

OUR OWN TIME

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

Welcome

The debate on working time is one of the most salient topics on work and politics across Europe today, with a growing movement 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 **13th issue**. If you would like to see the 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.

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In this issue - #13

<u>Call for submissions</u>	2
<u>Conference - Reminder</u>	3
<u>Denmark</u>	4
<u>Germany</u>	5
<u>Portugal</u>	6
<u>Spain</u>	7
<u>United Kingdom</u>	8
<u>Beyond Europe</u>	10

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

European Network for the Fair Sharing of Working Time Conference 2022 - Reminder

When: Thursday 20th - Friday
21st October 2022

Where: Maison des Associations
Internationales,
Brussels

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

We have reached in-person capacity, but welcome virtual attendees to register at [this link](#).

You can access the programme [here](#).

Denmark

Introducing a permanent four-day week in Odsherred municipality

Trade union HK Kommunal reported that negotiations are underway to make the four-day week permanent at the Odsherred municipality. An experimental scheme began in 2019 using compressed hours (i.e. the standard 37 hours are worked on Monday to Thursday, leaving Fridays off). The view of staff is generally positive and the negotiations may involve the option for greater flexibility in terms of the weekly day off.

See the EPSU's coverage in English [here](#).

See the coverage in Danish [here](#).

Germany

The Network hosted a workshop at the European Summer University of Social Movements in August.

Margareta Steinrücke, Alexandra Arntsen and Adrien Tusseau presented the Network's mission, objectives and activities at a workshop on 19th August 2022 in Mönchengladbach.

Alongside a discussion of the trends and actions around working time reduction across Europe, participants were invited to join an open debate on strategies for achieving working time reduction.

See general coverage about the Summer University [here](#).

Portugal

Four-day week trials to start in 2023.

The Portuguese Government will introduce a four-day week pilot in the public and private sectors next year. The project will be coordinated by Pedro Gomes, Professor at the University of Birkbeck, and the proposal will be shared with the Government's partners in October.

See coverage [here](#).

Spain

Telecommunications company extending their four-day week.

Following a trial period that lasted several months, telecommunications operator Telefónica is to [extend](#) their four-day week programme. The so-called “jornada semanal flexible bonificada” will be open to the group’s 18,000 employees in Spain after the programme was tested with 150 employees.

In exchange for a 12% pay cut, the deal would let staff work four days, or 32 hours, a week instead of 37.5 hours now, on a voluntary basis, a union source said.

A maximum of 10% of employees in each Telefonica unit can join the programme.

The mayor of Valencia proposes a month-long four-day week trial in 2023.

Joan Ribó has proposed starting a pilot of a 32-hour week during April 2023, enabled by transferring the usual non-working day of the local festival of San Vicente Mártir to April. This would result in April having four full weeks of four working days.

See coverage in Spanish [here](#).

United Kingdom

First local government body to commence a four-day week trial.

A three-month trial of a four-day week for desk-based staff at South Cambridgeshire District Council will [begin](#) in January – with further trials involving bin crews to follow if it's successful.

Staff will work a 30-hour week with no loss in pay, in a bid to improve recruitment and retention.

The Council will prepare for the trial between now and when the trial begins in January 2023. There are approximately 470 desk-based Council staff who will be able to take part.

The UK pilot reaches its halfway point.

September marks the mid-point of the world's largest four-day week pilot in the UK. Interviews and a survey are underway to understand how companies are progressing.

86% percent of the companies taking part in the trial have [said](#) they are likely to continue it permanently in the mid-point survey.

US media corporation CNN discusses the “life-changing” impact for workers taking part in the pilot [here](#). Fortune outlines why ‘people totally love’ the four-day week pilot [here](#). TimeOut magazine speaks to three employees taking part in the trial [here](#).

See coverage of the four-day week pilot in German [here](#), stating that “The five-day week is a 20th-century concept that is no longer suitable for the 21st century”.

The House of Lords has [agreed](#) to look at the results of the four-day week pilot.

[Return to contents](#)

Atom Bank hails productivity boost resulting from the four-day week.

In November, the British Bank introduced a four-day week with no loss of pay. It stated the company was attracting more talent and staff productivity and morale had improved.

The Bank spoke publicly to encourage other organisations to stay with or move to a four-day week. Their chief people officer said “We have had a lot of success off the back of it, but it’s not easy to implement”.

See coverage in The Times [here](#).

See coverage in the Evening Standard [here](#).

Introducing a four-day week would help with cost of living by saving workers up to £3200 a year.

To help with the cost of living crisis, Autonomy calculated the potential savings to workers from reduced commuting and childcare costs that would arise from moving to a four-day, 32 hour working week with no loss of pay.

They found that:

- A parent with two children would save £3232.40 on average per year across both costs, or roughly £269.36 per month.
- A parent with one child would save £1789.40 on average per year across both costs, or roughly £150 per month.

According to HR News, who surveyed full-time, part-time and self-employed people in 2019, the average worker is paying an average commuting cost of £1,738 per year.

See coverage in the Guardian [here](#).

Beyond Europe

South Africa to launch a four-day week trial

A joint initiative between 4 Day Week Global and the 4 Day Week SA Coalition is [inviting](#) South African businesses to pilot a new working model in 2023 – with planning to start as early as November 2022.

South Africa's 4 Day Week Coalition [includes](#) the National Business Initiative (NBI) and Stellenbosch Business School.

Hong Kong's New World Group introduced "summer hours" running till the end of September.

4,000 staff across the property development and investment business have [benefited](#) from a four and a half day work week throughout the summer. New World Group said it was trying summer hours to "help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance".