

Suggested audience

This survey is open to any person, employed in public or private organisation, irrespective of the type of contract.

Why this survey?

Over the past decades, the use of ICT for work purposes has facilitated higher flexibility of working time and location. Flexibility offers potential benefits for employees, such as increased autonomy to organise working hours according to their needs and preferences. However, it also poses important risks, including receiving work requests outside working hours and increased difficulties to disengage from work.

COVID-19 pandemic has had an important impact on these working patterns. A large number of workers was forced to perform work remotely, mostly from home, and a significant share of them continue doing so, after the lifting of social distancing restrictions, at least for part of their working time. Telework may have positive aspects for employees, such as reduced commuting time, but can also reinforce a working culture of "always on" with negative impacts for health and working conditions, including work-life balance.

In response to this situation, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion is conducting an exploratory study, which seeks to understand, how these trends are likely to develop in the future, and how to make full use of the potential benefits of increased flexibility in working time and location, by anticipating its main challenges and addressing the opportunities that emerge from them.

In particular, the study focuses on:

- **Right to disconnect:** understood as workers' right not to engage in work-related activities or communications outside working time, by means of digital tools, such as phone calls, emails or other messages. The right to disconnect should entitle workers to switch off work-related tools and not to respond to employers' requests outside working time, with no risk of adverse consequences, such as dismissal or other retaliatory measures.
- **Telework:** understood as a form of work organisation where work, which could be performed from employers' premises is carried out away from employer's premises by using ICT. Telework arrangements vary in terms of intensity (share of working time teleworking); pattern (whether it is carried out regularly or on ad-hoc basis) and location (whether it is predominantly home-based telework or it is mobile telework, carried out from multiple locations).

The study will feed into the policy debate, regarding the most appropriate EU policy responses to the opportunities and challenges, posed by the right to disconnect and telework.

The study is performed by [Visionary Analytics](#) and [Notus](#). It is carried out at the request of European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Please find the support letter [here](#).