



Business Support on Your Doorstep

EU Alert

network
enterprise europe

11th September 2009

Working Time Rules - 'The Shifting Goalposts' Free Workshop - 24th September 2009

Lawyers from leading international law firm Pinsent Masons will explore developments to the rules on worker's working time in this one-off briefing brought to you by Enterprise Europe Network West Midlands.

- The following are just some of the key elements to be covered during the briefing:
- Where the Working Time laws come from and why it is that they are constantly changing
- What it means to an employer when the law is changed and the ways in which such changes take place
- A review of recent developments in the law to include rest breaks etc

The session will explore recent changes to this area of the law and how employers have coped with these changes. The session will also share thoughts on the best practices being adopted by employers in order to implement developments in the laws relating to Working Time as well as acting as a reminder to employers as to what developments have taken place in this far-reaching area of the law.

We will assume a basic understanding of the key aspects of UK working time laws. This will enable delegates to gain a deeper understanding of what has changed, why the changes have occurred and what actions employers should take in response to such changes.

Programme - Hotel Du Vin, Birmingham

08:00 - 08:30: Registration and Breakfast

08:30 - 09:40: Presentations

09:40 - 10:00: Questions and Answers

10:00: Close

For more information, contact Enterprise Europe West Midlands on 0121 455 0268

Lights Out for Traditional Lightbulbs

The EU is phasing out traditional light bulbs over the next three years in favour of a new generation of energy-efficient lighting. Under new rules coming into force in September, manufacturers and importers can no longer sell clear incandescent light bulbs of 100 watts or above in the EU. However, shops may continue to sell bulbs already in stock.

Part of a European effort to save energy and fight climate change, the ban will be expanded in September 2011 and 2012 to include lower wattages of clear incandescent bulbs. Frosted bulbs and high-energy halogen lights are also being phased out.

By 2020 the measures will save enough energy to power 23 million households every year, roughly the electricity consumption of Belgium. This will reduce emissions of carbon dioxide by 32 million tons each year, or about one-tenth of the world's annual emissions of the greenhouse gas.

Introduced 130 years ago, conventional incandescent light bulbs convert only around 5% of the energy they use into light; the rest is given off as heat. They are far more wasteful than newer devices like compact fluorescents and low-energy halogens or emerging products such as light-emitting diodes.

<http://ec.europa.eu/energy/efficiency/ecodesign/lumen/index.htm>

EU Crackdown on Websites Selling Consumer Electronic Goods

EU Consumer Commissioner Meglena Kuneva has announced the results of an EU-wide investigation - involving 26 Member States and Norway and Iceland - into misleading advertising and unfair practices on websites selling consumer electronic goods.

The clampdown covered 369 websites selling six of the most popular electronic goods to consumers in the EU - digital cameras, mobile phones, personal music players, DVD players, computer equipment and game consoles. It covered 200 of the biggest websites selling electronic equipment in the EU as well as more than 100 websites which were targeted on the basis of consumer complaints.

The results of the checks carried out in May this year show that 55% of the websites investigated showed irregularities in particular relating to: misleading information about consumer rights; misleading information about the total cost of the product; or incomplete contact details for the trader. The initial checks by national authorities will now be followed by an enforcement phase when companies are contacted by national authorities and required to correct their websites or clarify their position.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1292>

Mobile Phone Operators Sign up for eCall Roll-out

On 9th September 2009, eCall, Europe's in-car automatic emergency call system, received the full backing of Europe's mobile phone industry. Representatives of the industry's GSM Association underlined their commitment to this life-saving technology by signing the EU's Memorandum of Understanding to implement eCall across Europe. eCall automatically dials 112, Europe's single emergency number, when a car has a serious accident and sends its location to the nearest emergency service – even when passengers do not know or cannot say where they are. Rolling out eCall requires close cooperation between public authorities, car companies and mobile phone operators and could save up to 2,500 lives each year in the EU when fully deployed and reduce the severity of injuries by 10 to 15%.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1290>

Commission to Promote Rail Safety Rules and Monitor their Implementation

The European Commission will review rail safety rules and practices as well as the quality of their implementation and will consider all opportunities for improvement, where necessary, it was announced at a conference on "Railway safety: the way forward" on 8th September 2009 in Brussels. Joining European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani at the conference are the Italian Transport and Infrastructure Minister Altero Matteoli; Brian Simpson, Chairman of the Transport and Tourism Committee of the European Parliament. The conference was convened in the aftermath of the accident which had occurred in Viareggio, Italy, on 29 June, when a freight train derailed and a wagon exploded, leaving a high number of victims.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1283>

European Innovation Policy - Successes but also New Challenges

The re-launched Lisbon Partnership for growth and jobs has put innovation and entrepreneurship at the centre and called for decisive and more coherent action by the Community and the Member States in view of mastering the shift towards knowledge based low carbon economy. On this basis, an ambitious European innovation policy has been launched in 2006 and the Small Business Act (SBA) has been agreed. Thanks to the partnership approach between the EU and its Member States progress can today be reported. Almost all Member States have improved their innovation performance. The innovation gap between the EU and its key competitors, the US and Japan, has narrowed. However, the Communication also recognises policy gaps and indicates areas where further improvements both at European and at Member States level are necessary. This analysis will feed into the preparation of the new European reform agenda beyond 2010.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1268>

Stepping up Efforts on Resettlement of Refugees

On 2nd September 2009 the European Commission proposed the establishment of a "Joint EU Resettlement Programme". This programme aims to develop resettlement within the EU into a more effective instrument to give protection to refugees, providing for closer political and practical cooperation among EU Member States. This initiative concerns the resettlement of refugees from third countries to an EU Member State.

Resettlement is the transfer of refugees, who have provisional protection, from the first country of asylum to another country, where they can start a new life and find permanent protection. The large majority of the refugees worldwide find themselves outside of the EU, in developing countries in Asia and Africa. Return to their country of origin is the preferred option for most of them. But for some of these refugees, particularly the vulnerable ones, this is no option. Resettlement is the only solution for them.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1267>

Europeana: Think Culture

In ancient times, the library of Alexandria was said to contain up to 70% of all human knowledge. The challenge for the digital age is to do even better than that – and make the result last longer.

The EU's digital libraries initiative sets out to make all Europe's cultural resources and scientific records – books, journals, films, maps, photographs, music, etc. – accessible to all, and preserve it for future generations.

A further key goal is to set up and develop Europeana – a single access point for consulting digital copies of the materials held by libraries, museums and archives. In the "analogue times", if you wanted to research a subject – Rembrandt, for instance – you had to travel all over Europe to find material. But with the European digital library, you will be progressively able to access all of it online – his works, books and documentary, films about him, drawings, photographs etc. – regardless of where the originals are held.

The digital libraries initiative is part of the Commission's i2010 strategy for the digital economy.

<http://www.europeana.eu>

If you have any queries about the EU Alert bulletin, or would like some more information about any of the topics in this edition, please contact Enterprise Europe West Midlands on 0121 455 0268

www.een-midlands.org.uk

