

**Question for written answer E-003497/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Elena Kountoura (The Left)

Subject: Urgent need for Commission to propose legislative initiative on Europe-wide establishment of right to disconnect and protection of remote workers

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the need to regulate remote work¹ in the EU has become even more urgent. A recent European study on working conditions shows that people who frequently work from home are six times more likely to work in their free time and twice as likely to work 48 hours or more a week compared to those who work in the office².

Given that:

- being constantly connected has an adverse effect on workers' health³;
- there is currently no European legal framework establishing and regulating the right to disconnect and no uniform approach to remote work across all EU Member States;
- as far back as January 2021 the European Parliament called for an EU law that would grant workers the right to digitally disconnect from work without facing negative repercussions;
- the social dialogue which began in June 2022 between European social partners with the aim of reaching a legally binding agreement on remote working, in the form of a Directive, failed because two of the three participating employers' organisations refused to submit a text;

can the Commission answer the following:

In light of the failed negotiations with the employers' organisations, does it intend to promptly put forward a proposal for a European Directive establishing the right to disconnect, in order to put a stop to the exploitation of remote workers in EU Member States?

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¹ An EU-wide law is needed to establish the right of workers to disconnect from work and, in particular, the right not to engage in work-related electronic communication, not to answer work-related phone calls, messages, emails or any other form of correspondence outside working hours and during statutory leave; such a law must also forbid discrimination against remote workers for choosing to exercise their right to disconnect.

² <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/data-catalogue/living-working-and-covid-19-data/working-during-covid-19>

³ Long periods spent in front of a screen, coupled with a heavy workload, reduce concentration, cause an information and emotional overload and can lead to headaches, eye strain, insomnia, fatigue, anxiety or exhaustion. In addition, static posture can cause muscle strain and musculoskeletal disorders. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/638434/IPOL_BRI\(2019\)638434_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/638434/IPOL_BRI(2019)638434_EN.pdf)