



*Business Support on Your Doorstep*

# EU Alert

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## **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**

## Stark Differences in Working Time Across Europe

There are substantial differences in working time between the former EU15 Member States and the majority of the new EU Member States (NMS12), according to the report Working time developments – 2008. The average working week in the EU15 was 37.9 hours in 2008 (the same as in 2007). It was longer in the NMS12 – 39.5 hours (down very slightly from 39.6 in 2007), a difference of 1.6 hours or 4.2%.

For most European workers, collective agreements are the main way in which working time is set. Through its analysis of working time developments over the past decade in the EU15, Eurofound has discovered that in these countries the working week has grown somewhat shorter: average agreed weekly working hours have fallen from 38.6 hours to 37.9 hours – a fall of 1.8%.

While the working week has also reduced in the 10 Member States that joined in 2004 (the NMS10), the reduction has been less: since 2003, average agreed weekly working hours declined by only 0.2 hours or 0.5%, down from 39.6 hours to 39.4. These collectively agreed reductions in working hours did not entail a loss of pay; however, towards the end of 2008, cuts in working hours with consequent cuts in pay became increasingly topical as the economic crisis deepened.

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9015>

## Last Call to Implement Car Safety System Voluntarily

The European Commission today made a last call to all EU countries to speed up voluntary implementation of the new in-car communication technology 'eCall' that could save 2 500 lives a year. The eCall system automatically dials 112, Europe's single emergency number when a car has a serious accident and sends its location to the nearest emergency service.

This can halve emergency response times, reduce severity of injuries and save lives of people who do not know or cannot say where they are. For now, the deployment of eCall by public authorities, car companies and mobile phone operators is voluntary. So far the system is not operational in any EU country. The Commission warns, in a policy document adopted today, that if no significant progress is made in rolling out the system by the end of 2009 it could propose regulatory measures to make this life-saving technology available all over Europe as soon as possible. In 2008, more than 1.2 million accidents on Europe's roads caused around 39000 deaths and more than 1.7 million injuries.

"Too many people are still dying on European roads. Every week I hear about road accidents where eCall would have helped. The time has come for Member States and industry to move from talk to action," said Viviane Reding, EU Commissioner for Information Society and Media.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1245>

## **New Directive on Defence and Security Procurement Enters into Force**

The new Directive 2009/81/EC on defence and security procurement entered into force on 21 August 2009. The Directive will be the cornerstone of a truly European Defence Market supporting the development of the European defence-related supplier base. Up until now, the vast majority of defence and sensitive security procurement contracts have been exempted from the Internal Market rules. One of the reasons for this is that the existing EU procurement rules are considered to be ill-suited for most defence- and security-related purchases. The new Directive will greatly improve this situation by providing tailor-made procurement rules for defence and security contracts. Member States now have at their disposal Community rules they can apply to complex and sensitive transactions without putting at risk their legitimate security interests.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1250>

## **European Commission Publishes Annual Report on US Trade & Investment Barriers**

The report focuses on some key trade barriers and measures that prevent EU exporters from tapping into the full potential of the US market. It notes some continuing concerns and highlights a number of new barriers introduced in 2008. Only a small proportion of EU-US trade is affected by trade disputes, but raising and addressing these issues helps to boost confidence in the transatlantic marketplace and allows exporters to reap the full benefits available.

<http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/html/144160.htm>

## **EU Invests a Fresh €18 Million in Future Ultra High-Speed Mobile Internet**

As of 1 January 2010, the EU will invest € 18 million into research that will underpin next generation 4G mobile networks. The European Commission just decided to start the process of funding research on Long Term Evolution (LTE) Advanced technology, that will offer mobile internet speeds up to a hundred times faster than current 3G networks. LTE is becoming the industry's first choice for next generation mobile networks, also thanks to substantial EU research funding since 2004. 25 years ago, Europe already made the GSM standard the backbone of modern mobile telephony. Based on Europe's joint research and the strength of the EU's single market, the GSM standard is today used by 80% of the world's mobile networks. LTE promises to be a similar success as EU-funded research continues to bring cutting-edge technology to the daily lives of Europeans.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1238>

## **Europeans Increasingly Turn to the ECC**

The European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net) handles over 62.000 contacts with EU consumers who turn to them for advice or for help with problems affecting cross-border shopping, both in person and online. The European Commission supports the network and has published the ECC-Net Annual Report for 2008, which saw a 22% increase in the number of Consumers turning to them directly for help. In 2008 most complaints tackled by ECCs concerned transport (33%, of which 80% related to air transport), recreational services (25%) and hotels and restaurants (13%).

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9010>

## **Consultation: Ideas for Simplifying the Implementation of the EU Framework Programmes**

In 2010, the European Commission plans to issue a Communication on possibilities for simplifying the implementation of the EU RTD Framework Programmes. For gathering ideas, the Commission opens here a first informal consultation. Ideas are sought under two broad headings:

Improvements to processes and systems that could be implemented under the current legal basis of the 7th Framework Programme (e.g. better guidance and communication, improved workflows, improved IT systems)

More profound changes of the modes of implementation of the EU research budget that would require adaptations to the legal basis (in particular the Framework Programme, Rules for Participation, model grant agreements).

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/consultations/fp-simplification/consultation\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/research/consultations/fp-simplification/consultation_en.htm)

**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](http://www.een-midlands.org.uk)

