

TELEWORK IN GREECE

—Telework beyond your home—

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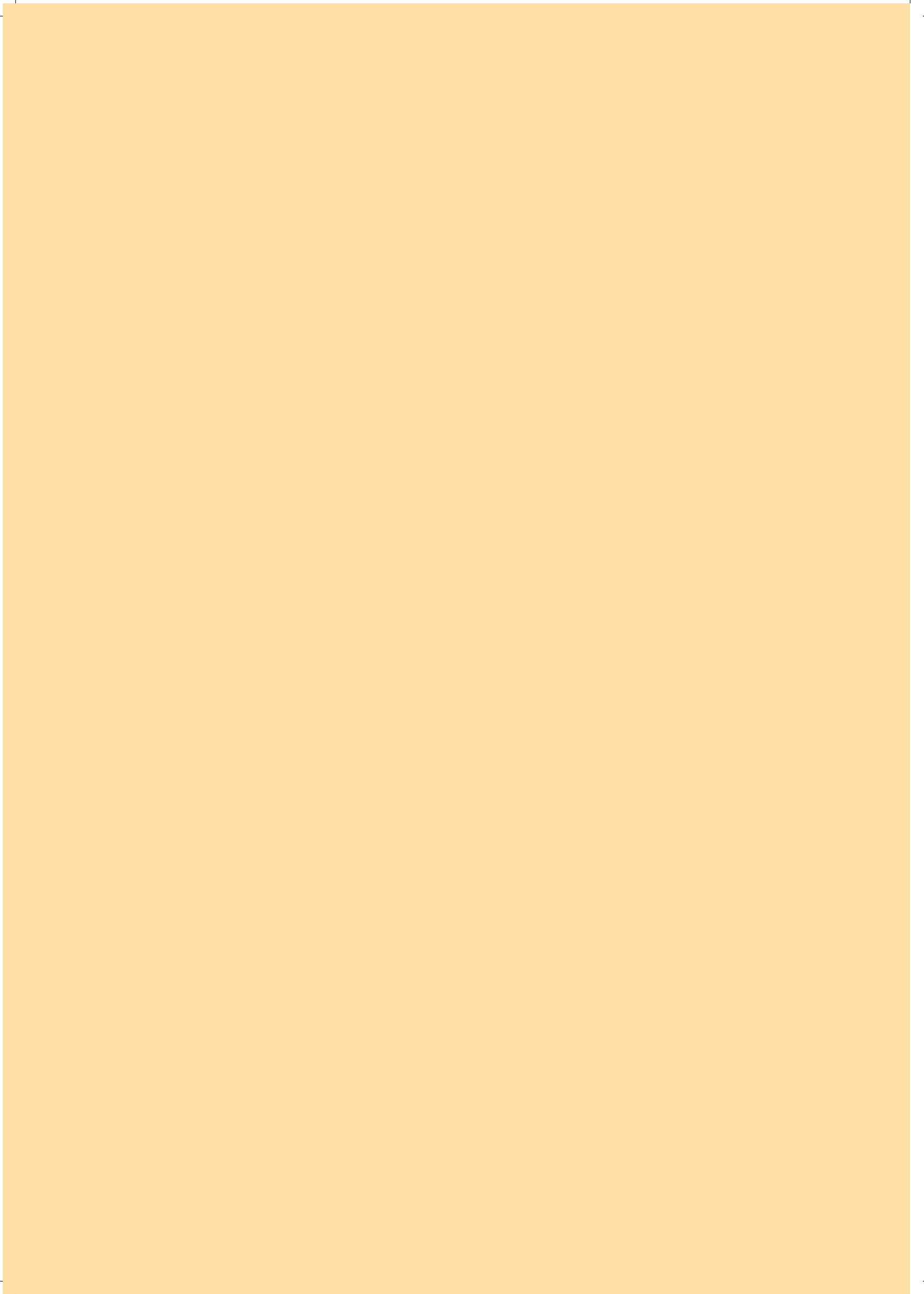
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Introduction

In the White Bible of the European Union, Development, Competitive, Employment, Challenge and the Way towards the 21st century, where a series of measures have been proposed for the confrontation of the continuous increase of unemployment and sub employment, computers and new technologies seem to have a very critical role in the efforts made for the improvement of the competition in Europe in the 21st century, as well as for the creation of new employment positions inside the European Union. The development of distant employment (teleworking) is the main avenue through which informatics can change the form of employment and lead us to the turnover of traditional facts.

The term 'telework' is used in general to describe a group of activities, in which the nature and the place of working can be altered as a result of the use of developed telecommunication networks in combination with information technologies. The term 'office' as a fixed, geographically assigned place ceases to stand. The company is no longer defined by the offices it occupies, but instead, as a relations network (co-operations network) in which they are connected, on the one hand, through a telecommunications network, and on the other, through different types of contractual settlements. In this context the following terms have been used in the past: 'electronic working at home', 'teleworking at home', 'networking' and 'bureau-less work'.

The implications of these terms as well as a great spectrum of jobs that these may refer to, make the formulation of a definition, which could be used by anyone and which shall be used as a basis for further investigation and configuration of policy on the specific subject, rather difficult. Besides, the complexity of a phenomenon such as teleworking, leaves us with great margins for different approaches.

On the other hand, teleworking isn't (at least not yet) a legal category. This means that the attempt of a definition can only clarify its functions and is only useful as far as occasional problems that are connected to the development and dissemination of teleworking (and not to its social exclusion) are concerned. This explains why we could have different definitions depending on the different problems that are connected to teleworking.

Nevertheless, most of the times the core of this sense is given and we can ascribe it if we determine teleworking as distant employment with dependent or independent employment treaty, which is offered directly to a business with the combined use of information, telecommunication and multimedia technology.

Therefore, common characteristics for all the types of teleworking are the place of work and the used technology.

Place of teleworking

The place of work is anywhere but the traditional place of work at the employer's office. Therefore, teleworking is distant working, away from the place where the result of one's work is expected. Teleworking at home is also included. Collected data, up to today, show that such are the cases of most teleworkers. Additionally, we usually have telework in an independent teleworking center. The center can either be chosen at random or can be appointed by the employer. Of course, teleworking at home pre-existed as distant working did. The interference of new technologies is what has increased the percentages of teleworking.

Proof technology

This second element concerns the technology used by the teleworker. Teleworking includes the use of telecommunications: computer, fax, cd roms etc. It concerns the exchange of telecommunication speeches, documents, designs etc. and non-manufactured goods such as furniture, textile or even books, as in the case of traditional handicraft at home. The nature of teleworking varies at great percentage from a very low level characterised by work that is frequently repeated, such as data-entry jobs, up to highly creative levels, such as research, development, consulting, arts etc. To whom the infrastructure belongs as far as the labor law is concerned, is not definite regarding the definition of teleworking. The material can actually be owned by the teleworker or it can be at the service of the employee. Nevertheless, in practice, the material infrastructure usually belongs to the independent teleworker while it belongs to the employer in a teleworking wageworker's case. From both cases, various interesting legal issues that overcome the bounds of these treaties may result, such as the exclusive use of the material, the responsibility for this material etc.

Nevertheless, due to the lack of a specific scientific definition and the lack of systematic research and inadequate statistics in Greece, we do not have many data available for teleworking. Until now, through the accomplished researches, we can conclude that on the one hand the whole subject of teleworking is very differentiated between Greece and the rest of the European countries, and on the other hand, there is a rapid increase of teleworkers.

In general, we must point out that in order for someone to draw a conclusion regarding the definition of teleworking, we must take a group of variables into account, such as:

- > The location of the distant place of work
- > The conventional relationship between employer and distant employee
- > The time of work that is spent during teleworking
- > The exclusiveness of the relation with the employer
- > The use of information and telecommunication technology

The study of the above mentioned variables leads to the conclusion that teleworking is a multi-sided phenomenon that comprises a great group of activities, which take place in different types of locations and are covered by different types of conventional settlements. Thereby, it is necessary to separate and register the different types of teleworking, given that the various financial and social issues that result from teleworking are directly connected to its type and form.

1.1 THE CURRENT SITUATION IN GREECE

In Greece there is no systematic monitoring and recording of the teleworking phenomenon through statistics collected both from General Population Surveys and enterprises on a regular basis. A first attempt to record and measure this phenomenon was made within the framework of a survey conducted Information Society SA through **GRNET SA** and was funded through the 'Information Society' Operational Program. The main findings of this survey in terms of the spreading and dynamics of teleworking in the country show an intense interest of users in the new way of work organization and an optimistic attitude towards the possibility it offers for changing the daily lives of workers and their employment relationship. Besides the statistical findings that concern mainly the trends in the spreading of teleworking among the population, as far as businesses are concerned, the issue of teleworking in Greece is very limited and concerns mainly:

- > Large enterprises—multinationals that have started adopting the teleworking practices and models of their mother companies abroad;
- > The self-employed in professions that require familiarization with and the use of new communication technologies (PCs, Internet). Such professional categories consist of writers, journalists, translators, accountants, programmers, architects, etc.

In Greece the phenomenon of teleworking has not been spread at an extended level despite the fact that there is a rousing interest in this new way of organizing work and the changes in the relation of the employee with his work.

From the side of businesses the conversations regarding teleworking are narrowed to multinational enterprises and professions that presuppose the knowledge and the use of new technologies of telecommunication and informatics (PC, Internet). Such categories of professions consist of writers, journalists, translators, programmers etc.

In the Greek field, three actions as supporting mechanisms of teleworking have been (and some still are) operative:

- > the Human Network for the Dissemination of the Research & Technology Knowledge about Telework 'TELEWORKING 2000';
- > the pilot telecenter in Larissa, DIMITRA;
- > 'the tele-network created by ZEUS CONSULTING S.A.'

The two last activities have a peripheral character while the first is a reinforcement activity for the cooperation of organizations from the wider public and private sector with interest in subjects of teleworking. From these three activities the single one that is still in operation is the network of ZEUS Consultants S.A.

If we examine carefully the present situation in Greece we can easily reach the conclusion that the local businesses until now haven't been acquainted with the concept of teleworking, besides the fact that the natural and social structure of the country favors the development and embodiment of new ways of employment.

Most public authorities, including local administration authorities as well as the enterprises and industries, are established in the big urban centers, which have

an important residential density. Nevertheless, Greece is basically a provincial country and consequently the residents of provincial regions must transport towards the urban centers in order to have better chances of occupation. This leads to the gradual reduction of the provincial regions' role in economic and technological development of the country, which is accompanied by a controlled evolvement and development of urban centers.

Through teleworking, many functions which until now take place in the offices can be occupied by persons that work either at home or at the teleworking centers which are situated at a distance from the central offices of the enterprise.

Due to the fact that until now the cost for the support of employment at home was not exactly a motive for someone to work there, the best solution would be the creation of teleworking centers in distant territories, by undertaking enterprises for example, which can be used by all teleworkers of the territory. These centers would provide all the necessary equipment and also would be able to offer legal and any other support to the employees, if necessary.

1.1.1 Promotion factors and limiting factors for teleworking

The following tables summarize the benefits and challenges presented by the application of the teleworking model, as these appear in the international bibliography, for workers, businesses, and the society in general.

Benefits	Challenges
– Stress reduction, increased flexibility and work satisfaction	– Jealous colleagues
– Fewer interruptions during work allow greater focus and improved staff productivity	– Reduced social interaction may lead to social and professional isolation
– Decreased participation in office politics	
– Time saving (clothing, transportation, fuel, etc.)	– Less opportunities for professional development, reduced influence on professional matters
– Less commuting	– Possible difficulties in monitoring the worker's performance
– Reduced need to relocate to the area where the business is established	– Possibility of working longer hours
– Reduced personal leave	
– Possibility of job access to those in geographically remote areas	
– Aids in attaining a work-life balance/ motivates dual career households	– Family peace and balance may be jeopardized if teleworkers become work addicts
– Reduces traffic accidents	
– Encourages the disabled to work	

Table 1: Teleworking: Benefits and challenges for workers

Benefits	Challenges
– Saves office space	– Teleworking start up and operational costs (telework policy, guidelines, training, evaluation, etc.)
– Increased productivity (by 20% on average)	
– Cost savings reduce need to downsize	– IT equipment and support costs
– Possible difficulties in monitoring and supervising work	– Issues related to the security of information transmitted
– Reduced personnel travel costs	– Workers safety and health
– Increases flexibility to staff during peak workloads	– Could affect the creation of organizational culture
– Accommodates the disabled and persons with health problems	
– Creates the conditions for retaining key employees, and reduces needs for new recruits	
– Taps labor markets from geographically remote areas (domestic or international)	
– Possibilities for tax credits and other incentives	
– An option to relocating employees	

Table 2: Teleworking: Benefits and challenges for employers

Benefits	Challenges
– Reduces traffic congestion, accidents and demand for public transportation	– Possible implications to merchants
– Reduced fuel consumption and pollution	
– Helps balance work and family life	
– Provides better job opportunities for the disabled	
– Provides a financial boost for businesses in rural areas	
– Retention capabilities aid economic development, global competitiveness, and the 'brain drain'	

Table 3: Teleworking: Benefits and challenges for society

1.1.2 Current situation in SMEs

In accordance with statistics, the vast majority of businesses in our country are micro-enterprises, employing less than 10 persons and very often managed by the members of a family (family businesses). On the other hand, the self-employed represent about 54% of all businesses. Together with micro-enterprises, they make up for the majority of businesses (97.5%).

Despite the fact that the recording and monitoring of employment relationships in SMEs is inadequate due to non-compliance with official statistics, the studies and evaluations that have been performed to date with regard to the employment relationship models applied by SMEs result in the following:

- > SMEs mostly employ young people, women and the temporarily employed, resulting in greater flexibility in the organization of work.
- > However, working hours in small enterprises are longer than in the large ones. This is a result of the greater flexibility of SMEs, the lack of control from the competent State bodies, but very often it is also a result of the will of employees themselves who accept such conditions in return for a salary increase.
- > There are viewpoints referring to a number of informal benefits offered by many SMEs to their staff (informal leaves, arrangements, non-declared remuneration, etc.), including the possibility to work from home.
- > The main problem for the smooth development of employment relationships in SMEs, is also the failure to set up trade unions within them, and this is due to the fact that pursuant to Article 78 of the Civil Code a minimum of 21 employees is required for setting up such trade unions. This results in the inexistence of trade unions in 98.43% of the country's businesses, employing 64.67% of the work force.

By the above, certain flexibility in the work organization methods is evidenced on the one hand, which, however, has not been recorded, thus making it impossible to be assessed. On the other hand the rather low levels of Internet penetration in SMEs means that such flexibility matches traditional 'work from home' methods, rather than the development of teleworking methods.

Summing up, teleworking is by far the best choice for the Greek market both for private and public sector. The geographic formation of Greece prohibits people who wish to work but continue to live at a province to practice any other profession besides agriculture or cattle-breeding. Due to this factor, we have a great percentage of internal immigration in Greece which increases each year. Internal immigration causes the following surcharge to our country:

1. Centralization of the entire population in three or four big cities, leaving the villages to depopulate and, eventually, ruining them.
2. Environmental pollution around the urban territories that gather most of the population.
3. Increase of unemployment rate in cities and lack of employees and workers in peripheral territories.
4. Expansion of social discrimination between men, women, disabled, low educated and highly educated people.

Labour market: statistics on telework (1990 – 2003)



2.1 NUMBER OF TELEWORKERS

In Greece the percentage of teleworkers is less than 0.1% while at the same time other EU countries have exceeded 3.9%, such as Denmark. Specifically, the 0.5% of the active working force are teleworkers (occasional & full-time). According to researches the number of enterprises that will make use of telework is expected to quintuplicate in the next 5 years: nevertheless, only 1% of the private enterprises — mainly multinationals — employ personnel with teleworking.

In 1997, the labour force of Greece was 3,680,000 people of which 16,380 were teleworkers, a percentage of 0.46%. The percentage of Greece's labour force with e-mail accounts was 27.57% while 0% of the labour force had B-ISDN.

From the following statistics, which we gathered from 'Telework 1997' — the EC's annual report, 'In Status Report on European Telework "Telework 1997"', and in comparison with the statistics we have now for the practice of teleworking in Greece, we come to the conclusion that Greece may be a country that offers the necessary geographical magnitude to practice teleworking, but one of the slowest countries regarding the embodiment of new technologies and teleworking.

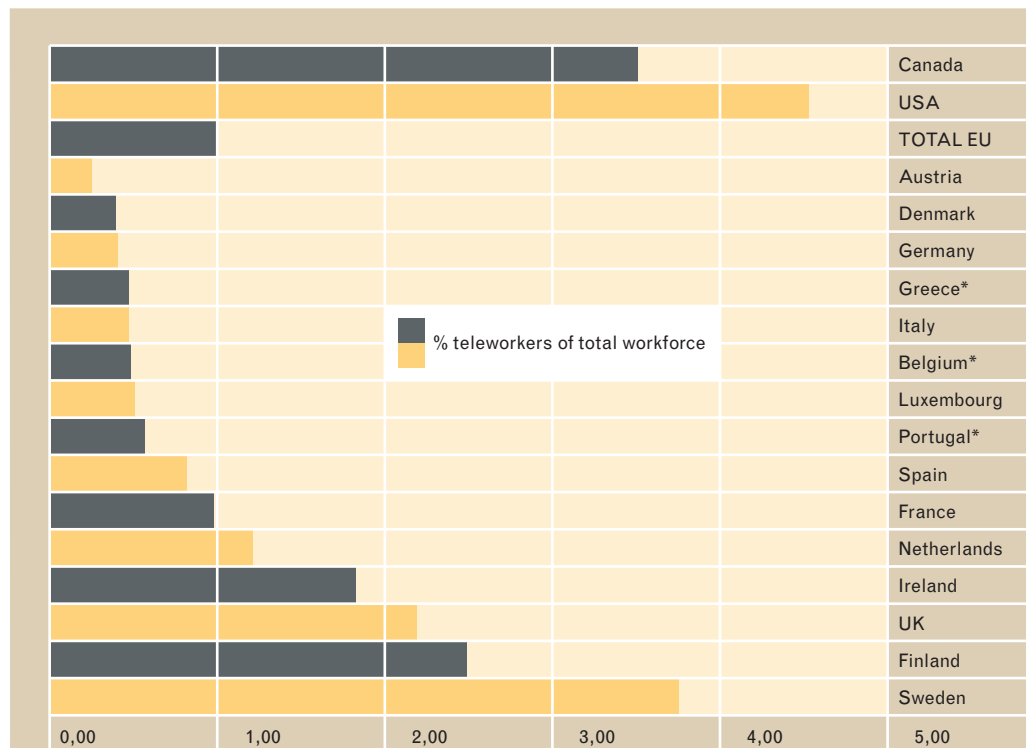


Figure 1: The percentage of teleworkers (Source: SIBIS 2002).

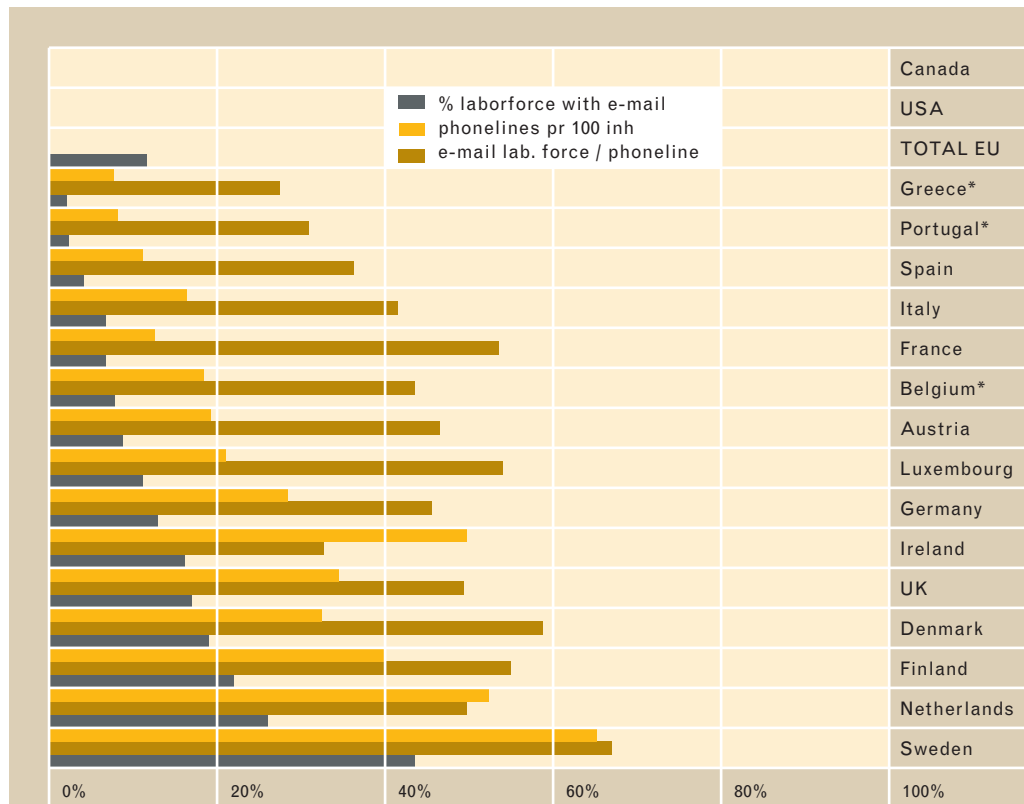


Figure 2: The percentage of Greece's labour force with e-mail accounts (Source: SIBIS 2002).

2.2 FIELDS OF TELEWORK: SECTOR DIFFERENTIATION

Teleworking is not the ideal pattern of work for all professions, for example professions in which personal contact is necessary or manual work. Here it is impossible to apply telework. In short, some categories of professions in which telework can be applied are:

- > Beaux Arts
- > Audio visual means
- > Commerce
- > Communication
- > Multimedia design
- > Education
- > Personnel staffing
- > Management
- > Graphics Design
- > PC operation
- > Internet applications
- > Journalism
- > Legal, economical and social sector
- > Marketing
- > Informatics and New Technologies
- > Secretarial support
- > Translations

Following, we mention some forms of work that someone may encounter in a telecenter:

- > Writing, introduction and modulation of texts
- > Teleconference
- > Transportation of material and information
- > Telephone centers with various activities from company marketing to technical support
- > Data input
- > Equipment renting
(many telecenters rent their equipment to enterprises that need it)
- > Secretarial support of the telecenter
- > Information flow (mainly through Internet)
- > Touristic services supply, transportation means reservation, hotels
- > Office services
- > Multimedia design and publication
- > Scanning
- > Education
- > Translation services
- > Logistics applications & record keeping
- > Programming
- > Webpages design

2.2.1 Profited social groups

- > Residents of distant, highland and island territories
This concerns a vulnerable group which due to the bad communication network—mainly during winter—remains totally isolated. Usually telecommunications are also excised. The residents of these territories are in this way at the mercy of weather conditions. The primary goal is communication and better survival conditions which shall occur with the strengthening of local economy. Examples of such citizens in Greece are islanders of desolate territories as well as citizens of highlands.
- > Women with family obligations
This group refers mainly to mothers that have babies at a very young age. It is natural for the mother not to be able or willing to hire a household keeper and to prefer to manage the breeding of her children herself. Additionally, women who have been commissioned with the role of attending to a person of old age are included in this category.
- > Young people
This is the category of young people who wait 'eternally' to find employment through ads or who do not have transportation or information means.
- > People with special abilities
This category refers to people who have problems of mobility due to a physical disability. Not only are these people unable to work, they cannot select information or be educated on new technologies either, a fact which isolates them even more socially.

> Citizens of big urban centers

The problem of transportation and distances in big urban centers is well known. It concerns a time-consuming and soul-destroying everyday situation which has a powerful negative impact on the environment (pollution, noise, traffic jam).

The movement of the population towards the suburbs of big cities affirms the severity of the problem.

2.2.2 Teleworking organisation

Three basic parameters in order for this new employment method to regularly and effectively function, are the following:

- > The foundation of good relationships between teleworker and supervisor
- > The creation of a comfortable and functional place of work
- > The right designing of time and way of working according to the needs of the profession

2.2.3 Employment administration based on preassigned targets (management by objectives)

This concerns a widespread method of working mainly abroad. This kind of management involves:

- > Analysis of professional duties and obligations
- > Definition of targets which must be achieved
- > Time programming
- > Partial and total review and evaluation

In other words, the teleworker determines along with the manager the targets and time limits that the nature of the profession imposes. After the termination of each goal, the teleworker makes a partial retrospection of the attempt made and requests evaluation from the relevant manager. What is mainly attended is not to deflect by the given dates.

2.2.4 Designing of work

Before the teleworker begins to work, it is important to carefully design the footsteps that he/ she will follow. In direct cooperation with the manager, the teleworker must request a brief profile of the specific job from the manager, which shall consist of the characteristics and relevances of the profession as well as the abilities and qualifications the employee must have to live up to his/ her obligations.

2.2.5 Organisation of work based on duties

This stage includes a detailed analysis of obligations. The targets and the means must be determined as well as the way in which they shall be accomplished. The design of a timetable falls under this unit.

2.2.6 Partial retrospection

In this case the manager must, along with the teleworker, appoint points of time for regard and evaluation (milestones). These points of time should condition the procedure of defining times.

2.2.7 Organization of place and functions

Mainly responsible for this procedure is the manager, who must inform the teleworker of the stages that he or she shall face in the course. It is his task to organize the office (technological or other equipment), to offer continuous education, to develop techniques of communication, to contrive new ways of counting effectiveness and productiveness and, finally, create the necessary background in the company for teleworking.

2.2.8 Self evaluation of the teleworker

The teleworker must evaluate himself steadily. Not all employees have the characteristics of a teleworker. The teleworker must make an activity and qualification report before it's too late, and afterwards conclude whether teleworking is a type of work that suits him or not. Additionally, the teleworker must establish whether the agreements that were initially designed are kept both from the side of the teleworker as well as from the side of the company, in order to facilitate his work.

2.2.9 Correct communication strategy with the manager and the office

Because there isn't a continuous face-to-face contact, the manager is obliged on the one hand to completely make his aims clear and, on the other hand, to activate the correct communication channels between the teleworker and the offices of the company. At any time the teleworker must have access to and communication with the company. This communication is not only connected with the job itself but also with the general working environment (for example, communication relationship with the colleagues, informing etc). There are different techniques of communication, some of which are tele-meeting, communication groups etc.

2.2.10 Expenses — Costs

On the one hand, the costs needed for an office or a teleworking center to be equipped (furniture, modem, PC, printer, phone, fax, answering machine etc.). On the other hand, there are the current expenses, such as the renting of space, electricity, telecommunications cost, service of machinery and consumables such as cartridges, paper, diskettes and anything else you need.

2.3 FORMS OF TELEWORK

Based on the records of the status quo on the sector of teleworking we recommend the following categories:

2.3.1 Telehomework/ Employment at home (full-time, part-time, independent professional, etc.)

Teleworking at home is the main and most widespread form of teleworking—we already meet Employment at home as a legal category in various E.U. Member Countries—which is practically the evolution of employment at home. Thereby we detect the paradoxical phenomenon the post-industrial society to reinstate us in the pre-industrial era, when the house was the basic unit of production.

In Greece, to be exact, employment at home has blossomed exceptionally during the last decade, independent from the phenomenon of teleworking, in the limits of export of salaried employment or subcontracting, known also as fason employment. And while the main part refers to small industry labors, clothing or shoes, increasingly it evolves in other forms of labor too. Thereupon Law 1902/1990 for social insurance, at the state's efforts to insure social protection for the home employed workers but also the reservation of social security flow, it included also those who offer literal work. With this evolution the way for teleworking with the form of employment at home has opened in Greece too.

2.3.2 Mobile or nomadic telework: telework on location and on the road/ Under way employers

It concerns the category of teleworking, which is not taking place at a specific place (such as home) but at different places, subsistent the existing contact with the employer. The development of technology, (mobiles, car phones, laptops) has created a new form of employment. 7 million workers in USA are under way teleworkers.

2.3.3 Telework in satellite office or 'bedrijfsverzamelkantoor'/ Network connection with the employers

This type of teleworking, which is realized by a team of employees, which is concentrated at a place, is far away from the employer. In this case it is also the development of informatics and telecommunications, which has created the opportunity for the creation of such a type of employment. The companies which target the minimization of the operating cost turned towards the installation of some of their functions in territories away from the urban centers, where the cost of the land is lower than the one of the urban centers and where they can find available work force (such as women) or specialized scientists, who do not have the ability or the desire to travel to the large urban centers. According to the rule, the working relationship which conditions this form of cooperation is clerical and consequently the employees of this form avoid uncertainty and a lack of collective organization.

2.3.4 Telecentres: teledocks, telequarters, telecottages, televillages

The essence of telecentres is that they group together teleworkers of different companies during their whole or partial working hours in one and the same professional

environment with a complete technological infrastructure, in a neighbourhood close to their homes.

A teleworking station is a local center equipped with accoutrement services of informatics, which is renting the place and its equipment to employees and employers so that they can work there instead of at the office in the center of the city. The possibility of social meetings in combination with the baby-safekeeping service, which is usually offered, appoint the teleworking station as the most preferable solution for teleworking.

The teleworking center offers a broader spectrum of services, such as the access to new technologies of informatics for the local enterprises, education in the use of means of informatics, creation of new employment seats. Specifically the last one, is materialized by hiring employees for the account of distant or local employers, who are working in the settlements of the teleworking center or at home or with the role of the intermediate create acquaintances between people who wish to telework and nominee employers.

This kind of disruption of an enterprise can also have a national dimension with teleworking offered abroad. This way we discriminate the national teleworking and the international teleworking. Actually, more and more enterprises detach departments from their central organization and reorganize their work in small peripheral centers abroad with the intention to exploit the minor employment cost. American enterprises have their basic offices for the supply of information to the central offices in Ireland and SE Asia. The same practices follow enterprises from Central Europe with networks towards the district. This evolution is extremely interesting for Greece because only the development of such potentials will participate successfully in the distribution of employment. This way as a country we will be able to cover a great number of lost employment seats which the introduction of new technology has brought. A national employment market is hutching.

2.3.5 Development of telematic links between Public Authorities

Teleworking is not only interesting in the private field and private enterprises. Its implementations will have great importance for the public administration since this is the main field of services supply. The Dutch government already has applied in 1990 the teleworking project for 3 days per week to employees of the Transportation Ministry. At a Municipality of London in 1982, 59 home teleworkers were hired, in order to process data for revenue bond. Pilot programs for teleworking in the public sector have been implemented in other countries such as Sweden, France etc.

2.4 TYPES OF TELEWORKERS

Differentiation of teleworkers in terms of teleworking hours:

- a. Marginal teleworkers. Operational: people who are teleworking irregularly one day a week.
- b. Substantial teleworkers. Operational: people who are teleworking regularly at least one day a week.
- c. Primary teleworkers: telework as primary working method. Operational: people who are teleworking regularly 3 or more days a week.

In general, teleworking at home is a large category, which is divided into the following groups:

2.4.1 Full-time employment

This concerns teleworking full-time at home and exclusively for one employer. The term full- or part-time employment as we shall mention later on is not connected to the total working time but to the proportion of work spent on employment at home. Usually, people that are involved in such a type of teleworking are people of low education while the relationship with the employer as well as the way of payment is not always clear. There are cases in which this kind of employment occurs completely atypical, without the taxes payment and insurance for none for the biconditional parts.

2.4.2 Part-time employment

This concerns teleworking partly at home and partly at the settlements of the employer. According to the research data, people who are involved in such a type of education are highly-skilled and usually have a clerical relationship.

2.4.3 Independent professionals

This concerns teleworking at home for more than one employer. Occupations which were traditionally realized by independent professionals (journalists, translators, designers and consultants of various categories) and employments which coincided with the development of technology (documents process, development of databases etc.) belong to this category. Due to its nature this category includes employees whose employment relationship with the employers is difficult to group since each one of them has his/ her own model of work.

2.5 DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENTIATION OF TELEWORKERS

Differentiation of teleworkers in terms of sex, age, and educational level.

There are no official data on how widespread telework is in Greece, e.g. the number of people engaged in telework, its growth in recent years, or the type of enterprises in which it is dealt with most often. Overall, neither the National Statistical Service nor other bodies have kept track of the phenomenon of teleworking. There are indications that the number of teleworkers in Greece is about 20,000, whereas the 1997 European Community report on teleworking sets the figure at 0.46% of the country's total labour force. However,

these data should be taken with a grain of salt, since it is not known from which official sources they were taken.

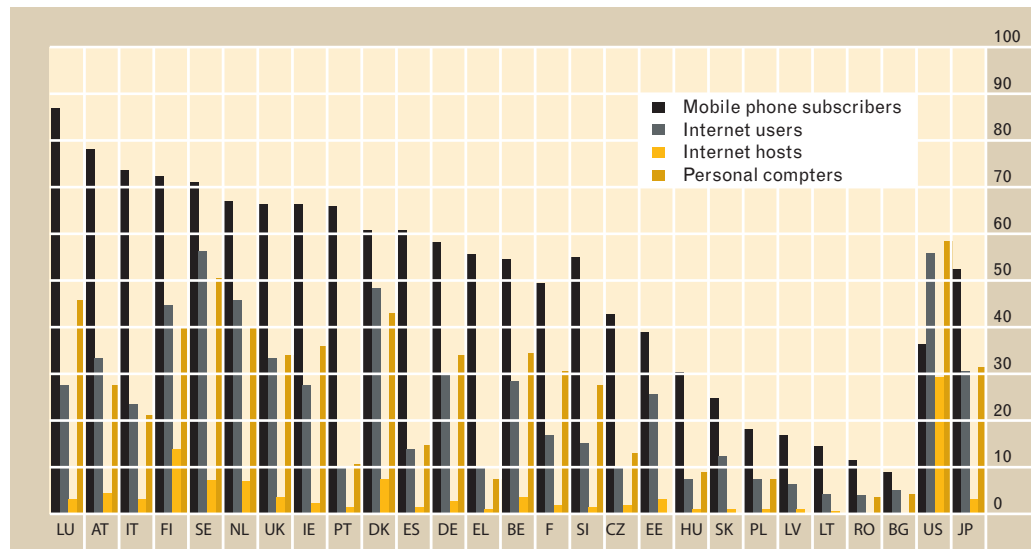


Figure 3: ICT & Internet Access Indicators (2000)—Source: EUROSTAT

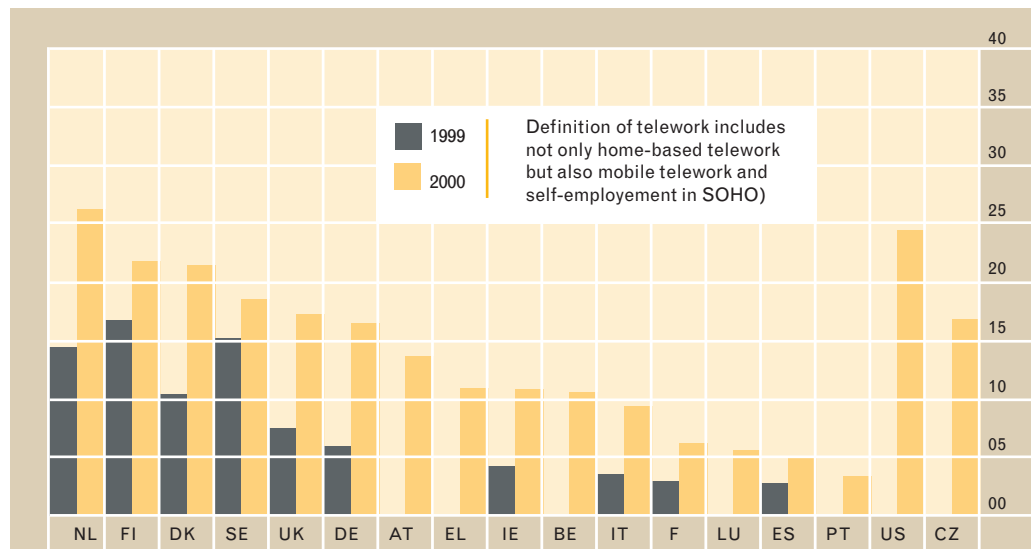


Figure 4: Spread of telework—all types (1999/2000)

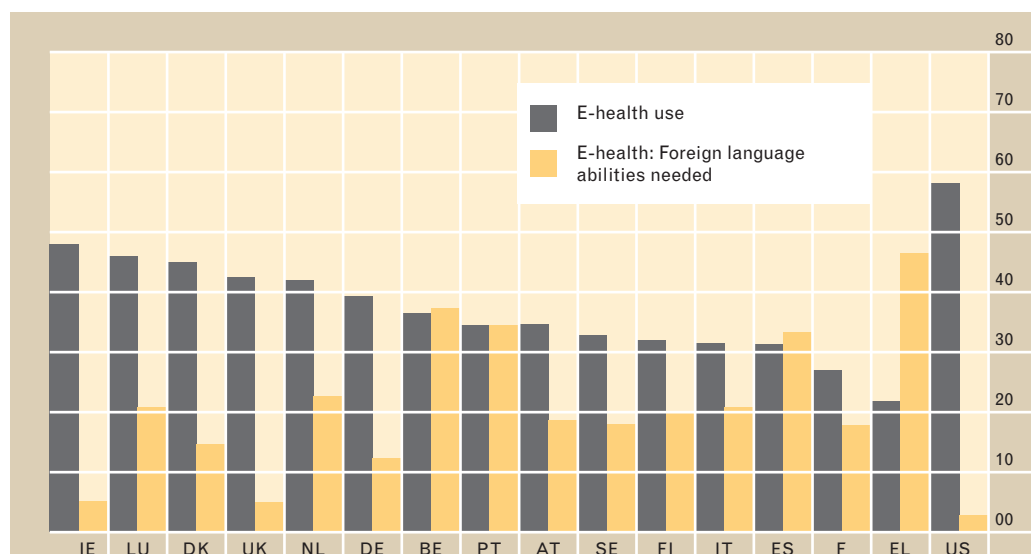


Figure 5: E-health use and the language barrier of internet users (2002), Source: SIBIS 2002

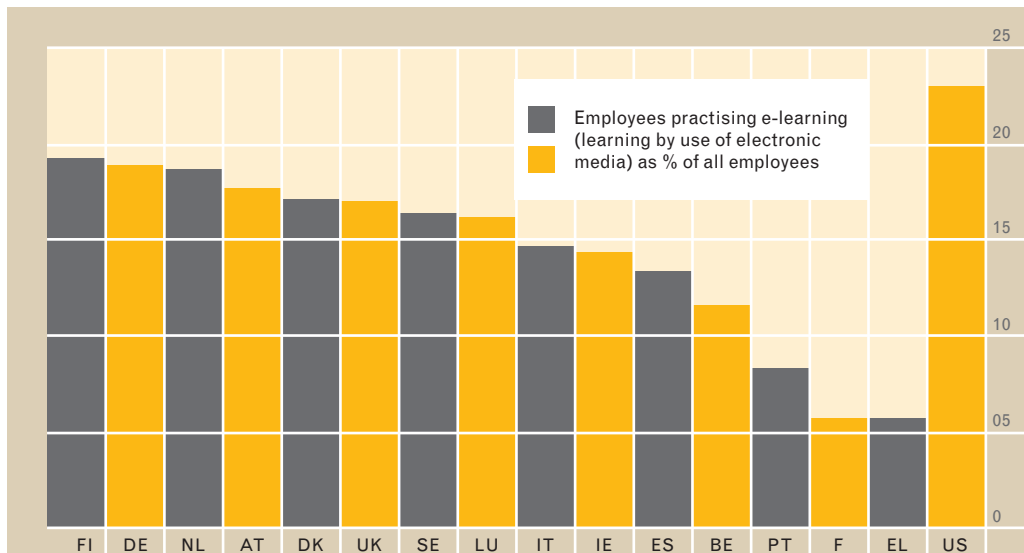


Figure 6: E-learning (2002), Source: SIBIS 2002

Greece falls well below average on most indicators—mobile telephone use, teacher-pupil ratios, and the Gini index of income inequality are exceptions. Training and e-applications however are areas where the Greek performance looks particularly poor on the indicators.

Greece: nearly all the aspects of the KS indicators researched in Euforia are well below the EU 15 average. Thus Greece still has quite a long way to go just to reach the level of the other EU countries.

Policy on telework

3

3.1 GOVERNMENT

3.1.1 Legislation and fiscal policies to facilitate / promote / support teleworking

Regulation of teleworkers' conditions of employment is contained in the new industrial relations bill passed by Greek Parliament on 7 August 1998 and published as Law 2639/98 in the Government Gazette on 2 September 1998. In particular, the new law on 'Regulation of Industrial Relations, Formation of a Labour Inspection Body and other provisions' stipulates that no dependent labour relation is involved in agreements between employers and workers involving provision of services or work, including instances of payment per unit of telework, as long as such agreements are in writing and are communicated within 15 days to the competent Labour Inspectorate. Otherwise, for legal purposes the labour relation is assumed to be a dependent one, and the teleworker is considered to be a full-time contractual employee. It is also stipulated that nine months after publication of the law, enterprises will be obliged to submit a complete list of the teleworkers they employ to the Labour Inspectorates. However, it should be noted that although teleworking comes within the regulatory framework for all atypical forms of employment, it is not defined or broken down into individual types.

In the context of the project 'Teleworking 2000' of the Computers Technology Institute (CTI) which subsumed in the Human Networks of Research and Technology Knowledge of GGET, arose the need of editing the Greek Memorandum of Understanding of Teleworking, for the acceptance of teleworking as an equal form of employment.

The aim of this Memorandum is the mapping of directives for the propagation and enforcement of teleworking in Greece. The Greek Memorandum of Understanding of Teleworking concerns the agreement of public and private sector conveyors that sign common laws and directives for the development of teleworking in Greece.

The directives that exist are separated in general political directives derived from different thematic areas. Directives of specific good practices of teleworking for the following fields that concern teleworking and its development:

- > Employment Relations
- > Employment and Social Innovation
- > Taxation
- > Social Insurance
 - Continuous socio-economical development
 - Motives for the enterprises

3.1.2 General Political Directives

> Teleworking necessitates the political interference.

In industrial society, the working area is important for social relations. As teleworking constitutes an important change in the labor framework and the way of life, it must correspond to the social needs of the teleworker.

New organization of employment and the respective adjustments must be introduced with great care regarding the conditional social folds, but also the contingency of their change. Besides, the metres of support of useful use of teleworking regarding its flexibility and security cannot be reduced in alternative solutions of a single regulation. Taking into account the complexity of coherent factors, teleworking requests cautious political interference that includes the systemization of the regulations, motives and information.

> **General Directive 1:** Adjustment of continuity in the Employment Market.

The bound of teleworking must result from collective contracts, laws and employment practices that modulate the framework of the employment market in our days.

Teleworking must be conditioned by the existent regulations for the employees of conventional employment, instead of being separated by their colleagues who work at the office, with specially designed laws and collective contracts. Wherever it is judged necessary, the existing regulations must be adjusted so that they can be applied to telework as well.

> **General Directive 2:** Equal rights and obligations for teleworkers.

There mustn't be a different treatment towards teleworkers as far as regulations, working conditions, salaries and career possibilities are concerned, in comparison with the corresponding professionals in the same field of employment, country, precinct, city and function.

> **General Directive 3:** Discrimination between employee and small business.

The adjustments for the teleworkers must make the prominence between an employee and a business clear. The freelance teleworkers must be seen as small businesses, if they can correspond to certain requisitions for an independent business. Otherwise, they must be considered as employees in the business they work for and undergo the same treatment as the rest of the employees, according to the current law, agreements and employment practices.

> **General Directive 4:** Taxation Discrimination, Funding and Motives.

The Ministry of Economics and the Professional Accountants, Consultants for Tax, Income, Capital, Social Security Taxes, Enterprises Capital Taxes, must examine the taxation regime regarding teleworkers (employees and small businesses) as well as the employers of teleworkers, so that they will be able to define the taxes or the enforcement of taxation rules, which will not demoralize teleworking or act against it.

They should pursue to deplete any proportional discrimination. Additionally, they must designate the taxes or the application of taxation rules, which could be amended in order to act as financial motives (alleviations, funding) in activities of teleworking.

> **General Directive 5:** Teleworking as a profitable model for the support of motives. Teleworking must be adjusted as far as the profit distribution is concerned, allowing the teleworker and the employer to receive a rightful proportion of the financial benefits that result from the adjustments regarding teleworking.

It must be examined how the contractors could share the benefits of teleworking. It must also be inspected if the wage scales of teleworking could be increased and the taxation scales decreased, since teleworking entails less common assets.

> **General Directive 6:** Teleworking in distant territories.

The local and peripheral provenances and the political representatives in all levels, must enhance their efforts in how the new employment positions will be increased in the distant territories through teleworking contracts.

The methods and models for the labor allowances and the new designation of the working place must be defined and tested. The patterns of cooperation between private companies and developmental peripheral authorities must be processed and entered in a broader scale. We must begin in Greece an informative campaign for teleworking as a means of facilitation for the creation of new employment positions and as a means for greater competitiveness, which will make the Greek businesses more competitive in the World market.

> **General Directive 7:** Teleworking and the promotion of Adjacency Offices Network.

The local authorities must promote the commendation of syndicates between public and private sector organizations, in order to create, develop and operate a network of offices, fully founded working stations with computers software and telecommunications infrastructure as well as Internet access.

The workers in these public or private services or the free-lancers must know the benefits of Information Technology and Telecommunications and deliver a part or all their work remotely with the assistance of telematic networks.

> **General Directive 8:** Implementation of Teleworking in public management.

The state has a significant role which must give persons and companies the opportunity to have access in applicable Information Technologies & Telecommunications. The state must proceed in new but extended experimental enforcement of teleworking in public management.

3.1.3 Working relations, employment & social innovation

> **Directive1:** Voluntarism

The opportunity given to the employees to practice telework must be determined according to each particular case and must be a matter of choice.

> **Directive2:** Equality

The opportunity for the practice of telework must be given equally to all men and women. Teleworkers that are engaged at home or in a teleworking center must be considered equal to their colleagues in the main offices. This, particularly, must include the relevant coverage through a collective contract of employment.

> **Directive 3:** Reimbursement of expenses

For teleworkers who work at home, the employers must provide the basic equipment of computers and telecommunications. Additionally, they must offer the coverage of expenses for separate telephone lines, the use of telephone, fax and e-mail. The coverage of expenses and the method of calculation of the expenses, of electricity for the office at home, the maintenance of the equipment and heating must be accorded among the employer and the teleworker in the contract of employment.

> **Directive 4:** Private life and protection of data

Concerning teleworkers who work at home, the employers must respect their private life and have access to their home only after a mutual agreement has been made. The private and official data that will be transmitted among the employer and the teleworker, which are or aren't saved in both places must be protected from non-authorized access.

> **Directive 5:** Collective protection

Teleworkers must have the same collective protection as the employees that practice the same tasks in the main office.

> **Directive 6:** Health and Security in the working place

For the teleworkers who work at home, there must be the option to determine a specific working space at home, without disturbance, according to the most satisfying prescriptions in matters of health and security in the working place.

> **Directive 7:** Constitution of teleworkers

Teleworkers must be supported with specific constitution and education regarding the use of advanced technologies, administrative subjects, regarding health and safety as well as the socio-psychological dimension of teleworking.

> **Directive 8:** Constitution for directors of teleworkers

Directors and instructors of teleworking teams must receive special constitution regarding the most effective methods of communication and the use of tele-administration techniques, which include the mutual negotiation of aims, the settlement of flexible times and the administration of teleworking which is distributed in different parts.

3.1.4 Taxes and social security

> **Directive 1:** Working regime of contracts

The employers of teleworkers, salaried teleworkers, self-employed teleworkers, professional consultants and financial offices must allocate and record in the employment contract or the entrusting deed the working regime of the teleworker, whether it is conditioned by full- or part-time employment, and determine the financial regime.

> **Directive 2:** Residence, and citizen's social rights

The employers of teleworkers, salaried teleworkers, self-employed teleworkers, professional consultants and financial offices must ensure that the working place, the residence in the country of provenance and the place of tenement as well as the tax

address of each teleworker are registered in the employment contract or in the entrusting deed. The determination of legal relationships and social rights of teleworkers must be the full responsibility of their employers.

> **Directive 3:** Disagreements for the transition of tasks-pricing

If telework that has been performed by teleworkers is resold in any form by their employers and becomes a subject of disagreement for the transition of tasks-pricing between the financial offices and the employers, the teleworkers will not be prosecuted through or by the utility of some adjustments required for the price of transition.

> **Directive 4:** Environmental benefits

The authorities and the employers must secure that teleworkers are rewarded with every possible tax funding and motives for the reduction of traffic congestion and for other benefits in favor of the environment and secure that no penalties are imposed on teleworkers for the reduction of transportation and traveling, for example increased tax percentages for business vehicles with little travel expenses.

3.1.5 Continuous socio-economical development

> **Directive 1:** Teleworking in favor of social enhancement

In many suburbs and villages, a great number of adults travel to the cities every day to their jobs by public transport. In these suburbs and villages, the social environment isn't well-balanced during many hours of the day.

The social control that is exerted from adults to children and young people is reduced sensibly. Many social problems that concern younger people can, justifiably, be related to the living environment that is connected with social imbalances and reduced social control. The possibility of social enhancement through teleworking must be examined with experiments of massive scale.

> **Directive 2:** Equal percentages of teleworking

Teleworking from great distance has a great disadvantage, since the percentages of communication are in proportion to the distance.

This reduces the possibilities to trace intensive economical activities from the point of telecommunication in distant territories. Motives must be given for the development towards equal communicative percentages independently, of the distance. At least, there won't be any extra expenses that cannot be justified by the added expenses on behalf of the supplier.

> **Directive 3:** Working combinations

There is great need to increase the flexibility regarding the working combinations. Since the term 'teleworking' is directed towards an isolated person who can assume a job, employment with great fluctuations in proportion to the seasons could be combined with other duties, during the law request season.

Such combinations must be accommodated and motives must be given with this purpose. The transactions between employment and self-employed must be facilitated as well as the possibility to combine part-time employment with all year long business.

> **Directive 4:** Greater flexibility in the working hours

In order to protect the environment more effectively, motives must be given regarding the flexibility of the working hours and office hours, aiming at a reduction of the traffic jams in the morning and at night and a reduction of the duration of increased pollution due to exhaust fumes.

> **Directive 5:** Reduction of traffic jams and pollution

The Ministries and the peripheral Authorities must be amplified with the necessary laws or appropriate regulations, in order to be able to design their budgets, so that they themselves can use the initiatives regarding teleworking not only as a new way of employment of a distant employee or finding clients from a distance, but also as a necessary means for the reduction of traffic jams.

More specific initiatives will be included in the teleworking centers, that will be in peripheral basis in association with the civil centers, in combination with bus lines and bus stops that are close to parking spaces, with solutions of free parking, for regions where there is a serious problem of pollution, or by creating settlements of common transportation and train stations in the suburbs as well as 'communal contiguity teleworking centers'.

> **Directive 6:** A comprehensive informing campaign for teleworking

It has been proven that teleworking is useful for many objectives that aren't very well known. A comprehensive informing campaign must begin to show the authorities and the general public how teleworking is practiced in different fields.

3.1.6 Motives for the businesses

> **Directive 1:** Development of memorandum mechanisms

Each measure of economical policy must recognize the existence of networked tele-businesses as basic seat. This means that the new statistic definitions must be assigned on the basis of a better assignment of parameters in the field of services supply.

> **Directive 2:** Insurance of sufficient effective training and educative support for businesses in relation with tele-business

Every development of education and training politics must contain the support and introduction of telematics on the basis of enterprising procedures. The support must be administered in a coherent way, in order to include all the conditional factors of distant transactions.

> **Directive 3:** Money-credit environment

The financial reinforcements, including taxing and funding of capital, must always be available for the creation, development and maintenance of tele-businesses and networks. Motives must be developed regarding the intermediation, expressing the true data for the creation and transactions of the tele-business.

3.2 REGIONAL POLICY AND INITIATIVES

9TH INTERNATIONAL TELEWORK WORKSHOP: CRETE, GREECE 2004

In the context of activities and initiatives for the promotion of teleworking, the International Telework Academy has implemented the 9th International Telework Workshop, which was titled:

‘Telework and Future Forms of Organizing’ in Crete, Greece (*Creta Maris Hotel, Heraklion*) on September 6-9, 2004 with the following topic: ‘Telework: Integrating physical, mental and virtual work spaces’.

The International Telework Academy (ITA) in collaboration with the Technological Education Institute of Heraklion, Crete (TEI) has organized the event. The workshop has brought together practitioners and academics in a spirit of mutual enquiry.

The workshop reflected on the diverse impact of e-enabled processes on business activity. Papers detailing emerging theories, cutting edge research and the best commercial practices were sought. Papers that facilitate the exchange between scholars and practitioners were particularly welcome.

E.KAT.O. has contacted the organizations to establish communication and participated in the Workshop in order to present and promote the activities of the project. The presentation of the project was very effective and achieved a great distribution level to the public.

3.3 LOCAL POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

3.3.1 Recognition and promotion of teleworking practices

New work patterns in the Information Society. The labour market is constantly changing, and the pace of change is extremely rapid in certain areas. One of the most important aspects of this change is the increased use of teleworking. Information and communication technologies give many workers the opportunity to work at home or in some other place away from their usual workplace, with the help of a personal computer and a telephone line. Even though the percentage of workers making use of such facilities is still small in our country, the international experience shows that, as a form of organisation of work, teleworking will spread. The government invites its social partners to cooperate for the formulation of an institutional framework favouring the spread of teleworking while safeguarding the rights of workers.

The positive consequences of telework. In today’s society, telework has a series of positive consequences. First, it gives workers new control over the management of their time. It can also improve everyday life, by saving energy and reducing traffic.

3.3.2 Greece in the information society: strategy and actions

Teleworking can lead to a geographical redistribution of the labour market and its diversification by relocating activities to less favoured areas, while also allowing population groups (parents who have to be at home, the handicapped) for which employment in its classic form is difficult, to participate in the labour market. The most important impact of telework is however the role it can play in the competitiveness between firms. In an international environment in which competition is increasingly based on technology and knowledge is a scarce resource, teleworking allows Greek enterprises to attract workers with the appropriate knowledge and skills and to produce new products and services on the basis of a flexible organizational scheme. Telework offers workers greater administrative and organisational control over their time, allows the participation in the job market of new population groups and is a tool for the competitiveness between enterprises.

3.3.3 Possible risks

The generalisation of telework is not without risks. Risks include the disappearance of collective forms of work, the often temporary nature of teleworking, as well as divisions such as those between a core of well-paid workers with steady jobs and a crust of underpaid and insecure workers. An important risk is also the creation of a feeling of alienation from social processes for workers who work away from a professional environment. It is important to adapt the legislative framework and examine the consequences of telework. The development of teleworking practices based on sound foundations has positive consequences for the economy and society. The government intends to facilitate this development with a number of interventions, such as:

- > Adaptation of the legislative framework so that there is a balance between the conditions facilitating faster development of teleworking and the protection of workers
- > Establishment of special provisions for the promotion of telework in the framework of Local Employment Agreements or on a case-by-case basis (e.g. new enterprises or enterprises in particular areas)
- > Provision of information, awareness and diffusion of best practice
- > Promotion of pilot/demonstration projects aiming at the creation of networks between employers located in metropolitan areas and experts that are located in remote areas, the development of tele-centres in such remote areas, and the support of the commercial exploitation of their services
- > Promotion of research via entities such as the National Institute of Labour, aiming at assessing the overall economic and social consequences of telework and evaluating the results of governmental initiatives in this field

3.4 POLITICAL PARTIES

At this point there isn't any intention expressed regarding teleworking by the political parties in Greece. Nevertheless, the government intends to promote the institution of telework even more as we previously mentioned.

3.5 EMPLOYERS ORGANIZATIONS

With regard to the positions of the social partners on teleworking, neither the employers' organisations nor the unions have worked out an integrated framework of positions and proposals. However, the provision in the new industrial relations law regarding atypical forms of employment including telework has, as a whole, been viewed as particularly positive. Employer bodies nevertheless have expressed opposition to the presumption of dependent labour.

3.6 UMBRELLA ORGANIZATIONS AND NETWORKS

Mixed organizations that are dealing with telework or are promoting/supporting telework. Like in the case of political parties, there hadn't been a serious expression of interest regarding teleworking and its promotion until now. Nevertheless, after the first contacts that E.KAT.O. made with some women's organizations such as ERGANI—Women Entrepreneurs Association, SEGE—Corporation of Women Entrepreneurs of Greece, ARISTI—Umbrella organization of Businesswomen & co-owners, KETHI—Research Center for Equality Issues and other organizations with similar scope, some organizations have expressed interest in assisting the promotion of teleworking.

Main reasons of interest are the following:

- > Combat of unemployment, mainly for women who have children and are unable or don't want to leave them with a babysitter to go to work or women who have to take care of an older relative.
- > Protection of the environment & reduction of pollution, since the reduction of transfers from place to place by car or public transport will lead to less production of pollution.
- > Promotion of decentralization, now that there will be no need to move to the cities in order to find a job different from agricultural work or cattle-breeding.

The organizations therefore, expressed their interest in:

- > Promoting the informative and educational material created by our organization to all their members.
- > Distributing the questionnaires of the project to their members and collecting them in order for E.KAT.O. to process the answers
- > Informing their members of any educational or informative seminar, conference, meeting or other type of exhibit shall be implemented by E.KAT.O. in the bounds of the project, in order to achieve their participation and sensitization.

Focus on Telecentres

4

In Greece, as we mentioned before, teleworking hasn't been very much widespread. For this reason the only teleworking center now operating in Greece is CreteTelework Network. Following, we submit a brief description of CTN.

4.1 CRETE TELEWORK NETWORK — OVERVIEW — TELEWORKING IN CRETE

According to the site of CTN, this Network is now a reality made possible thanks to a collaboration between FORTHnet and chosen hotels located throughout the island of Crete. FORTHnet will provide the hotels with Information and Communication Technology (ICT). From their side, the hotels provide their clients (teleworkers) with the appropriate facilities. Using such facilities the clients can be connected with their work back home, keep in touch with friends and family while enjoying their holiday in Crete.

FORTHnet will also provide hoteliers and teleworkers with free Virtual Office facilities. V.O. is a powerful software programme which allows users to transfer and keep their most important documents in an account of their own, so there is no need to connect to their computers back home every time they want to work on a particular topic.

4.2 THE PARTICIPANTS

Hotels which are members of the CTN project vary in category and location. Regardless of their category, CTN will verify that the facilities are standardized, to ensure that teleworkers and hoteliers are equally satisfied with the final results.



Suggestion for case-studies

5

It is obvious that telework is not one of the basic issues on the labour relations agenda in Greece. However, its growth as a new form of employment and its development as a new labour and social phenomenon, combined with a lack of adequate data, have made an in-depth study imperative. There is also need for a definition of telework, in order to create the suitable framework for its regulation. Enterprises' compliance with the relevant provision of Law 2639/1998 will produce the first official list of teleworkers in Greece. This will certainly be an important step in the right direction, just as the law itself is important for regulating industrial relations, insofar as it attempts to set up an initial framework for the functioning of atypical forms of employment which lack the basic characteristics of dependent labour. However, as employers' organisations and unions have both pointed out in the context of the social dialogue, there is need for a broader legislative framework to regulate other matters, such as social security and working conditions, which are relevant to atypical forms of employment including telework.

Unfortunately the only teleworking center active at this point in Greece is the teleworking center of general activity, and not only for hotels as CTN, called ZEUS CONSULTING.

Actions taken place

6

E.KAT.O. in order to achieve sensitization and informing of the public regarding teleworking, which would had as a direct result the promotion and identification of the ALL INCLUSIVE @WORK project, approached through written and oral speech the women's organizations, governmental offices, ministries, umbrella organizations, trade unions, employees and employers unions in order to collect information regarding their knowledge on teleworking and afterwards inform them and sensitize them in participating in the activities of the project.

Initially, we sent via fax, mail and e-mail a descriptive letter to all the above mentioned organizations which was followed by a phone call in order to settle a meeting with the organization's representatives. During the meeting with the Boarding Council of each organization, we implemented a presentation of our organization, the projects aims and targets as well as the role of their organization in the project, considering they might decide to assist us. After the presentation, we distributed informative material regarding teleworking and finished the meeting with a brief workgroup with the Boarding Council.

Specifically, as far as the public sector is concerned, that is, ministries, prefectures and municipalities, we conducted several attempts to meet with the representatives and participated in several meetings on the subject of teleworking. Specifically, here in Greece some modifications on specific articles of the Civil and Labour Law are taking place in order for our country's law to meet with the demands of the Commission's Directives.

After the implementation of the meeting we received several positive answers of organisations that are willing to assist our organization in the promotion of teleworking by any possible means they have. Nevertheless, we haven't yet finished implementing all the meetings with all the organizations in order to know what results this activity will have for the benefits of the project besides the informing and sensitizing of the people.

6.1 POSSIBLE WEBSITES TO DISTRIBUTE OUR SURVEY

The site of the Ministry of Development would be a good informatory means regarding teleworking as well as the websites of women's organisations such as ERGANI, SEGE, KETHI, ARISTI etc.

6.2 **POSSIBLE PERSONS TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS GROUP(S)
TO DISCUSS THE SURVEY RESULTS AND SPECIFIC TOPICS
FORMULATED IN THE COUNTRY REPORTS**

The General Secretary for Consumer Issues of the Ministry of Development, Mr. Skordas, the president of ARISTI, Mrs Pagalou, the representatives of KETHI, Mrs. Siano, Mrs. Germoti and Mrs. Alamani and others.

6.3 **POSSIBLE TELECENTRES AS CANDIDATES
FOR CASE STUDIES**

Unfortunately, since there aren't any telecentres currently in Greece, the only telecenter we can propose is the telecenter of Crete (CTN).

6.4 **IDEAS FOR GENERAL OR SPECIAL SEMINARS**

All organizations could implement a series of 20 seminars to organizations and employers unions regarding teleworking, its pros and cons and what effects teleworking can have on their professional and personal life, especially for women with family and professional obligations.

Proposals

From the overview of international experience and the ascertainties concerning the current situation and problems in Greece, E.KAT.O. reached certain conclusions and made proposals addressed to:

1. Businesses
2. Workers and their representatives (trade unions and collective bodies)
3. the State and competent policy makers

Businesses

Any business that wishes to apply a teleworking scheme must design its implementation by clearly separating telework and work at home. The first type is governed by the terms and conditions of an agreement entered into between the employer and the employee, while the second type is usually agreed upon on an informal basis. A first approach would be to set up working groups in order to study the various dimensions and requirements of such an enterprise, e.g.:

- i) a group responsible for IT and communications matters;
 - ii) a group responsible for HR matters;
 - iii) a scheme management group.
- > Teleworking should be implemented gradually, starting from an experimental stage and moving to the various company departments on the basis of an evaluation of the scheme.
 - > Teleworking must be voluntary for employees and under agreed and clear terms and conditions.
 - > Teleworkers shall have the same rights and obligations as their colleagues working in the company.
 - > The selection of the persons to perform telework should be transparent and based on the requirements of their specific jobs and the possibility of their tasks to be performed remotely.
 - > The business should follow a policy for the development of information and communications technologies and provide teleworkers with the necessary infrastructure.
 - > The active and substantial participation of social partners is a main prerequisite for teleworking to become a field of experimentation with innovative actions that may be drawn on in policy making.
 - > The legal framework should prevent unilateral changes to working conditions on the part of employers ignoring the needs of teleworkers, and pressuring them to accept worse conditions than those of comparable workers at the employers' premises.
 - > For that reason, teleworkers should be included in the existing collective representation bodies. On the other hand, the representatives of trade unions should have access to teleworkers.

- > The suggestions of the Framework Agreement on Teleworking should be supported more.
- > It should be investigated whether the legal framework on the insurance coverage of new forms of work in general and teleworking in particular is adequate and completed where necessary, in order to make it more usable.
- > The actions undertaken by businesses supporting teleworking promote an increase in the productivity of staff, thus leading to an increase in the workload of businesses and creating demand for employment. To that end, businesses should be assisted in creating the infrastructure necessary for the teleworking in the form of special measures (funding, financing of the creation of infrastructure for teleworkers, etc.).
- > The funding of business plans aiming at the development and experimental implementation of such actions has been provided for and is included in Priority 3.5 of the Operational Plan of the Ministry of Labor within the framework of the 'Information Society' Operational Program. This specific priority also prioritizes business plans facilitating the increase of employment in remote areas and among vulnerable population groups. The following is suggested for the implementation of this priority:
 - i) Funding under this priority should concern both the development of business plans and their implementation. Implementation should involve the selection of all projects that have implemented the business plan satisfactorily, while such implementation shall be gradual through pilot applications;
 - ii) The marketing scheme of the services of the teleworking unit to be set up, as well as the possibility to export its services and its interconnection with international commercial units, should be particularly important criteria in the selection process of the business plans to be funded;
 - iii) Financial support should be granted on the basis of the cost per service rendered and not on the cost for the creation of infrastructure;
 - iv) Priority shall be given to the operational plans of regional bodies aiming at the creation of tele-centers oriented towards software development, mass media and advertising, the provision of consultation services, training, etc.
- > The safety and trust provided by technology to teleworking are very important factors for its dissemination. Many businesses hesitate to adopt teleworking because they believe that the new information and communications technologies do not provide a satisfactory safety level. The provision of user friendly and cost effective solutions, such as the smart cards, in combination with the establishment of public safety mechanisms (such as the electronic signatures) shall contribute to the adoption of teleworking by businesses.
- > The lack of clear standards—guides on the adoption and extensive use of teleworking—is an important limitation. Teleworking standards should be elaborated and the best manner for this to be achieved is through the adoption of teleworking by the public administration and services. If public corporations and organizations, as well as the public administration manage to be pioneers and to be efficient in this sector, other private sector firms shall follow their example very soon.

- > Telecommunications expenses constitute another important issue for teleworking. The State could exercise pressure in order to achieve more favorable and, principally, stable rates for teleworking, initially for teleworkers in the public sector, and then it should ask that these be extended to all teleworkers.

- > The need for extending the legislation on health and safety at work in order to also cover teleworkers when working from home is also imperative.

- > The educational system must adequately prepare future workers for the new work culture. Such changes are considered important for the development of the competitiveness of industry in the near future.

- > Particularly with regard to SMEs it is suggested that Consultation Centers be created within the respective Chambers to which they belong, in order for them to use consultation and information services for matters concerning flexible forms of work and teleworking for their staff.

- > Statistical surveys on the functioning of the labor market should include questions on the extent and the type of teleworking applied. More specifically, they should include questions assisting in the estimation of the number of teleworkers at home or commuting teleworkers.

- > Finally, the participation of all involved parties in an extensive and ongoing social dialogue about the new forms of work organization, such as teleworking, is required, which is a determinant factor for adaptation to new technologies.

8

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