I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

OPINIONS

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

559TH PLENARY SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE – INTERACTIO, 24.3.2021-25.3.2021

Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on ‘Challenges of teleworking: organisation of working time, work-life balance and the right to disconnect’
(Exploratory opinion at the request of the Portuguese Presidency)
(2021/C 220/01)

Rapporteur: Carlos Manuel TRINDADE

Request from the Portuguese Presidency of the Council 26.10.2020

Legal basis Article 304 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

Section responsible Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship

Adoption in section 11.3.2021

Adoption in plenary 24.3.2021

Plenary session No 559

Outcome of vote (for/against/abstentions) 221/15/20

1. Conclusions and recommendations

1.1. The EESC recognises that during the COVID-19 pandemic, teleworking has helped to ensure that the economy has continued to function and has saved jobs in the various Member States, limiting the loss of activity. Millions of European workers began working from home — around 40% according to Eurofound estimates.

1.2. Before the pandemic, telework accounted for a much lower proportion of all work than in the US or Japan (less than half). The pandemic expedited the shift to teleworking, however, and it became essential in tackling the health crisis. Businesses, workers and society are consequently facing huge challenges. Obviously there will be numerous lessons to be learned from the pandemic, enabling us to make the most of opportunities and eliminate the risks associated with telework.

1.3. In this respect, the EESC acknowledges the far-sightedness of the European social partners in their 2002 Agreement on Telework. The EESC calls on the social partners in the Member States to continue social dialogue and collective bargaining, and to draw up rules tailored to each of their countries and to each sector-specific situation.
1.4. The EESC takes the view that any solutions must factor in the economy's transition towards digitalisation, towards more sustainable development and towards reducing existing inequalities.

1.5. The EESC urges the Commission and Member States to monitor the implementation of the 2002 Agreement on Telework and the 2020 Agreement on Digitalisation. In the light of the experience gained from the pandemic existing regulations in the EU and in the Member States could be amended and new regulations created so as to promote the positive aspects of telework and protect the fundamental rights of workers. The EESC notes that the organisation of working time, the risks to health and safety at work, work-life balance, the right to disconnect and the effectiveness of labour rights when teleworking must be given special attention. Developments in technology and in ways of working are gathering pace, meaning that rules and practices need to be adapted to new conditions in the future.

1.6. The EESC highlights the need for Member States, with the involvement of the social partners, to ensure that there is an appropriate national framework for teleworking, setting out the rules of play for companies and workers interested in adopting this form of work.

1.7. The EESC urges the Member States to transpose and implement the Work-Life Balance Directive.

1.8. The EESC emphasises that the 2002 and 2020 agreements concluded by the European social partners include the key principles making it possible to leverage the positive effects of teleworking, while minimising the negative effects.

1.9. The EESC is of the view that, in terms of regulation, the key issues are to ensure: that teleworking is voluntary and reversible and that teleworkers have the same individual and collective rights as comparable workers in the companies that they work for, including by organising work so as to ensure that workload is comparable; that the teleworking arrangements are set out in written form; and that specific measures are established, where necessary, to guarantee the effectiveness of teleworkers' rights, including health and safety conditions at work.

1.10. The EESC recognises that it is important for all issues relating to equipment, responsibilities and costs to be clearly defined before commencing telework. As a general rule, the EESC deems employers to be responsible for providing, installing and maintaining the equipment necessary for telework. The employer should cover directly the costs incurred in teleworking, in particular those in relation to communication (consumables, mobile phone, internet).

1.11. The EESC suggests that in relation to teleworking, and in accordance with European and national legislation on telework and collective bargaining agreements at national, regional, sectoral and company level, companies should use appropriate mechanisms to measure normal working hours and overtime.

1.12. The EESC believes that the methods of monitoring and recording working time should be strictly geared to this objective. They should be known to workers, be non-intrusive and avoid breaching workers' privacy, while taking into account the applicable data protection principles.

1.13. The EESC stresses that teleworkers must not be disadvantaged in their working life, in particular as regards the development of their professional career, continuing learning, access to the company's internal information, trade union participation and representation, specific labour rights (occupational medicine, insurance, etc.) and access to other specific rights within the company.

1.14. The EESC believes that, following studies on the impact of teleworking, a joint process by the European Commission, the ILO and the OECD should be initiated with a view to drawing up an ILO convention on teleworking. The EESC also considers that decent telework conditions should be part of the ILO Decent Work Agenda and the corresponding national programmes.
2. Conceptual aspects and background to teleworking

2.1. This opinion aims to respond to questions raised by the Portuguese Presidency on the challenges of teleworking with regard to the organisation of working time, work-life balance and the right to disconnect, with a view to promoting the European social model. These questions include the gender perspective, which will be explored in a separate opinion (SOC/662) to be read in conjunction with this one.

2.2. The EESC appreciates the work done by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Eurofound on teleworking methodologies and related concepts, which has made it possible to compare European and international data (1).

2.3. When referring to this type of work, the EESC uses the term ‘teleworking’ to mean professional activities carried out remotely, away from the company’s premises and making use of ICT equipment. The place where the work is carried out and the use of ICT are therefore two of the defining aspects of teleworking. The EESC recognises that there are different ways to telework, depending on existing national laws and practices. This opinion will focus on teleworking by employees and will not consider the issue of self-employed workers, something that will have to be covered in an opinion of its own in the future.


2.5. The European social partners have also focused their attention on this area. The Framework Agreement on Telework (an autonomous agreement) was signed in 2002, but implementation has been uneven across Europe. It highlights several aspects of telework such as: its voluntary nature; equal treatment with comparable workers at the organisation, with specific reference to workload, access to training and collective rights; reversibility; the fact that teleworking does not alter workers’ employment status; respect for teleworkers’ privacy; data protection and compliance with rules on health and safety at work. In order to verify that health and safety rules are correctly applied, employers, trade union or workers’ representatives and other relevant authorities have access to the workplace within the limits specified in national laws and collective bargaining agreements. If teleworkers are working in their own homes, access is subject to prior notification and requires their agreement. Teleworkers have the right to request visits for inspection purposes.

2.6. In June 2020 the European social partners signed an autonomous framework agreement on digitalisation covering specific four areas in particular: digital skills and securing employment; the modalities of connecting and disconnecting; artificial intelligence and guaranteeing of human control principle; and respect of human dignity and surveillance. The EESC considers it necessary to carry out an assessment of the results of implementing the provisions set out in this agreement as soon as possible. The EESC calls on the Commission, the Member States, and the Social Partners to promote the swift and proper implementation of the agreement. A European legislative initiative could potentially be launched under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Articles 151 et seq. TFEU), and/or at Member State level, to protect and give effect to the right of workers to disconnect.

2.7. Important work has also been, and will continue to be, done by the European social partners in a significant number of sectors. A non-exhaustive list of agreements in the areas of teleworking and digitalisation, which demonstrates the effort made through social dialogue, can be found in the annex.

2.8. At Member State level, labour law regulates areas relevant to teleworking, such as the duration and organisation of working time, employment relationships and health and safety at work, through specific provisions, including the requirement for a written contract of employment. The Framework Agreement on Telework has had an influence on the content of the rules adopted.

2.9. Teleworking has been, and will continue to be, the focus of collective bargaining and of national, sectoral and company-level agreements (agreements that in some cases are tripartite), which were also influenced by the 2002 European agreement. Collective bargaining often takes place at company level, meaning that not as much is known about the content of the agreement (6).

2.10. The situation in Member States in eastern Europe is an exception in this respect. The EESC calls on the social partners in these Member States to negotiate or update agreements on teleworking.

2.11. According to data from the 2015 European Working Conditions Survey, the overall proportion of people teleworking was high in the Nordic countries — Denmark (37 %), Sweden (33 %) — and the Netherlands (30 %); it was average in countries such as Luxembourg (26 %), France (25 %), Estonia (24 %), Belgium (24 %) and Finland (24 %); and it was low in half of EU countries, ranging from 12-13 % (Germany, Spain, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Romania) to 7-11 % (Italy, Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, Portugal and Hungary). It should be noted that, in general, half of teleworkers are ‘occasional’ teleworkers and just under a quarter are ‘regular’ teleworkers (home-based telework) (7).

2.12. Recent findings from research include (8):

2.12.1. In 2019, only 5.4 % of those employed in the EU-27 usually worked from home — a proportion that has remained virtually unchanged over the last decade; however, between 2009 and 2019, the proportion of those who sometimes worked from home increased from 5.2 % in 2009 to 9 % in 2019: ILO studies report that the rate of teleworking (including ‘mobile’ teleworking) among the EU workforce as a whole is 8 %, compared with 20 % in the US and 16 % in Japan (9).

2.12.2. The prevalence of teleworking varies greatly between sectors and occupations, and is particularly high in the information and technology sectors and in knowledge-intensive sectors, as well as among highly-qualified professionals. The industrial structure in the Member States, the distribution of employment by firm size, the self-employment rate and workers’ digital skills are some of the factors which explain the differences and variations in the prevalence of teleworking across Member States.

2.12.3. Disparities in access to telework and to the forms of protection enjoyed by workers may exacerbate inequalities between workers, including the question of gender, which is being addressed in SOC/662. A solution must be found to this problem.

2.12.4. Building up workers’ digital skills is key to addressing the challenges arising as a result of technological change and new ways of working (in 2019, less than 25 % of businesses in the EU had training in digital skills, ranging from 6 % in Romania to 37 % in Finland).

2.13. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, many millions of workers in Europe began working from home, with Eurofound estimating that around 40 % started teleworking full-time as a result of the pandemic. In most cases this has been made compulsory following decisions taken by the public authorities for health control reasons.

2.14. The EESC reaffirms its various opinions (10) on topics relating to the future of work, digitalisation, the organisation of working time and work-life balance.

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(7) European Commission, Telework in the EU before and after the COVID-19: where we were, where we head to, Science for Policy Briefs, 2020.
(8) Idem.
3. The opportunities and risks of teleworking

3.1. For companies, teleworking can lead to productivity gains, though it may pose difficulties in terms of organisational culture and the organisation of work. From a business perspective, the use of teleworking has multiple objectives, including (11):

i. organising work on the basis of results, giving workers more autonomy and responsibility for results;

ii. working with increased productivity and efficiency (with fewer interruptions);

iii. saving space in premises/offices and making savings on associated costs;

iv. facilitating access to work for certain categories of workers (those with care responsibilities or with physical disabilities).

3.2. For workers, teleworking can make it easier to balance their work and private life and reduce the costs of commuting. In general, teleworking can offer greater autonomy and can result in better concentration and increased productivity (12). However, autonomy does not always compensate for the negative effects on health and well-being and it may even increase the intensity of work when combined with excessive workloads and competitive organisational cultures that insist on high performance, resulting in excessive (and unpaid) workloads and insufficient rest periods (13).

3.3. The EESC highlights the fact that teleworking makes a positive contribution to sustainable development and decarbonisation of the economy, in addition to facilitating urban mobility.

3.4. The EESC notes that the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been substantially reduced due to telework. The significant increase in telework has enabled many areas of the economy to survive.

3.5. The EESC notes that the blurring of the boundaries between working and non-working hours can lead to an increase in the number of hours actually worked and in the intensity of work, along with difficulties in disconnecting from work and detrimental effects on family time. Measuring and monitoring working time represents a major challenge for labour inspectorates in the Member States, one that needs to be properly addressed.

3.6. Research highlights the risks to workers. These not only include risks related to the various kinds of isolation, such as stress, depression and anxiety, but also musculoskeletal risks, headaches, fatigue and sleeping disorders, not to mention the new digital issues such as ‘virtual presenteeism’. The effect of presenteeism on working life varies. According to Eurofound, the experience is negative for some workers, while others are satisfied that they can work from home rather than go into their employer’s premises when they are feeling unwell. However, this should not encroach upon the right to sick leave. Teleworking also poses major difficulties such as organising and participating in trade union activities, invisibility, invasion of privacy and the dispersal of teleworkers.

3.7. The EESC notes that teleworking entails other risks, such as those connected with cybersecurity, which need to be properly addressed in order to protect businesses and the privacy of teleworkers. A further risk associated with teleworking is the potentially negative impact on the existing working culture in units producing goods and services or in associations and/or voluntary organisations.

3.8. Teleworking requires ICT skills and access to equipment and services, along with living and other conditions conducive to teleworking. This raises the issue of economic and social inequalities.

3.9. The EESC acknowledges that telework could make the labour market more inclusive with respect to some groups at risk of discrimination: people with disabilities, pregnant women and single-parent families in particular often come up against structural barriers to finding jobs.

(12) Eurofound, Telework and ICT-based mobile work: flexible working in the digital age, 2020, p. 53 (hereinafter ‘Eurofound 2020’).
3.10. The EESC is of the view that, in terms of regulation, the key issues are to ensure: that teleworking is voluntary and reversible — apart from in exceptional cases such as the pandemic, when the public authorities make it obligatory — and that teleworkers have the same individual and collective rights as comparable workers in the companies that they work for; that teleworking arrangements are set out in written form; and that specific measures are established, where necessary, to guarantee the effectiveness of teleworkers’ rights and their equal treatment with other workers.

3.11. In the EESC’s view, regulating telework could ensure decent working conditions and help reduce inequalities and in-work poverty (14).

3.12. The EESC deems employers to be responsible for training and for providing, installing and maintaining the equipment necessary for telework. The employer should cover directly the costs incurred in teleworking, in particular those in relation to communication (consumables, mobile phone, internet).

3.13. All necessary measures should be taken to protect data relating to teleworking, in particular teleworkers’ personal data.

3.14. The EESC points to the significant increase in surveillance, control and monitoring systems applied to the activity of teleworkers in most companies. The EESC recommends that such monitoring tools take account of the principles underpinning data protection and, if necessary, that they be covered in future European legislation and/or collective bargaining at national, regional, sectoral and company level between the social partners in the Member States.

4. The challenges of teleworking

4.1. Organisation of working time

4.1.1. The EESC notes that research into the effects of teleworking on working time has unequivocally identified the pattern of long working hours as the main disadvantage of this form of work (15). Employees are able to structure their working day and to avoid commuting, but the downside is that they work longer hours at night and at the weekend.

4.1.2. The EESC is pleased to see that the European social partners recently agreed that regular exchange of views between managers and workers and/or their representatives on workload and work processes (16) are amongst the measures to be considered as part of the joint partnership process which is the basis of the accord.

4.1.3. In fact, a Eurofound (17) study found that:

4.1.3.1. While carrying out ‘regular’ telework, around 30 % of workers work in their free time on a daily basis or several times a week; around 50 % of workers are interrupted to take on unscheduled tasks and around 20 % work more than 48 hours a week (around 30 % if they are ‘mobile’ and 10 % if they are ‘occasional’ teleworkers).

4.1.3.2. Around 40 % of ‘regular’ teleworkers rest for fewer than 11 hours (the figure is around 25 % for ‘occasional’ and 60 % for ‘mobile’ teleworkers).

4.1.4. Eurofound surveys show that the intensity of work is a common problem in European countries (for example 37 % of workers report being subject to tight deadlines) and that this is more common among teleworkers, particularly mobile teleworkers (18).

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(14) See the resolution recently adopted by the European Parliament.
4.1.5. The impact on health and well-being of the intensive use of ICT equipment such as working on computer screens or smartphones should be assessed. Negative effects which can be aggravated by teleworking include: psychological stress, eye strain, anxiety, headaches, fatigue, sleep disorders and musculoskeletal problems (19).

4.1.6. Although there are European laws that can be applied to teleworking, it is necessary to assess whether the Working Time Directive and the other directives referred to in point 2.4, and the Agreements on Teleworking (2002) and on Digitalisation (2020), are sufficient to protect these workers (20). In this regard, the EESC notes the importance of European case-law, which states that ‘(…) Member-States must require employers to set up an objective, reliable and accessible system enabling the duration of time worked each day by each worker to be measured’ (21). The EESC notes that it is for the Member States to determine the specific arrangements for implementing such a system, taking into account, inter alia, differences between sectors and activities (22).

4.1.7. Bearing this in mind, the EESC suggests that in relation to teleworking, and in accordance with European and national legislation on telework and collective bargaining agreements at regional, sectoral and company level, companies should use appropriate mechanisms to measure normal working hours and overtime.

4.1.8. The EESC takes the view that the concept of equal treatment among comparable workers in the same company applies to conditions for health and safety at work, to organising work in such a way as to ensure that the workload is comparable and to the right for trade unions/workers’ representatives to access the place where telework is carried out within the limits set by national laws and collective bargaining agreements.

4.1.9. Teleworkers must not be disadvantaged in their working life, in particular as regards the development of their professional career, continuing learning, access to the company’s internal information, trade union participation and representation, specific labour rights (occupational medicine, insurance, etc.) and access to other specific rights within the company.

4.2. Work-life balance

4.2.1. One of the driving forces behind the expansion of teleworking is that this form of work appears to allow for better work-life balance and higher productivity, more loyalty and less staff turnover. However, as it is difficult to reach definitive conclusions regarding the effects of telework on the world of work based on the current state of research on this topic, the reality could be much more complex and ambiguous than, and perhaps even contradictory to, this potential win-win scenario for workers and employers (23).

4.2.2. The EESC points out that there is a discrepancy between the increasing flexibility of working hours and the objective of decent work, as advocated by the ILO.

4.2.3. The EESC draws attention to the fact that, with regard to work-life balance, negative effects are amplified in the case of teleworkers. They also vary according to the individual characteristics of the worker, the working culture and the way in which work is organised (24). The EESC believes that effectively transposing the directive regulating this issue will undoubtedly lead to an improvement in the working conditions of teleworkers (25). The EESC therefore urges the Member States to properly transpose and implement this directive.

4.2.4. The EESC notes that the effects of teleworking on work-life balance are extremely ambiguous, if not contradictory, and further research into the balance between paid work and personal life is needed (26).

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(19) For more information on the implications of teleworking for health and well-being, see: Eurofound 2020, pp. 27-35.
(20) Eurofound 2020, p. 54.
(21) Judgment of the European Court of Justice, case C-55/18, ECLI:EU:C:2019:402, paragraph 60. See other case law on the subject of teleworking: C-518/15; C-344/19; C-580/19; C-214/20; C-84/94.
(22) Idem case C-55/18, ECLI:EU:C:2019:402, paragraph 63.
4.2.5. The EESC stresses the need for sufficient training for workers and line managers on good practices in the management of teleworking and compliance with legal and contractual standards, particularly in relation to promoting work-life balance.

4.2.6. The EESC calls on Member States to invest appropriately in creating and/or developing high-quality, universally accessible social services for the care of the elderly and children, as this will help to ensure work-life balance.

4.3. The right to disconnect

4.3.1. The EESC is aware that an ‘always on’ culture, being continually connected and a lack of rest create significant physical and psychosocial risks for teleworkers (27). Being connected means that it becomes difficult to respect the boundaries between paid work and private life.

4.3.2. With regard to the right to disconnect, despite following different approaches Member States have developed policies and/or the social partners and businesses have taken action to limit detrimental effects, the aim being to protect workers’ leisure time.

4.3.3. Being constantly connected has negative consequences. Women are the most disadvantaged as they bear the burden of carrying out unpaid domestic work and caring for children, the elderly and the sick (28).

4.3.4. The legislation covers most of the topics associated with teleworking, so it is still very important that it be implemented effectively. At European level, the Framework Agreement on Digitalisation signed in June 2020 includes, inter alia, the arrangements for exercising the right to disconnect, compliance with the working time arrangements in the legislation and collective agreements, as well as other contractual arrangements, and ensures the worker is not required to be reachable by their employer outside working hours. The EESC notes that this agreement is now being implemented by the social partners in the Member States. However a legislative initiative under the Treaty on The Functioning of the European Union (articles 151 et seq. TFEU) to protect and give effect to the right of workers to disconnect, thus preventing their working conditions from deteriorating, remains possible.

4.3.5. There are different views on establishing a right to disconnect in the Member States (29). Four countries (Belgium, Spain, France and Italy) have adopted specific legislation. Two further countries either discussed draft legislation (Portugal) or held a consultation process (the Netherlands) but no specific legislation was adopted. In other Member States, views are divergent: in some cases, trade unions call for specific legislation because existing laws are not deemed sufficient; in others collective bargaining is considered to be the best form of regulation and in yet others it is argued that the legislation governing working time is sufficient.

4.3.6. In view of this situation, the EESC welcomes the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 21 January 2021 as taken into account by the European Commission in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan of 4 March under the chapter concerning telework and the right to disconnect (30). In this framework the EESC considers that the right to disconnect should be properly addressed in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

4.3.7. The EESC emphasises that, with regard to the right to disconnect, overtime is not a problem in itself provided it complies with the rules laid down, particularly the maximum number of hours, and that there are guarantees that all work performed is paid for in keeping with the laws of each country.

5. Actions by the European Commission, the Member States and the social partners

5.1. The EESC stresses the need for more and better statistical information and for more research on teleworking to identify best practices and to examine its impact on the lives of workers, businesses and society. The EESC calls on the Commission to improve research into teleworking and its effects, to promote the exchange between Member States of good

(28) See EESC opinion SOC/662 (see page 13 of this Official Journal).
(30) See the resolution recently adopted by the European Parliament.
practices in relation to the organisation working time, work-life balance and the right to disconnect, and finally to support the required skills transition and its progress, while respecting social dialogue and collective bargaining between social partners at different levels.

5.2. The EESC emphasises that the 2002 and 2020 agreements include the key principles making it possible to leverage the positive effects of teleworking, while minimising the negative effects.

5.3. The EESC urges the Commission and Member States to monitor the implementation of the 2002 and 2020 agreements, if necessary adjusting the existing rules — and drawing up new ones — in the light of the experience gained from the pandemic so as to promote the positive aspects of telework and protect the fundamental rights of workers. Developments in technology and in ways of working are gathering pace, meaning that rules and practices may need to be adapted to new conditions in the future.

5.4. The EESC highlights the need for Member States, with the involvement of the social partners, to ensure an appropriate national framework for teleworking, setting out the rules of play for companies and workers interested in adopting this form of work, taking into account the above-mentioned agreements.

5.5. In particular, the organisation of working time, the risks to health and safety at work, work-life balance, the right to disconnect and the effectiveness of labour rights when teleworking must be given special attention.

5.6. The EESC is convinced that teleworking issues should be addressed in line with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

5.7. The EESC considers the participation and involvement of the social partners at all levels, including through collective bargaining, to be key to finding balanced, decent and fair solutions.

5.8. The EESC believes that, following studies on the impact of teleworking, a joint process by the European Commission, the ILO and the OECD should be initiated with a view to drawing up an ILO convention on teleworking. The EESC also considers that decent telework conditions should be part of the ILO Decent Work Agenda and the corresponding national programmes.

Brussels, 24 March 2021.

The President
of the European Economic and Social Committee
Christa SCHWENG
ANNEX I

EUROPEAN SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE JOINT TEXTS ON TELEWORK AND DIGITALISATION (1)

Telework
Eurocommerce and UNI, Europa, European agreement on guidelines on Telework and ICT-mobile work in commerce, 25 May 2018 (commerce)
EACB, EBF-FBE, ESBG and UNI Global Union, Declaration on Telework in the European Banking Sector, 17 November 2017 (banking)
ETNO and UNI Europa, Joint Declaration on ICT-based mobile work, 2 February 2017 (telecommunications)
ETNO and UNI Europa, Joint declaration on telework, 9 June 2016 (telecommunications)
ACME, BIPAR, CEA and UNI-Europa, Joint declaration on telework by the European social partners in the insurance sector, 10 February 2015 (insurance)
CEMR-CCRE and EPSU, CEMR-EP/EPSU joint statement on telework, 13 January 2004 (local and regional government)
Eurelectric and EPSU, EMCEF, Joint declaration on telework, 13 November 2002 (electricity)
Eurocommerce and UNI Europa, European Agreement on Guidelines on Telework in Commerce, 26 April 2001 (Commerce)
ETNO and UNI Europa, Guidelines for Telework in Europe, 7 February 2001 (telecommunications)
Joint Committee, Opinion on telework, 23 November 1998 (telecommunications)

Digitalisation
ETNO and UNI-Europa, Joint Declaration on Artificial Intelligence, 30 November 2020 (telecommunications)
CEEMET and IndustriAll, Joint opinion on the impact of digitalisation on the world of work in the metal industries, 9 November 2020 (metal industry)
EFIC and EFBWW, European Social Partners joint statement on Digital Transformation in workplaces of the European Furniture Industry, 6 July 2020 (Furniture)
Federation of European Social Employers and EPSU, Joint Position Paper on Digitalisation in the Social Services Sector — Assessment of Opportunities and Challenges, 6 June 2020 (social services)
Eurelectric and EPSU, IndustriAll, Digitalisation at the heart of social partners’ commitment to keep the lights on, 9 April 2020 (electricity)
Eurelectric and EPSU, IndustriAll, A Social Partners’ Framework of Actions — Challenges and opportunities of the digitalisation for the workforce in the European Electricity Sector, 9 April 2020 (electricity)
PostEurop and UNI Europa, Joint Declaration on Training in the Digital Era, 6 December 2019 (postal services)
ECEG and IndustriAll, Joint recommendations on digital transformations in the workplace for the European chemicals, pharmaceuticals, rubber and plastics sectors, 8 November 2019 (chemical industry)
EFCl/FENI and UNI Europa, Joint Statement on the Impact of Digitalization on Employment in the Cleaning and Facility Services Industry, 29 October 2019 (industrial cleaning)

(1) Based on the European Commission EU social dialogue texts database, the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) EU Social Dialogue texts database (not yet publicly available) and own research.
INTERGRAF and UNI-Europa, Print is vital for the future of reading — INTERGRAF and UNI Europa Graphical & Packaging joint statement, 21 October 2021 (graphical industry)

FERPORT, ESPO and ETF, Joint statement ‘Market based and technological developments in the shipping sector and technological innovation represent major challenges for the port sector’, 24 June 2019 (ports)

AMICE, BIPAR, Insurance Europe and UNI Europa, Follow-up statement on the social effects of digitalization, 15 February 2019 (insurance)

IRU and ETF, Joint statement from Social partners for better regulation and digital enforcement, 7 December 2018 (road transport)

EBF-FBE and UNI Europa, Joint Declaration on the Impact of Digitalisation on Employment, 30 November 2018 (banking)

CEPI and IndustriAll, A social partner resolution addressing the ongoing digitalisation in the European pulp and paper sector and its potential impact on industry and employment, 6 July 2018 (paper industry)

CEEMET and IndustriAll, The impact of digitalisation on the world of work in the metal, engineering and technology-based industries, 8 December 2016 (metal industry)

AMICE, BIPAR, Insurance Europe and UNI Europa, Joint declaration on the social effects of digitalisation by the European social partners in the insurance sector, 12 October 2016 (Insurance)

EPSU and CEMR, Joint Declaration on the opportunities and challenges of digitalisation in local and regional administration, 11 December 2015 (local and regional administration)
ANNEX II

The following amendments, which received at least a quarter of the votes cast, were rejected in the course of the debate (Rule 43(2) of the Rules of Procedure):

**Point 1.14 (linked to 5.8)**

Amend text as follows:

1.14. The EESC believes that, following studies on the impact of teleworking, it is important that good teleworking conditions become part of the Decent Work Agenda in general and the Decent Work Country Programmes in particular. A joint process by the European Commission, the ILO and the OECD should be initiated with a view to exploring whether drawing up an ILO convention on teleworking is needed.

Outcome of the vote:
In favour: 109
Against: 130
Abstention: 14

**Point 4.1.1**

Amend text as follows:

4.1.1. The EESC notes that it is difficult to reach definitive conclusions regarding the effects of telework on the world of work based on the current state of research into the effects of teleworking on working time has unequivocally identified the pattern of long working hours as the main disadvantage of this form of work (15). Employees are able to structure their working day and to avoid commuting, but the downside is that they work longer hours at night and at the weekend.

Outcome of the vote:
In favour: 111
Against: 120
Abstention: 18

**Point 5.8 (linked to 1.14)**

Amend text as follows:

5.8. The EESC believes that, following studies on the impact of teleworking, it is important that good teleworking conditions become part of the Decent Work Agenda in general and the Decent Work Country Programmes in particular. A joint process by the European Commission, the ILO and the OECD should be initiated with a view to exploring whether drawing up an ILO convention on teleworking is needed.

Outcome of the vote:
In favour: 109
Against: 130
Abstention: 14

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(15) Telework in the 21st century, ILO, 2019, p. 298