



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG

The Director-General

005007-24.03.2010

Brussels,

EMPL/F1-F2/BB-MR/fpr D(2010) 5271

For the attention of the Social
Partners' organisations consulted
under Article 154 of the Treaty

**Subject: Reviewing the Working Time Directive: first-phase consultation of
the social partners at European Union level under Article 154 of the
TFEU**

Dear Sir, Dear Madam,

On 24 March 2010, the Commission adopted the Communication COM (2010) 106
'*Reviewing the Working Time Directive*'.

This Communication constitutes the consultation paper for the first stage in consulting
the social partners at EU level, in accordance with Article 154(2) TFEU, on the possible
direction of EU action regarding the Working Time Directive¹.

The Communication sets out the Commission's assessment regarding Working Time in
the EU, expressing its concern that the present situation does not ensure effective
protection for workers' health and safety across the EU, nor afford sufficient flexibility to
workers or to businesses in the organisation of working time. In addition, the
Commission notes that given the fundamental changes in the world of work since the
Directive was originally drafted, it may be necessary to take better account of new needs
and working patterns - social, economic, technological and demographic.

The Commission therefore proposes a comprehensive review of the Directive, based on
this consultation of the social partners under Article 154 TFEU, and on an impact
assessment with a strong social dimension. The consultation paper sets out proposed
objectives for such a review, and identifies a number of key issues arising in the
application of the present Directive.

In this first phase consultation, the Commission is looking for the social partners' views
on whether action is needed at European Union level on reviewing the Working Time
Directive, and on the possible scope of such an initiative. In this context, the Commission
invites the social partners to reflect broadly on the kind of working time regulation the
EU will need in order to cope with the challenges of the 21st century.

¹ Directive 2003/88/EC concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time

Section 6 of the Communication then sets out a series of specific questions on which the Commission wishes to hear the opinions of the social partners.

Please find enclosed the English, French and German versions of the Communication.

I would be grateful for your views and comments in response to this consultation within six weeks of receipt of this letter – that is, allowing for the Easter break, by **19th May 2010**.

Please send your replies to Ms Madeleine Reid (Madeleine.Reid@ec.europa.eu) and to Ms Bianca Busuioc (Bianca.Busuioc@ec.europa.eu).

Yours truly,


Robert Verrue
24/3/010