

# OUR OWN TIME

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

## Welcome

March 2023

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 Work-Time Network 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 **15th 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.

If you would like to subscribe to receive this email, please sign up [here](#).



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## In this issue - #15

<a href="#"><u>Call for submissions</u></a>	2
<a href="#"><u>Network Updates</u></a>	3
<a href="#"><u>Finland</u></a>	4
<a href="#"><u>France</u></a>	5
<a href="#"><u>Germany</u></a>	6
<a href="#"><u>Hungary</u></a>	7
<a href="#"><u>Portugal</u></a>	8
<a href="#"><u>United Kingdom</u></a>	9
<a href="#"><u>Europe</u></a>	11
<a href="#"><u>Beyond Europe</u></a>	12

## Call for submissions

The newsletter is dependent on contributions from the Network's members. All members need to provide is a link to the relevant update and a one/two-line explanation in English.

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](mailto:workingtimenetwork.europe@gmail.com)

# Network Updates

## European Work-Time Network: Rebranding

The European Network for the Fair Sharing of Working Time has rebranded, and is now named the 'European Work-Time Network'.

We are in the process of launching a new website, and formalising as an Association in France. Updates on this process will be shared in the June newsletter and via email.

## Webinar series

The European Work-Time Network's webinar series on working time reduction will be held between April and November. Speakers from trade unions, campaigns, academia and business will provide updates and insight on progress towards shorter working weeks around Europe.

The first webinar will be held on **Wednesday 26th April, 12pm UK time/1pm Paris time on Attitudes and Arguments around Working Time Reduction**. Alexandra Arntsen and Pedro Gomes will be speaking.

You can sign up to the first webinar via Eventbrite [here](#).

Those on the Network's mailing list will receive additional information about the webinars via email. The sessions will be held on the last Wednesday of the month.

If you are interested in speaking on a panel in one of these webinars, please contact our Coordinator, India, at [workingtimenetwork.europe@gmail.com](mailto:workingtimenetwork.europe@gmail.com).

# Finland

## Four-day week debate revived ahead of elections

Parliamentary elections are being held in Finland in April 2023, and the four-day week is back on the [agenda](#). Following trials held in 2019, the success of the UK's four-day week pilot has revived discussions of working time reduction.

The Economic Affairs and Employment Ministry announced that it will assess the possibility of carrying out shorter working week trials by the end of March.

# France

## Renewed attention on France's 35-hour week

Whilst conflict over the proposal to increase the retirement age in France continues, the UK's pilot has renewed [attention](#) on the country's 35-hour week.

According to researchers, higher numbers of organisations are moving to a 35-hour four-day week with compressed hours, or reducing hours to a shorter working week.

# Germany

## Arguments for the 28-hour week

An article advocating for the 28-hour week has been [published](#) by one of ATTAC Germany's AG ArbeitFairTeilen speakers, Stephan Krull, and is available to read in German.

## Employers must record all working hours

In December 2022, Germany's Federal Labor Court (Bundesarbeitsgericht, BAG), ruled that employers are required to comprehensively [record](#) working hours.

Employers must record the duration of their employees' daily working hours, including overtime. The ruling provides a good basis for reducing levels of unpaid work.

# Hungary

## Quarterly update

In Hungary experiments with working time reduction are primarily found in the form of schemes by individual firms.

A recent example includes a trial by **Telekom**, which included 150 workers in 4 different areas of the company. This was initially planned with a 20% reduction in working hours in the form of eight hour days across a four-day week, while keeping wages and performance levels stable. However, performance could not be maintained at 100%, which is why the trial was adjusted to a 10% reduction in working time.

In addition, the book retailer, **Libri**, tested a work week of 34 hours over four days from October 2022 to February 2023. 137 office workers volunteered to participate. The company is currently in the process of evaluating whether the trial achieved its stated goals of improving the rest time of their staff to benefit morale, well-being, and performance.

There are also several other smaller companies that have implemented a four-day work week without this being communicated to the general public. In some instances, the companies are concerned that public attention might create a negative impression with their clients.



# Portugal

## Coverage of the four-day week private sector trial

Since Portugal's four-day week trial was launched in December, targeting the private sector, news outlets and service providers have followed its progress.

[Bridge In](#) reports that 63 Portuguese companies have registered interest in participating in the pilot, as of March, financed by the Portuguese Institute of Employment and Professional Formation.

## United Kingdom

### Results launched from the world's largest four-day week pilot

Following the UK four-day week pilot coming to an end in December, a report containing results from the think tank Autonomy, University of Cambridge and Boston College have been [released](#).

61 companies, and around 2,900 workers, took part in the trial between June to December 2022. 92% are continuing with the four-day week, 39% of employees were less stressed at the end of the trial and 71% had reduced levels of burnout.

The Deputy Leader of the Labour Party has supported the [results](#), and urged businesses to look at the findings.

See coverage from the [BBC](#), [Reuters](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Financial Times](#) and [Sky News](#).

### UK Four-Day Week Rollout Programme launched

Autonomy and the UK's 4-Day Week Campaign have launched the first four-day week [National Rollout Programme](#) for UK organisations.

The rollout will move beyond experimentation, providing 8-weeks of support organisations to prepare to introduce a four-day week in June.

## Local government four-day week trial begins

South Cambridgeshire District Council has started its four-day week [trial](#), the first of its kind in the UK.

Early results show stress has been reduced for 60% of staff.

## Welsh politicians call for public sector pilot

Politicians on the Welsh Senedd Petitions Committee call for a four-day week [trial](#) in the Welsh public sector.

Committee chairman, Jack Sargeant, agreed it was a "bold proposal" but "no more bold than those campaigners who fought for a five-day week, paid holiday and sick pay which we now take for granted".

# Europe

## Summary of working time reduction initiatives

Following the publication of the UK's four-day week pilot results, [Euronews](#) reported on which countries have embraced a shorter working week and how it's going so far.

Countries featured in this article include Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, Finland and Iceland.

## Beyond Europe

### Bernie Sanders backs the four-day week

Taking to [Twitter](#), Senator Bernie Sanders calls for a four-day week in response to Washington Post coverage of the UK's pilot. Increased worker productivity, enabled by technology, was his justification for calling for shorter hours with no loss in pay.

### Four-Day Week Bill Re-tabled in US Congress

Mark Takano has reintroduced his [proposal](#) to make the four-day week law in the United States. Takano's 32 Hour Workweek Act would modify the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to make the standard work week 32 hours, instead of the current 40.

The proposed legislation was first introduced in 2021.