Partners. If social dialogue structures are not sufficiently developed, Public Authorities should support their development. Public Authorities should guarantee adequate financing to service providers to ensure quality services are provided & working conditions improved.

Stand-by time

Stand-by time corresponds to any period where the worker is not required to remain at the workplace, but has to be contactable and ready to provide services. An example could be when a technician of a nuclear facility is at home, but has to be ready to come to the plant to provide services in an emergency.

Under the current Working Time Directive, as interpreted by the Court of Justice, stand-by time does not have to be considered as working time for the purpose of the Directive. Only active stand-by time, i.e. time in which the worker responds to a call, has to be fully counted as working time.

(See in particular Cases [C-303/98 Simap](#), [C-151/02 Jaeger](#), [C-14/04 Dellas](#))

Please give your opinion on the following options as regards possible changes in the treatment of stand-by time under the Working Time Directive:

	Very undesirable	Undesirable	No preference	Desirable	Very desirable
No change to the current rules*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Incorporate the interpretation of the Court into the Directive (i.e. codification to clarify that stand-by time does not have to be considered working time)*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Introducing the obligation to partially count stand-by time as working time for the purpose of the Directive*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Introducing a limit to the maximum number of hours that a worker may be required to be on stand-by in a given period (for instance 24 hours a week), together with a derogation possibility to set a different limit via collective agreements*	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you would like to add comments or indicate another option, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

[Optional]

The current understanding of stand-by time in the WTD is acceptable. The best format would be to maximize autonomy of social partners to negotiate on this, whilst implementing limits. If social dialogue structures are not sufficiently developed, Public Authorities should support their development. Public Authorities should guarantee adequate financing to service providers to ensure quality services are provided.

2.C Derogations

Compensatory rest

Under the current Working Time Directive, as interpreted by the Court of Justice, a worker who by derogation from the general rules has not received his/her minimum daily rest of 11 consecutive hours in a 24-hour period, will have to receive an equivalent period of compensatory rest (i.e. 11 hours) directly after finishing the extended working time period. This sets a maximum of 24 hours to a single consecutive shift.

(See in particular Case [C-151/02 Jaeger](#))

How would you assess the possible introduction in the Working Time Directive of provisions regarding the period within which such a compensatory rest has to be taken:

	Very undesirable	Undesirable	No preference	Desirable	Very desirable
No change to the current rules*	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Incorporate the interpretation of the Court into the Directive (i.e. codification to clarify that compensatory rest has to be granted immediately after the extended period of work)*	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allowing employers the possibility of granting compensatory rest within 2 days*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allowing the possibility of granting compensatory rest within 4 days*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you would like to add comments or indicate another option:

500 character(s) maximum

[Optional]

The best format would be to maximize autonomy of social partners to negotiate on this, whilst implementing limits. If social dialogue structures are not sufficiently developed, Public Authorities should support their development. Public Authorities should guarantee adequate financing to service providers to ensure quality services are provided.

Reference period

The limit to weekly working time of 48 hours provided by the Working Time Directive is a limit to *average* working time. This means that in certain weeks the worker can be required to work more than 48 hours as long as this is balanced out by lower hours in other weeks. This average has to be calculated over a certain period, i.e. 'a reference period'. Currently, the standard limit to the reference period is 4 months, which can in certain sectors be extended by law up to 6 months, and by collective agreement it can be set up to 12 months.

What would be in your view the most appropriate approach to the limit set to the reference period to calculate average weekly working time:

[only one answer possible]

- No change in the current provisions
- Allow that reference periods can be set up to 6 months by law in any sector, and maintain that they can only be set up to 12 months by collective agreements
- Maintain that reference periods can be set up to 4 months by law in any sector, but allow that reference periods can be set up to 12 months by law in certain specific sectors (e.g. to take into account the size of the undertaking or to take into account fluctuations of demand)
- Allow both previous options (i.e. option 2 and option 3), meaning that reference periods can be set up to 6 months by law for any sector and up to 12 months by law in certain specific sectors
- Allow that reference periods can be set up to 12 months by law in any sector
- Other
- Do not know

Opt-out

Under the current Working Time Directive, Member States have the possibility not to apply the limit to average weekly working time of 48 hours, when the worker agrees to it individually and freely with the employer, and does not suffer prejudice for revoking such agreement (the 'opt-out').

What is your view on this opt-out clause:*

[only one answer possible]

- It should be maintained unchanged
- It should be maintained, but stricter conditions for the protection of the worker should be added in the Directive
- It should be maintained, but it should be provided in the Directive that the opt-out cannot be combined with other derogations under the current Directive
- It should be abolished, but in compensation there should be additional derogations made available for employers (e.g. allowing not to count on-call time fully as working time)
- It should be abolished
- Other
- Do not know

Autonomous workers

"Autonomous workers", such as for example managing executives, can fully determine their own working time (i.e. decide when and how many hours they work). Member States have the option to apply the main provisions of the Working Time Directive to these workers.

Please choose the most appropriate statement according to your views:*

[only one answer possible]

- The current Working Time Directive provides an adequate exemption as regards autonomous workers, and should not be changed
- The current exemption should be maintained in substance, but more clearly formulated, in order to enhance legal clarity and to prevent abuse
- The definition of autonomous workers is too narrow and should be expanded to other categories of workers who should be exempted too
- The definition of autonomous workers is too wide and should be limited
- Other
- Do not know

2.D Specific sectors/activities

Emergency services

The current Working Time Directive as interpreted by the Court of Justice applies to workers in emergency services, e.g. civil protection services like fire-fighting services, in the normal operation of these services. The current Directive contains several derogations that can be applied to the working time and rest periods of these workers in order to ensure the effective provision of these services. In the event of a catastrophe/disaster, the Working Time Directive does not apply at all.

(See in particular Cases [C 397/01 to C 403/01 Pfeiffer](#) and [Case C-52/04 Feuerwehr Hamburg](#))

Please state your view on the application of the Directive to emergency services:*

[only one answer possible]

- The current rules adequately balance the need to protect the health and safety of the workers and the people they work with/for with the need to guarantee effective provision of emergency services, and should remain unchanged
- The current rules should be maintained in substance, but clarified in light of the case law of the Court of Justice, to improve legal certainty
- There should be additional derogations applicable to all or some categories of these workers, addressing their specific situation
- The Working Time Directive should not be applied to workers in emergency services
- Other
- Do not know

Health care sector

The current Working Time Directive provides a derogation for health care services when they require continuity of service, meaning particularly that the rest periods of health care staff can be postponed to some extent.

Should there be a different provision on the working time organisation of health care staff with a view to safeguarding patient safety?

Please state your view.*

[Only one answer possible]

- The current rules provide enough safety for patients
The current rules should be maintained in substance, but clarified in light of the case law of the Court of Justice on on-call time and on timing of compensatory rest to improve legal certainty
- There should be additional derogations applicable to workers in the health care sector in order to improve continuity of service
- There should be a more narrow derogation applicable to workers in the health care sector in order to improve patient safety
- Other
- Do not know

Please specify which additional derogations there should be.*

500 character(s) maximum

The Social services and long-term care sectors for persons with disabilities should also receive the same additional derogations as the healthcare sector to improve continuity of service. The same problematic for the health services sector goes for the social services sector as the need for continuity often remains the same, in particular for the health and safety of the recipient of the service.

2.E Patterns of work

Changes in working patterns

The Working Time Directive was conceived more than 20 years ago, when information and communication technologies were not as developed and many types of present jobs did not exist yet. In light of these changes in working patterns and organisation, should the Working Time Directive introduce specific rules regulating particular situations and types of contracts such as telework, zero-hour contracts, flexitime, performance-based contracts without working time conditions, etc.?

Please state your view.*

[multiple answers possible]

- The current rules are satisfactory and do not need to be changed
- The rules should be changed in light of increasing telework
- The rules should be changed in light of zero-hour contracts
- The rules should be changed in light of increased use of flexitime
- The rules should be changed in light of increased use of performance-based contracts without working time conditions
- Other
- Do not know

Reconciliation of work and private life

Do you think the Working Time Directive should support better reconciliation of work and private life by introducing any of the following specific rights:

	Very undesirable	Undesirable	No preference	Desirable	Very desirable
The right for a worker to ask for specific working time arrangements (e.g. flexitime, telework) depending on their personal situation, and to have their request duly considered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
The right for a worker to request to take daily rest in blocks of time instead of uninterruptedly, allowing the worker for example to go home early in the afternoon and later continue work from home at night, and to have their request duly considered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

If you would like to add comments or indicate another option:

500 character(s) maximum

The Working Time directive should support the better reconciliation of work and private life, as well as the capacity of workers to ask for more flexible working time arrangements and have their requests duly considered by employers. The best format of this would be to have collective agreements at company/sectoral level.

3. Looking ahead

Objectives for the future of the Working Time Directive

For the future of the Working Time Directive, how important do you consider the following objectives?

	Not at all important	Of little importance	Quite important	Very important	Do not know
While keeping the current Working Time Directive, to better ensure that Member States correctly and effectively put it into national law and practice*	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To improve legal clarity, so that the rights and obligations following from the Directive are clearer and more readable and accessible to all*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To provide more flexibility in working time organisation for workers*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To provide more flexibility in working time organisation for employers*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To provide a higher level of protection to workers*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To protect third parties involved (co-workers, passengers, patients, etc...) *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Approach for the future of the Working Time Directive

Which of the following approaches for the future of the Working Time Directive do you prefer?*

[only one answer possible]

- No new initiative (maintaining the current rules)
No legislative changes but initiatives towards improved legal clarity so that the rights and obligations following from the Directive are clearer and more readable and accessible to all (interpretative communication; 'codification' of the case law (i.e. clearly stating the case law of the Court of Justice in the legal text)
- Legislative changes but focused on the sectors where there is a specific need in terms of continuity of service (e.g. public services; sectors that work on a '24/7' basis like hospital services and emergency services)
- Legislative changes which would lead to an overall revision of the Directive, containing a mix of simplification and additional derogations while avoiding regression of the protection of workers
- Other
- Do not know

Please motivate your answer:

500 character(s) maximum

[optional]

Changes are required to allow more flexibility for sectors where there is a specific need in terms of continuity of service, which includes the social care/support sector for persons with disabilities. The current impact of the directive has at times increased costs for service providers to pursue 24h care/support, yet without any according increase in funding from public authorities. This has at times resulted in poorer services, reinstitutionalisation and loss of jobs.

4. Other comments or suggestions

Do you have any other comment or suggestion on the review of the Working Time Directive that you would like to share?

2,000 character(s) maximum

Optional. No hyperlinked or attached documents allowed.

Firstly, the service providers for Persons with Disabilities sector employing over 8 million professionals in Europe, many of which work in non-standard working hours, EASPD wishes to meet Ms Thyssen in person to discuss the impact of the WTD on the sector; in particular due to the specificities of the sector where 80% of the costs go towards staff (recruitment & retention).

The derogation for health care services must also include both the social support and long-term care services, due to similarities regarding the non-standard format of working hours in these sectors too. This must be clarified.

Furthermore, the European Commission should take into account the specificities of the sector; and in particular with regard to the triangular relationship between Public Authorities, Service Providers and Users. If the working time directive will continue to increase the costs of running some forms of service provision, and in particular 24h services, then it should also enforce public authorities to increase their funding of such services accordingly. This would lead to ensuring quality services for users, improving working conditions for the staff and unlocking the job creation potential in the sector.

However, the best format would be to allow social partners in the sector/company to negotiate what is the best possible outcome for them regarding working hours and costs, and to have the full support of public authorities in implementing the agreement, including the potential raise in funding to ensure sufficient funding for quality community-based service provision for the users. In countries where social dialogue structures are not fully developed, Public Authorities should pro-actively support their development.

Contact

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