

**STAFF EXPECTATIONS ON TELEWORK
AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO DG HR
FOR SUMMER 2021
and
FOR A "NEW NORMALITY" post-Covid**

**RESULTS of the FEDERATION SURVEY
conducted in MARCH and APRIL 2021**



Dear colleagues,

You have responded in great numbers to this second survey launched by **the Federation** at the end of March on telework arrangements: **6718 responses were collected** (compared to 4880 responses to our November 2020 survey).

This unprecedented participation clearly demonstrates the importance and sensitivity that you attach to this subject.

The Federation warmly thanks the colleagues who took the trouble to express their opinions and we now share the results with everyone, in accordance with our commitments.

We began this survey by addressing our members exclusively before opening it up to all staff in order to identify any differences.

It turns out that the results are almost identical in percentage terms for each of the five questions.

Your responses are presented in percentages and graphs in the attachments.

In summary, here are your opinions and expectations for telework in the future:

You have expressed two distinct preoccupations concerning telework:

- Firstly, immediate demands for the adaptation of telework conditions for as long as the Covid crisis related situation continues;
- Secondly, medium term demands for structural telework arrangements which will become the norm in the "post-Covid" future

Concerning the telework rules currently in force and still planned for the summer of 2021

In this period still dominated by Covid and while vaccinations are progressing but slowly, **the staff considers the limitation** imposed by the Commission of no more than 10 days of telework away from the place of employment **to be too restrictive**.

Indeed, when asked:

Would you agree that if the Covid-19 crisis persists and telework is the imposed way of working, the Administration should allow staff to telework freely from abroad on a temporary basis?

- 69% of you asked to be able to do so without time limit
- 20% of you wanted to have this freedom for half of the time

Thus, 89% of the staff feel frustrated by the limit of 10 short days arbitrarily set by the Administration.

Given all the hazards: national instructions, difficult transport conditions and constraints linked to professional activity, **the Federation asks DG HR to urgently** revisit the guidelines on this point and to show more flexibility and concern for its staff for the summer of 2021.

Concerning the expectations of staff on the modalities of structural telework which will become in the medium term the norm in the "post-Covid" future

To the question:

What proportion of telework time in relation to office-based work would you like?

The answers are unambiguous, there is a strong demand for a high proportion of telework in the future.

- 17% of you would be satisfied with 2 days of telework per week
- 74% of you would like to telework 3 or more days a week.

Thus, 91% of the staff are in favour of keeping a significant proportion of their working time in telework.

The administration would be moving towards a solution that would allow working patterns to evolve in this direction, favouring intensive teleworking.

It should be noted that this evolution towards more telework could well result in a substantial modification of the accommodation conditions in our buildings for the part of the working time spent in the office...

This is another issue of friction with the Administration, which we will inform you about through other messages...

Concerning the possibility of being able to telework a certain number of days per year outside the place of employment in the "post-Covid" future, the Federation had proposed in its survey to take as a reference point the model in force in other Institutions and in particular at the Court of Auditors: telework outside the place of employment a total of 30 days per year spread over the year with a maximum of 10 days per month.

Thus, to the question :

What possibilities to telework away from the place of employment would you like in the future?

- 24% of you opt for a scheme identical to that of the Court of Auditors
- 24% of you would like 10 more days per year than at the Court of Auditors
- 42% of you would like to be able to telework abroad without time limits

In total, 90.6% of staff would like to be treated at least as well as their colleagues at the Court of Auditors!

Secondly, there are many complaints from staff about the increase in meetings largely outside of core time and the constant exchange of e-mails which blurs the separation between professional and private life.

To the question:

Do you think that telework requires a review of core time and the introduction of a right to disconnect to preserve private and family life?

- 77% of you ask for concrete measures to be taken to ensure the respect of the right to disconnect from IT and telecoms

Finally, in financial terms, you rightly consider that the Administration transfers a number of expenses (heating, electricity, internet, telephone, etc.) to your charge and makes massive savings on missions and soon on buildings and offices.

To the question :

Do you think it is normal for the Commission to follow the practices in force in our Member States, and in particular Belgium, and to compensate (especially the lowest paid) by means of a financial allowance for the extra costs incurred by generalised teleworking (independently of the provision of a chair and a screen)?

- 34.5% of you want the lowest paid to be compensated
- 55% of you want to be compensated for the extra costs of telework.

Thus, 90% of the staff is in favour of the introduction of a financial contribution by the Commission.

The FEDERATION recalls that in these difficult and in many ways decisive moments, consultation between the Administration and the Staff Representative Organisations must be the rule.

At the legitimate request of the vast majority of colleagues, the Federation asks the administration to :

- **urgently revisit the telework guidelines to allow staff to telework freely from abroad, on a temporary basis in the summer of 2021 ;**
- **to include in the new provisions that structural telework at 50% (every other week) or 2 or 3 days per week becomes a right;**
- **to open up the possibility of teleworking away from the place of employment in the future "post Covid" on the model of the Court of Auditors;**
- **introduce safeguards to ensure that the right to disconnect from IT and telecoms is respected;**
- **to draw inspiration from the good practices in place in our Member States in order to cover all these costs related to telework, at least for the most vulnerable colleagues.**

The Federation supports all the demands made by colleagues in this survey and asks the Administration to take them into account during the discussions that will be held with the trade unions from May 2021.

The Federation

You will never walk alone !