

Position Statement of the Union of Employers' Associations of the Czech Republic (UZS ČR) on the Proposed EU Directive on Telework and the Right to Disconnect

We as UZS ČR, the representatives of the Czech employers' associations reject the proposed EU Directive on Telework and the Right to Disconnect due to its potential to increase operational burdens, reduce flexibility, and impose disproportionate legal and financial liabilities on employers across sectors. UZS ČR definitely considers the Directive to be a significant step-back measure that would magnify the loss of EU competitiveness.

Key Arguments Against the Proposal

1. Loss of Managerial Flexibility and Autonomy

- The directive risks undermining the principle of managerial prerogative, by overly regulating how and when employees can work remotely.
- Telework arrangements should remain a voluntary and negotiable element of individual or collective agreements, not imposed by a rigid, one-size-fits-all EU framework.
- Mandating telework rights could limit an employer's ability to manage teams based on business needs, deadlines, and customer demands.
- Moreover, the directive could also breach EU work-life balance initiatives since the flexibility options would be taken away from the employee as well, even though the intention is quite the opposite. Many would benefit, but more would not surely thrive.

2. Legal and Administrative Burden

- The directive could create a complex layer of compliance requirements, including tracking of working hours, digital disconnection rules, equipment provision, and data protection obligations.
- Especially for SMEs, the cost and complexity of implementing these measures may outweigh the benefits.
- Employers face heightened legal exposure for potential violations (e.g., failure to ensure disconnection), leading to increased litigation and liability risks.

3. Risk of Reduced Productivity and Accountability

- Enforcing a strict "right to disconnect" could lead to reduced responsiveness in time-sensitive industries or roles that require flexibility, such as consulting, client services, or tech support.
- Without careful monitoring and performance frameworks, telework may encourage presenteeism rather than productivity, making it harder to evaluate employee output.
- Employers could lose the ability to incentivize or reward flexible, committed workers who want to go beyond fixed hours.

4. Impracticality Across Diverse Sectors

- The directive does not sufficiently consider sectoral and regional differences across the EU. What may work for tech companies in urban hubs may be impractical for industrial, healthcare, or retail sectors.
- Many jobs are inherently location-dependent and not suited to telework. A universal right could create unrealistic expectations and lead to conflict between employers and employees.

5. Hindrance to Innovation and Competitiveness

- The directive could deter companies from experimenting with new hybrid models and digital workforce strategies, fearing rigid compliance frameworks.
- It might discourage investment in EU labor markets, particularly among startups and global companies seeking flexible workforce arrangements.
- By mandating certain arrangements, the EU risks creating a more risk-averse and bureaucratic corporate culture, undermining agility in a global economy.

6. Existing Frameworks Are Sufficient

- Current EU and national labor laws already provide adequate mechanisms for regulating working time, rest periods, and remote work arrangements.
- Social partners at national and sectoral levels are better placed to tailor telework rules to specific economic contexts through collective bargaining, rather than imposing top-down legislation.

Conclusion

While the goals of promoting worker well-being and work-life balance are commendable, the proposed EU Directive on Telework and the Right to Disconnect is too prescriptive,

insufficiently flexible, and economically risky. Employers' associations should oppose the directive in favor of voluntary, negotiated, and context-sensitive approaches that respect both employee needs and business realities.

For the Union of Employers' Associations of the Czech Republic (UZS ČR)

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