

Press release – MEPs call for an EU-wide “right to disconnect”



In a resolution adopted on Tuesday with 31 votes in favour, 6 votes against and 18 abstentions, Employment Committee MEPs say that EU countries must ensure that workers are able to exercise the [right to disconnect](#) effectively, including by means of collective agreements. They point out that this right is vital to protect workers' health.

The culture of being “always on” and the growing expectation that workers should be reachable at any time can negatively affect work-life balance, physical and mental health, and well-being, the Employment Committee asserts.

They call on the Commission to propose an EU Directive on the Right to Disconnect, since this right is not explicitly enshrined in EU law . MEPs also stress that being able to switch off from work should be a fundamental right , permitting workers to refrain from work-related tasks and electronic communication outside working hours without facing any repercussions .

Next steps

The non-legislative resolution is expected to be voted on in a plenary session in January 2021. Once endorsed by Parliament, it will be put forward to the Commission and EU countries for implementation as part of future regulatory decisions.

Background

According to [Eurofound](#), since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, over a third of EU workers now work from home . There is currently no European legal framework directly defining and regulating the right to switch off. The widespread use of digital tools and information and communication technologies (ICT) makes it possible to work from anywhere, at any time.

These technologies can have harmful consequences, extending working hours, blurring boundaries between work and private life, and contributing to some types of “work nomadism”, all exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis.