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40% of work during COVID-19 crisis has been done from home

Approximately 40% of paid hours worked by employees were performed from home during the COVID-19 crisis, showing the magnitude of change that has taken place with regards to working life in just six months. Telework has moved beyond being a work organisation issue, and now has significant broader utility, such as potentially boosting rural renewal as employees become less tethered to urban centres, and safeguarding jobs across Europe.

The developing impacts of telework on working life, as well its broader economic and social implications, are analysed in Eurofound's unique [Living.](#)

[working and COVID-19](#) survey. The final report, released this week, shows that respondents who teleworked tended to be relatively privileged, as evidenced by high levels of educational qualifications and economic resilience.

When responses to where work took place are analysed, Belgium had the highest rate of employees working from home, with over half of respondents (52%) indicating that they worked from home exclusively during the pandemic, and just 24% working at the employer's premises. Home-only telework rates were also high in Ireland (47%), Italy (47%), Spain (45%) and France (43%). These high rates are particularly notable considering [low rates of even occasional telework in most Member States preceding the crisis](#). While still growing significantly, home-only telework was comparatively low in Croatia (19%), Poland (21%) and Slovakia (21%), as well as northern Member States such as the Netherlands (23%) and Sweden (24%), where workplaces were more likely to be kept open.

The research also shows shortcomings in practical transitions to telework across Europe. Less than half (47%) of teleworking employees indicated that their employer had supplied the necessary equipment to work from home. Among the countries with a sufficient data sample this ranged from 66% in Finland, to just 37% in Spain. Among all those working from home during the crisis, 54% of employees reported having worked from home previously, while 46% were new teleworkers.

These sweeping changes to working life, which saw millions of people across Europe bring work into their homes, disrupted work-life balance and resulted in broad increases in overtime in order to meet rapidly changing demands. Work-life conflict was particularly evident for people with children under 17 who worked from home, this was most notably the case for women. In total, 22% of respondents working exclusively from home reported difficulty concentrating on work because of family obligations, compared to 8% of those working in other locations. These findings give renewed importance to 'right to disconnect' initiatives, as there is a need to prevent large segments of workers becoming at risk of physical and emotional exhaustion.

Speaking about the findings, Massimiliano Mascherini, Eurofound Head of Unit for Social Policies, said 'This research shows the radical changes that have happened in working life in a very short period of time. Telework is a work organisation issue, a work-life balance issue, a gender equality issue, a

regional development issue, and also a macroeconomic issue of pivotal importance to the future of Europe. We have experienced a telework revolution that looks set to permanently change working relationships, the onus is now on policymakers to both maximise its potential for protecting the economy, and minimise associated work-life conflicts.’

More information:

- Full report: [Living, working and COVID-19](#)
- Explore the data: [Working during COVID-19](#)

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