

OUR OWN TIME

*The Newsletter of the European Network
for the Fair Sharing of Working Time*

Welcome to the new iteration of the working time newsletter!

**The production of this newsletter has
been taken over by Autonomy.**

Autonomy is an independent, progressive
research organisation that focuses on tackling
climate change, the future of work and economic
planning.

We have been a member of the European Network
for the Fair Sharing of Working Time for
several years, and are excited to support the
coordination of the newsletter.



RESEAU
ROOSEVELT

ROSA
LUXEMBURG
STIFTUNG
BRUSSELS OFFICE



Introduction to the European Network for the Fair Sharing of Working Time

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 quarterly newsletter collates and shares the latest information on working time reduction from across Europe. This is the **11th issue**. If you would like to see previous issues, please use [this link](#).

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

If you would like to subscribe to receive the newsletter regularly, and join the Network's mailing list, sign up [here](#).

Call for submissions

The newsletter is dependent on contributions from the Network's members.

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

In this issue - #11

<u>Conference - Save the Date</u>	3
<u>Austria</u>	4
<u>Belgium</u>	5
<u>Germany</u>	6
<u>Greece</u>	7
<u>Portugal</u>	8
<u>Spain</u>	9
<u>Switzerland</u>	10
<u>United Kingdom</u>	11
<u>Joining the Network</u>	13

European Network for the Fair Sharing of Working Time Conference 2022 - Save the Date!

When: Thursday 20th - Friday
21st October 2022

Where: European Trade Union
Institute, Brussels

**More details to be confirmed soon,
including the programme and speakers.**

The biannual conference will be held in person
and virtually this year, following the online
events in Autumn 2020.

Austria

Construction company introduces a shorter working week

An Austrian company renting and repairing small vehicles for the construction sector has [introduced](#) a shorter working week, making itself a more attractive employer to tackle its skills shortage and improve employee satisfaction.

Belgium

Belgian workers can request a four-day work week with condensed hours

Under a new package of Labour reforms, Belgian workers will have the right to request a four-day week from private sector employers. However, they must condense their existing hours into four days, rather than reduce their hours overall.

In coverage in [the Telegraph](#), Joe Ryle, Director of the 4 Day Week Campaign, said:

"We welcome more flexibility for workers to choose when they work but compressing a normal five day week into four-days is not the answer to tackling burnout, stress and overwork.

"It's essential that the move to a four-day week involves a reduction in working hours, with no loss of pay for employees.

"To ensure the four-day week is implemented properly and the benefits are shared by all workers, trade unions must be at the heart of this transition."

Belgium's Minister of Economy and Labour, Pierre-Yves Dermagne, said that employers must give "solid reasons for any refusal" to these requests. See coverage in the German media [here](#).

Germany

Attac Webinar on working time reduction

Watch Attac's webinar on working time reduction hosted on 3rd March [here](#).

The webinar, "Reduced working hours: a solution for (almost) all our problems?" focuses on achieving a work-life balance, asking whether working time reduction can be an emancipatory project.

It asks how we should define our private lives, and how working time reduction could be centred as a political project.

Margareta Steinrücke and Sophia Wagner from Attac are joined by Andrea Ypsilante from the Social Democratic Party of Germany and the Institut Solidarische Moderne.

German press reports continued business scepticism

German business leaders [remain](#) sceptical of a four-day week. In sectors like manufacturing, employers point to the difficulty of increasing productivity whilst reducing working time. There are also some legislative barriers.

Greece

New publication on the reduction of working time

The ENA Institute for Alternative Policies, in collaboration with ThinkBee, in Greece has published a new report entitled “The Reduction of Working Hours: the Productivity & Social Benefits”, authored by Vassilis Delis and Eirini-Akrivi Nai.

Acknowledging Keynes’ 1930 essay, “Economic Potentials for our Grandchildren”, the publication explores the following:

“The four-day working week or any other reduction in working hours, while maintaining the earnings of the five days, is an idea that is gaining more and more popularity.

A key factor in bringing the issue of working time back into the public debate with regards to the future of work is the rapid technological developments in the fields of automation and digitization and their implications on the production process, which change the content and organization of the workplace.

Reducing working hours, showing positive effects on productivity, health and the balance of family - professional life of employees, but also in dealing with the climate crisis, can be a modern response to productive and social challenges of our era.”

Access the report [here](#).

Portugal

New Portuguese government considering four-day week

Portugal held a snap General Election in January, leading to a landslide victory for the Socialist Party. Prime Minister António Costa's party had been governing Portugal with a minority for several years.

The government has [announced](#) plans to consider reducing working time in various sectors of the economy. Prime Minister António Costa had promised to look at options for introducing a shorter working week whilst on the campaign trail.

Opposition is expected from business owners, who cite existing financial pressures resulting from the pandemic as an obstacle to the private sector being able to implement a shorter working week.

Spain

International four-day week conference in Valencia announced

The International Four Day Week Summit has been announced for 2022.

It will be held at the Complex Esportiu-Cultural Petxina in Valencia on Friday 27th and Saturday 28th May 2022. Registration is free.

There will be panel discussions from academics, business leaders, and civil society representatives on shorter working time and the path to achieving it.

Please see more information on their website [here](#). You can follow their [Twitter](#) account for updates.

Switzerland

Day of action for a shorter working week and climate protection

On 9th April, environmental activists at Strike for Future are [calling](#) for a nationwide day of action in Switzerland to demand a reduction in working time to protect the environment.

According to the organisers, reduced working hours should help to prevent unnecessary and climate-damaging overproduction.

Strike for Future is a coalition of climate activists, feminist collectives, trade unions, and other civil society organisations.

New working paper on the benefits of reduced working time

The Centre for Development and Environment and the University of Bern in Switzerland have published a new working paper entitled “Less is More: the Triple Benefit of a Reduction in Paid Working Time”.

Authored by Christoph Bader et al, the publication discusses the value of working less for achieving a more ecological, just and happy society.

Read the working paper [here](#).

Attitudes towards a four-day week are improving

In Switzerland, attitudes towards a four-day week are [improving](#): large employers, including in the manufacturing industry, are moving to a four-day week. Things to consider include what you lose if there is pressure to maintain productivity, such as idle time discussing with colleagues.

United Kingdom

Four-day week pilot launches in the UK

In January, a four-day week pilot was launched by 4-day Week Global, alongside Autonomy, the 4 Day Week UK Campaign and researchers at Cambridge University, Oxford University and Boston College.

Participating companies will move their employees from a 40-hour work week to 32-hours per week for a six month period. There will be no reduction in pay, and the pilot will start in June.

There are currently 30 companies [signed up](#) to the trial, [covering](#) 2,000 employees, with more expected to follow.

UK four-day week accreditation scheme reaches 60 companies

The UK's four-day week accreditation scheme, managed by the 4-Day Week Campaign, registers employers who have [moved](#) to a 32- or 35-hour week.

The number of companies accredited, under either the Gold or Silver standard, has [reached 60](#).

Wales: Future Generations shorter working week report and Senedd Committee Inquiry

In February, Autonomy [released](#) a report with the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales showing how Wales can pioneer a 'Shorter Working Week' across its national economy.

The report [surveyed](#) the Welsh population on their attitudes to a shorter working week, and

includes a 3-part strategy on how the Welsh government could introduce a four-day week.

Four-day week for schools report from Autonomy

In January, Autonomy [released](#) a report on introducing a four-day week for teachers working in schools.

The research [included](#) a survey of teachers, analysis of an existing case study of a school operating on a shorter working week, and modelling of options for implementing a reduction in working time in the sector.

Women's Budget Group report on shorter working time and a green caring economy

In February, the Women's Budget Group [released](#) a report on integrating a shorter working week into the transition towards a green, caring economy.

The report [argues](#) that, alongside other policy changes, a shorter working week can promote greater gender equality in paid work, unpaid work and income, while enabling a green transition.

It makes a series of policy recommendations around achieving shorter working time, and ensuring these shifts are equitable.

Joining the Network

The European Network for the Fair Sharing of Working Time is open to representatives of organisations, experts and activists with a commitment to and interest in working time reduction.

The Network's main objective is to create a permanent and open forum between organisations and actors working on a reduction in working time.

The newsletter is dependent on contributions from the Network's members.

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

If you would like to subscribe to receive the newsletter regularly, and join the Network's mailing list, sign up [here](#).