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The future of work is here: revisiting labour rights

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Selin SAYEK BÖKE and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The novel coronavirus is rapidly changing labour markets by accelerating digitalisation and automation, enforcing physical and social distancing and altering the spatial realities and organisation structure of work. Transition to remote work is widespread, becoming the new form of flexibility. This requires a discussion of new policies to ensure security to the millions of workers.

While remote work provides a temporary solution to the current epidemiological concerns and has proven cost-effective in different dimensions to both employers and employees, it bears significant risks regarding the rights of workers. Evidence shows that working from home and/or flexible hours arrangements mean in most cases a longer working day and more daily meetings. For many, it means increased precarity. A blurred distinction between work and personal life puts strain on the physical and mental health of workers. Furthermore, lack of socialisation, routine physical activity and spontaneous intellectual exchange bears the risk of hindering the very basic tenants of creative thinking necessary for productive and innovative work. While these risks are not novel, the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly exacerbated them. Wage and hour laws, protection from discrimination, and public safety and health requirements all need to be adapted to these shifting workplace norms.

On the other hand, not all work can be done remotely. This shift is also further exposing and deepening vulnerabilities of youth, women, migrants and refugees, as well as the existing economic inequalities in labour markets. Those unable to work remotely are facing significantly higher health risks, reductions in hours or pay, temporary furloughs or even permanent layoffs.

The “future of work” seems to be here, requiring continuous revisiting of the relevant policies to ensure the coexistence of productivity with the protection of the rights of millions of workers. The Parliamentary Assembly should look into this situation and make proposals and recommendations to member States.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

SAYEK BÖKE Selin, Turkey, SOC
BARDINA Maryna, Ukraine, ALDE
BARNETT Doris, Germany, SOC
BAYR Petra, Austria, SOC
BEN CHIKHA Fourat, Belgium, SOC
BOER Margreet, De, Netherlands, SOC
BUSTINDUY María Luisa, Spain, SOC
ÇEVİKÖZ Ahmet Ünal, Turkey, SOC
DE TEMMERMAN Jennifer, France, ALDE
ESTRELA Edite, Portugal, SOC
FRIDEZ Pierre-Alain, Switzerland, SOC
GUTIÉRREZ Antonio, Spain, SOC
HEINRICH Gabriela, Germany, SOC
KILJUNEN Kimmo, Finland, SOC
KOÇ Haluk, Turkey, SOC
KRAVCHUK Yevheniia, Ukraine, ALDE
LLOYD Tony, United Kingdom, SOC
LOVOCHKINA Yuliya, Ukraine, SOC
MOUTQUIN Simon, Belgium, SOC
RAMPI Roberto, Italy, SOC
SAVICKAS Lukas, Lithuania, SOC
SCHENNACH Stefan, Austria, SOC
SZEJNA Andrzej, Poland, SOC
TALIASHVILI Tamar, Georgia, SOC

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group