

REPORT FROM NORWAY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON TELEWORK

We refer to your letter of March 9 2006, and we are pleased to inform you that the European framework agreement on telework was implemented in Norway in December 2005.

The European telework agreement is implemented by a joint document: "Guidelines for Telework", which covers the points of the European framework agreement as well as the Norwegian regulation on work from home. The guidelines have been approved by four main organizations on the employers side and by five main trade union confederations, which also means federations that are not members of ETUC, UNICE, CEEP or UEAPME. The guidelines document is published both in a printed version and placed on the organizations' websites. The organizations have recommended their members to follow these guidelines if they start teleworking. The publication also contains the original text (English) of the European Framework Agreement on Telework.

The guidelines are the result of national bipartite negotiations between the trade unions and the employers' federations.

Unfortunately the parties did not succeed in finishing the implementation before the official deadline July 15 2005, this due to some disagreement on how to implement the text.

The negotiations started in June 2003 between the two main organizations (Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise - NHO and Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions – LO). The Trade Unions (LO) wanted a national collective agreement, whereas NHO preferred a more flexible and nonbinding implementation with a wider impact area. This disagreement was not solved and the negotiations were suspended.

Thereafter NHO started a process with the other main employer organizations. In the summer 2005 these organizations ended their work and agreed on the formulation of a set of guidelines. During autumn 2005 five main trade union confederations were invited to adopt these guidelines. They all accepted and agreed to the guidelines, and the framework agreement was thus regarded as implemented.

It is still too early to assess the actual impact of the telework agreement, particularly at company level. The guidelines have only been in force for a rather short time, and there has yet been no research into this. However, all parties involved are in agreement that this way of implementing the framework agreement on telework is fully satisfactory for the social partners and as part of Norwegian labour "regulations" in this field.

Enclosed for your information is a copy of the Norwegian guidelines publication.

Oslo, 21 April 2006

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