

**COMMITTEE :** Working Conditions (OIT 3)

**ISSUE :** How to ensure balanced Working Time arrangements for workers and companies?

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## **PRESENTATION BY THE PRESIDENT**



Hello delegates! My name is Elisa DEVELAY, I'm 16 and I'm from Lyon. I'm in the 1ère class at the Lycée International de Ferney-Voltaire. In my spare time, I read, listen to music, play the drums and skateboard. I enjoy spending time with my family, traveling, meeting new people and cultures, and socializing with friends. I've been part of the MUN scheme for a year, and at FerMUN 2024 I was a member of the press team. At this new FerMUN 2025 conference, which focuses on the International Labour Organization, I'll be co-chairing

Committee 3 on Working Conditions. In this committee, we'll be discussing working conditions, and more specifically, how to guarantee a balanced organization of working hours for workers and companies. This is a major issue for the labor market. In fact, it helps to guarantee a balance between workers' professional and personal lives. It also makes it possible to clarify and regulate the number of working hours given to workers by employers. So let's discuss this major issue that will soon affect us all.

I look forward to meeting you at the FerMUN 2025 conference, and to observing your proposals for resolving this issue!

## KEY WORDS

**Arrangement of working time (AWT):** Methods of organizing working time and schedules over a specified day, week, month or longer period.

**Annualization :** System whereby a worker is required to work a certain number of hours over a period of one year, rather than one week or one day.

**Job sharing:** A particular form of part-time work in which a full-time job is split into two part-time jobs for different workers.

**Work-life balance :** Work-life balance reflects the way in which individuals organize their time between work commitments and personal activities, as well as the quality of life and policies in place to support this balance (leave, remote work, etc.).

**Overtime :** All hours worked in excess of normal working hours, except where custom requires that they be taken into account when calculating remuneration.

**Flexible working hours:** Also known as “flexi-time”, this system allows working hours to be flexibly distributed on a daily and weekly basis. The number of hours actually worked can vary from day to day and week to week.

**Staggered working hours:** A system of different arrival and departure times for different groups of workers in the same establishment.

**Compressed work week (CWW ):** (or “compressed weekly schedule”). An ATT system whereby the same number of working hours is spread over fewer days than the normal workweek, resulting in longer working days.

**Working time:** Time associated with the productive activities of the job, and arrangement of this time during a specified reference period.

**Night work :** Work performed for a period of at least seven consecutive hours, including the interval between midnight and 5 a.m.

**Decent work:** Promoting opportunities for decent and productive work for men and women, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity, in order to reduce the gap between their professional aspirations and their actual situation.

**Work-sharing:** A system for reducing working hours, aimed at distributing a reduced volume of work among an equal or similar number of workers, in order to avoid lay-offs or redundancies.

## **GLOBAL OVERVIEW**

Working hours around the world vary from region to region, influenced by legislation, culture and levels of economic development. According to the UN, more than a third of all workers regularly work more than 48 hours a week, while a fifth of the world's workforce works short hours (part-time) of less than 35 hours a week. According to the ILO, long working hours are generally associated with lower productivity per unit of work, while shorter working hours are associated with higher productivity. The ILO recommends that public policies be put in place to promote shorter working hours, a good work-life balance and higher productivity.

In Europe, the trend is towards shorter working hours, often around 35 to 40 hours a week, with strict regulations and heavy reliance on part-time jobs.

In North America, the USA and Canada remain flexible, with a 40-hour standard, but overtime is frequent.

In Asia, countries such as Japan and South Korea are known for their long working hours, despite recent reforms aimed at reducing working hours.

Developing countries, particularly in Latin America and Africa, record long hours, often due to the informal economy and economic pressure.

Globally, trends such as the four-day week, telecommuting, and increased attention to worker well-being are emerging, although disparities remain significant.

On October 4, 2019, to mark 100 years since the first convention, the ILO published a guide to implementing balanced working time arrangements ([here](#)). This explains that to keep workers in good health, there are several priority measures to put in place.

In particular, there is some advice on the organization of working time, which would be spread over just 6 days of the week. The document also describes working time limits. It recommends limiting working time to 12 hours a day, including overtime. It recommends that workers be allowed to choose their working hours from a range of data, according to their personal preferences and needs. This schedule must comply with certain rules, notably that the worker must have several nights' complete rest. The guide also recommends regular breaks between

working hours. It recommends the introduction of free weekends in the employee's schedule, with at least two days off. On remarque que ce document avertit également les employeurs quant à l'aménagement de travail abusif. Par exemple, il s'exprime sur le fait qu'il faut éviter de faire travailler l'employé beaucoup d'heures consécutivement (11 heures, etc.), ou qu'il vaut mieux le faire commencé vers 7-8 heures plutôt qu'à 6 heures. Il faut également minimiser le travail de nuit, et faire en sorte qu'il ne se déroule pas consécutivement.

One solution to the problem of excess working time in schedules is the system of staggered working hours. This involves taking into account the schedules of public transport, schools and day-care centers, and any other factors likely to influence workers' arrival and departure times. Assigning workers to a particular schedule must take into account their personal and individual needs and preferences regarding work start and finish times.

To promote worker health, overtime must be avoided (workers on compressed work week (CWW) schedules already work more hours per day), as well as undeclared work and other forms of overtime, and long commutes when they are detrimental to recovery. Anti-fatigue” measures are also needed to minimize the impact of long working hours, such as longer breaks and shift rotations. Several days off in a row should be implemented when there is a long period of night work.

## **ILO TREATIES AND MAJOR EVENTS**

### **28/06/1919**

The ILO focused its very first Convention on industrial working hours, opened in 1919. On April 11 and 28, it adopted the text entitled “Labor”, which became Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles ([here](#)). It was adopted in its entirety at the Peace Conference on June 28, 1919.

### **05/12/2008**

Two reports ( first report [here](#), and second report [here](#)) on the measurement of working time at the **eighteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians**. It updates the solutions put in place since the opening of the ILO, and adapts to the new global situation,

particularly with developing and emerging countries. It will serve as a reference document for future discussions and the drafting of resolutions.

**28/04/2009**

**World Day for Safety and Health at Work** ([here](#)), which has been held for the past 15 years. It is an opportunity to raise awareness among workers and remind them of their rights, workplace standards and the risks they may run in certain companies ([here](#)).

**17-21/10/2011**

Drafting of a report entitled “ **Working time in the 21st century** ” ([here](#)). It was submitted for discussion at the Tripartite Meeting of Experts on the Organization of Working Time. It examines recent developments in working hours and the organization of working time.

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

- Introduce regular checks on working hours in companies. This would make it possible to compel employers to comply with working standards, on pain of criminal prosecution and fines.
- Set up groups to defend workers' interests and rights in companies, like the CSE in France. This would help to build a climate of trust between employers and workers in a company as regards respect for working conditions
- Provision of psychological care not paid for by the worker, in the event of unhappiness caused by his or her working life. The worker can therefore benefit from free treatment, provided by the employer and/or the government, and thus heal himself.
- Encourage the installation of applications that promote the mental and physical well-being of workers, enabling them to manage stress and find balance.
- Encourage the installation of software that enables workers to manage and track their working hours, and plan their tasks in an efficient and orderly way.
- The employer should draw up a list of priorities within the company, clarifying which tasks are essential. This would enable workers to set up their own timetable to manage the assignments they receive with greater clarity.

- Establish a precise timetable for workers by the employer, to separate work and non-work life, and thus reduce the number of overtime hours. The schedule must be adhered to on a monthly basis.
- Introduction of a government-restricted overtime system to guarantee a secure framework for workers.
- Establish an improved Occupational Health Service in companies, to create a safe framework for workers.
- Job-sharing arrangements can help to create a lighter work schedule. Positioning several people on a specific job can spread the workload, and thus the mental burden on the worker if he or she does not wish to work the time required for the job. This does not harm the company's economy, as the salary is divided into two, three or four. However, half-time pay is not a structure that all workers can afford.
- Set up online training to raise awareness of workers' rights. This will enable them to provide information and alert them if their rights are being violated. Employers can also benefit from training such as this to familiarize themselves (if need be) with the law.

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[Guide to implementing balanced working time arrangements | International Labour Organization \(ilo.org\)](#)

Videos :

[Bing videos](#)