

# TELEWORK IN ITALY

—From knowledge to practice—

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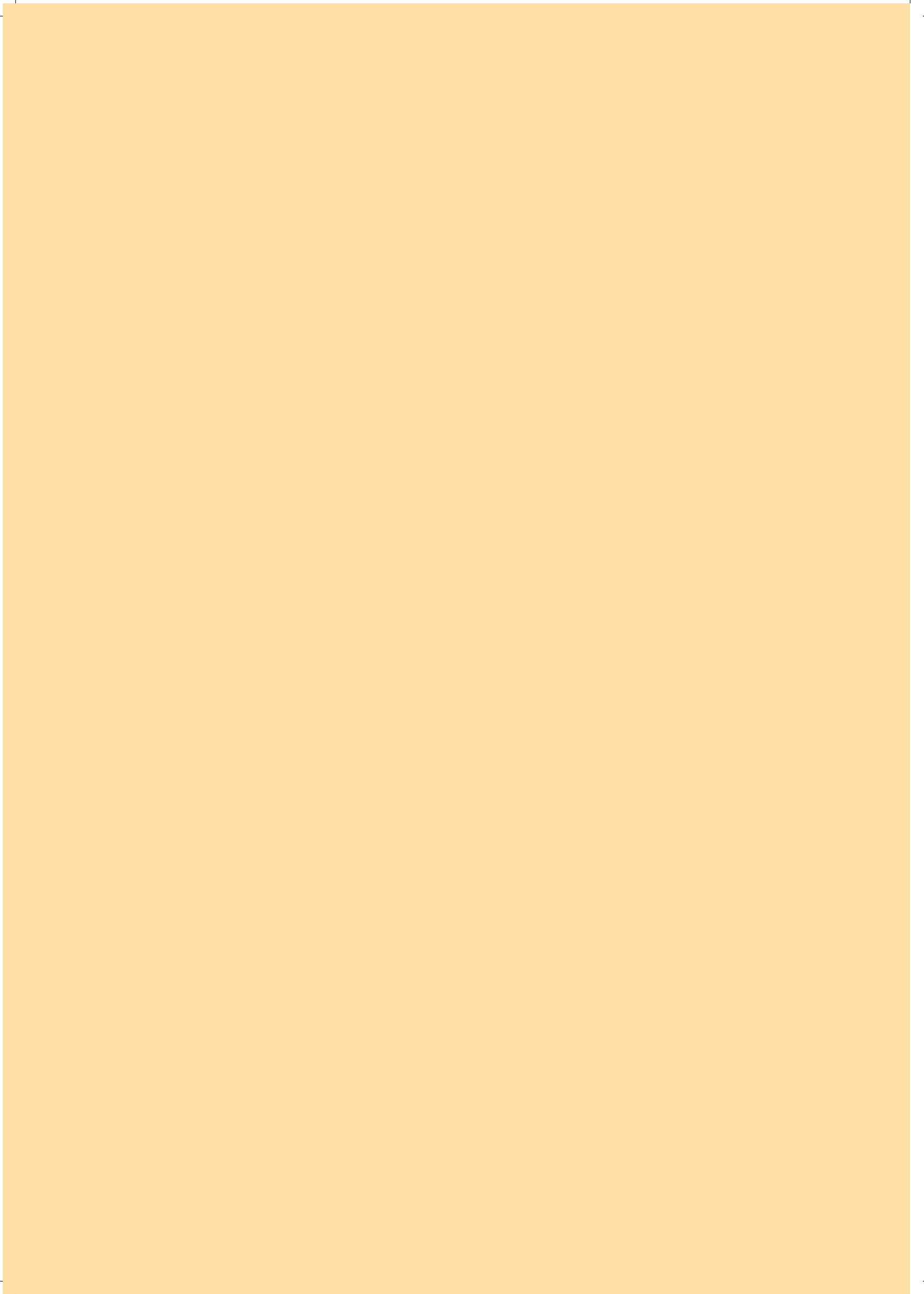
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# Introduction

## 1.1 A NEW WAY OF ACTING

Telework is a very flexible and effective organisational approach to working and is tuned to the modern means of communication.

It presents an alternative to the traditional way in which work is projected, organised and executed, and is centred on the possibility of acting and working away from the principal office.

Telework is based on:

- > The opportunity to overcome the constraints of distance and separation through Information & Communication Technology
- > The opportunity for teleworkers to become entrepreneurial
- > The opportunity to change the organisational structure of companies
- > The opportunity to improve the quality of life

Telework has to be differentiated from the notion of decentralisation, because:

- > It is more than a territorial dislocation of units maintaining their own organisational initiative
- > It is more than a deconstruction of the traditional workplace through the creation of remote individual workplaces

Telework is characterised by the following elements:

- > The distance between the subjects involved, who are no longer in close physical proximity to each other
- > The functional interdependence between the subjects involved
- > The operational interconnection, made possible by the use of technology
- > Flexibility with regard to distribution, deployment and work practices

Telework therefore represents a new way of working irrespective of time and place, dependent on results and adjusted to the teleworker's own rhythm of life.

- 1 In the EcaTT study, a teleworker is perceived as someone who, employed or self-employed, works outside the traditional office (at home, from a telecentre, from a remote office) at least one day a week, and uses ICT technologies to keep daily contact with the company.
- 2 Occasional teleworkers are generally perceived in ECaTT as employed or self-employed people for whom the teleworking time is fixed at less than one day a week.



## Labour market: statistics on telework (1990–2003)



Significant statistical information on telework, teleworkers and related aspects, can be found only in European research. On a national level, there is little statistical information about this specific working type.

The first survey on telework financed by the European Commission was launched in 1999. It was called the ECaTT project.

### 2.1 NUMBER OF TELEWORKERS

In the results of the survey summarized in the table below, we see that in Italy the number of teleworkers was 720,000 and that the percentage of teleworkers in the broad sense of the term was estimated at about 4%, whereas the percentage for other EU countries such as Sweden, Finland, and the Netherlands was estimated at about 15%.

Forms of telework	Number of workers	Total teleworkers in % of labour force
Telehomeworkers	315,000	1.57
SOHO telehomeworkers	90,000	0.45
Mobile telehomeworkers	270,000	1.35
Subtotal excluding repeated cases	584,000	2.92
Occasional telehomeworkers	135,000	0.67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>720,000</b>	<b>3.59</b>

Sources: ECaTT study (study on Benchmarking Progress on Electronic Commerce and New Methods of Work)

## 2.2 FIELDS OF TELEWORK: SECTOR DIFFERENTIATION

### 2.2.1 Methods and forms of telework

In Italy, telework can be looked upon from various angles.

We can approach telework from a legal point of view. We may, for instance, examine whether it is regulated, and, if so, examine the types of contract that are regulated.

It appears that the types of contract are related to the teleworkers and their relation with the company, which is either

- > Autonomous or
- > Dependent

We can also consider telework from the point of view of duration.

In that case, telework can be described as a way of working

- > Permanently
- > Not permanently
- > Occasionally

It is necessary to keep in mind that the concept of telework is difficult to define, owing to its extreme flexibility.

In our time, because of the spread of ICT, telework has been able to develop and broaden.

It seems to be destined to prevail during the following years, probably in a mixed form combining telehomework and telework in companies.

We should consider that in Europe, more than 50% of the total work force and approximately 80% of the work force used in new workplaces (created in the various economic fields), carry out activities that can be totally or partly related to the activity of 'information processing'.

Thanks to new technologies, the synchronisation of work on the one hand and the time and place factor on the other are no longer critical aspects, since it is no longer necessary for employees to be in the same place at the same time in order to be able to work together.

The idea is that a company's information should move rather than its employees.

## 2.3 FIELDS OF TELEWORKING

Every work activity not requiring the production of material goods is potentially 'teleworkable'.

This has proved successful in a great number of work activities, in fields such as:

- > Elaboration of information
- > Learning
- > Data entry
- > Carrying out projects
- > Translation

We can identify the characteristics of these specific activities as follows:

- > A high level of intellectual rather than manual work
- > Tasks handled individually or, in any case, tasks that are easily divisible into work phases

- > Those performing the tasks have a sense of initiative and the ability to achieve objectives without the need for strict supervision
- > Results and quality criteria are measurable
- > Devices are not excessively voluminous and expensive

A number of functions are particularly suited to telework.  
The following table contains some good examples:



<b>Example of functions suited to teleworking</b>		
<b>IT specialisations</b>		
Software programming	Software assistance	Software projecting
System analysis	Projecting of systems	Software development
Software consulting	Computer assistance	Technical computer assistance
Data restoring and saving	System conversion services	
<b>Sales</b>		
Telesales	Representative	Sales
Direct sales	Post demands	Customer assistance
<b>Marketing</b>		
Telemarketing	Market research	Market analysis
Market programs		
<b>Training and learning</b>		
Sales training	Training for systems of quality	
<b>Producting and composing texts</b>		
Compilation of publications	Compiling texts	Journalism
Proofreading	Spell checking	Elaboration of texts
Technical composition	Elaboration of video-text	Desktop Publishing
Technical publications	Multimedia presentations	Preparation of newspaper
Translations		
<b>Research</b>		
Elaboration of information	Research consulting	Research and analysis
Operational research	IT agencies	On- line database
Telephone interviews		
<b>Liberal professions</b>		
Architecture	Legal office	Physics
Mathematics		
<b>Accounting</b>		
Commercialists	Accountability	
<b>Consulting</b>		
Consulting of advertising	telephone consulting	work consulting

<b>Services to persons</b>		
Personnel recruiting		
<b>Projecting</b>		
Graphic projecting	CAD / CAM	
<b>Data elaboration</b>		
Data entry	Presentations	Database development
Management of mailing lists	Management of insurance practices	Insurance liquidations
Transcription of medical data	Elaboration of bills of payment and pensions	
<b>Administration</b>		
Administrative consulting	Pensions administrations	Sending out administrative messages
Administrative financial services		
<b>Management</b>		
Supervision	Project Management	Management of external affairs
Management of human resources	Management of mailing list	Database management
<b>Secretarial services</b>		
Office services	Dispatching, Faxing, Printing	Taking telephone messages
Local IT services	Services booking	
<b>Engineering</b>		
Projecting and development	Technical assistance	Control of telecommunications
<b>Other</b>		
Company programming	Employees verification	Public safety
Tutor	Restoring credits	Telephone information service
Consulting to companies	Photo composition	Flight bookings
Forecasting services	Safety in the workplace	Public relations
Graphics analysis	Insurance agencies	Financial inter-mediation
Financial consulting	Inspection	Research of people
Projecting	Production programming	Investment planning

## 2.4 FORMS OF TELEWORK

What follows is an overview of the main organisational types of teleworking. It should be noted that certain procedures often go hand in hand.

### 2.4.1 Telehomework

Telehomework is the main form of decentralised work enabling the teleworker with a contract as employee or co-worker to carry out his main activity at home. Some only use telematic connections to communicate with employers or with clients, while others combine working at home with 'conventional' activities inside the company.

Telehomeworking has received a lot of criticism. People's objections are mainly related to the social aspect of telehomework: telehomework is believed to cause a decrease in human interaction, and to eventually result into the telehomeworker's isolation.

Telehomework can be carried out by both a company's employees and by self-employed workers with more than one client.

*Employee:* in a contract for individual work a person's own home is specified as the workplace after or instead of the company's premises.

*Autonomous or independent teleworkers:* workers who choose or prefer to work at home. In general autonomous workers 'will follow the market' —if the employer wants them to work 'at the place of work', they will move to the place of work.

*Irregular or illegal teleworkers:* the individual and his direct superior see the benefits of teleworking and adopt the praxis, despite telework not being officially approved of by the company and sometimes even despite proceedings that run counter to the use of telework.

### 2.4.2 Mobile or nomadic telework: telework on location and on the road

The second type of telework is prevalent mainly among sales people and technical assistants, who communicate with the head office by means of telematic devices and avoid having to return to the office to download data and information contained in the central computer.

In that case there is no fixed workplace. Instead, each office disposes of a number of places where it is possible to carry out these specific activities.

Mobile teleworkers are employees whose working activities require a lot of time to travel and for whom the 'place of work' is not important since this could be anywhere.

Mobile teleworkers have minimal office equipment at home; their main concern is the accessibility of necessary tools while being 'on the road'. This necessity has been gradually taken into consideration by airports, hotels, etc. A good example of this is the offer of hotel rooms that are suitable for net-workers with access points for modem connection.

### 2.4.3 Telework in satellite office

This last type refers to particular structures in both the private and public sector, owned by one or more companies, at the disposal of employees who carry out their work in different locations situated outside the main site of the company.

A company may move part of its activities to areas geographically distant from the central office to meet strategic needs (new markets), managerial needs (reduction of costs) and operational needs (a bigger structure).

#### 2.4.4 Telecentres: teledocks, telequarters, telecottages, televillages

The essence of telecentres is that they assemble teleworkers from different companies during their whole or partial working hours in the same professional environment with a complete technological infrastructure, in a neighbourhood close to their homes.

*Telecentres:* Normally every subgroup within a company has all its equipment in one particular place—for example a finance department could be situated in one town, and customer service in another.

However computers and telecommunication mean that employees do not have to be in the same office, in the same town, or in the same country.

Every employee goes into the office he thinks is most convenient—for instance the nearest office, or the one that is easiest to reach. The 'team group' stays in touch by means of an electronic communication network.

Telecentres may be owned and occupied by one particular company, but a company may also hire office space in a centre where accommodation is provided for several enterprises.

When an employee transfers to another function within the company, this poses no problems with regard to his workplace; he merely changes the organisational structure of the company. When an employee resigns or is promoted, the company may replace him by someone more convenient, without having to worry about his workplace.

The benefits are evident. The development of electronic networks means that telework centres are well equipped, which should accelerate the use of telework methods considerably. In practice, however, the industrial field is sometimes slow to adapt to technological changes. There is a wide range of technological devices and support for users. Many users give structure and services: employees belonging to different enterprises, autonomous workers, professionals, and few entrepreneurs.

*Telecottages:* This is a special type of telework centre, so-called because of its rural origins.

The movement of telecottages was started in Scandinavia and has extended to many other parts of Europe by now—for example Ireland, France, England, Wales and Scotland. 'Telecottages' can be homes in the country that have been reconverted, parts of school buildings—or even parts of conventional office buildings.

The original aim of 'telecottages' was to bring technology and people with elevated professional profiles to the people living in remote villages. These people didn't have the possibility to use technological devices or to work with technologically advanced colleagues who are usually grouped in urban centres, or near these centres.

For many telecottages this is still an important part of their role: they offer training in the basic use of computer, writing texts, calculation sheets, and, more recently, in electronic mail and nets.

For employees who already have their own computer, the 'telecottage' offers more expensive equipment.

Telecottages want to contribute to the economic rebirth by helping local people find a job that fits their professional profiles without distance being a limitation.

In many cases this new way of working was introduced in local communities to single individuals.

A particular social role is assigned to telecottage workers: they work mainly at home, which is now the basis for their network of contacts, and in some places there is also the opportunity to 'meet at the coffee machine', the way it normally happens in a traditional working environment.

Many telecottages operate on a low economical financial basis, and are dependent on a combination of subsidies and assisted training.

**Televillages:** This is an extension of the telecottage concept. It mainly affects people's lifestyle and preferences. The idea is to create an entire community that is highly equipped and adjusted to the work of the future, in an environment characterised by economic lifestyles based on electronic networks. The entire village would be interconnected by means of cable. Each home would be equipped with an internal net connected to the village net, and, through broadband communication, to the 'global village'.

There are no televillages in Italy, but there is one in Wales, and there is the idea of creating some in the Scottish Highlands.

#### 2.4.5 'Offshore' telework

'Offshore' telework refers to work that has been moved to 'shores' beyond the borders of one's region, town or country.

This kind of telework and its supporting technology are neutral—job opportunities are created nor destroyed. Offshore teleworkers present opportunities. Today many countries are aware of the economic opportunities offered by electronic commerce, as testified by the software production in India and the data processing in the Philippines.

### 2.5 TYPES OF TELEWORKERS

We can differentiate teleworkers in terms of teleworking hours:

- > Marginal teleworkers. Operational: people who are teleworking on an irregular basis one day a week.
- > Substantial teleworkers. Operational: people who are teleworking on a regular basis at least one day a week.
- > Primary teleworkers: telework as primary working method.  
Operational: people who are teleworking on a regular basis 3 or more days a week.

Teleworkers who execute their work in a flexible way are defined as flexible workers. Flexible work combined with telehomeworking or mobile work lies behind the idea of a 'hot desk'. This type of desk doesn't belong to one teleworker in particular, but every worker is free to use it. Every desk has standard 'office system' equipment i.e. a PC or computer terminal and a telephone. The employee may have a personal account for his personal archives so that these can be saved during the employee's absence.

# Policy on telework

# 3

## 3.1 FRAMEWORK

On 9 June 2004, an Interconfederation Agreement was signed in Italy in order to reach a framework agreement on telework signed by ETUC, UNICE/UEAPME and CEEP. Confindustria, trade unions and 19 other entrepreneurial associations signed this Italian agreement.

This agreement is the basis for defining the general framework of reference for the discipline of telework, leaving space for intervention on collective and individual deals. It emphasises that 'teleworkers' have the same rights as regards health and safety and the same protections as traditional workers. Thus the workload has to be the same for every person working for the same company. Moreover, telework has to be 'a voluntary choice both for the employer and for the employee'.

Next, we will report through which bills the actual agreement has been reached. Moreover, it is important to integrate the context of standards regarding telework and those laws affecting the related topics, such as the law 53/2000. This law supports maternity and paternity, the right of giving care and training, and the co-ordination of the times of the cities. Definitively approved on 22 February 2000, it was designed to correspond to the new social needs that characterise our post-industrial society. It pays attention to individual needs, to personalised management and work engagements during the arc of life, to the ways in which time is spent (both everyday time and life time), and to the need for cures and solidarity towards the weaker subjects (within the family, in the relationships of a 'good neighbourhood', and in the various forms of 'social solidarity').

The bill pursues the following aims:

- > To favour a government with contemporary issues including the recognition of the right to realise independent plans, thus permitting a greater articulation of the times with regard to work and learning. This purpose corresponds to a powerful request for a flexible labour market on the one hand, and to the social demand for individual freedom — not being forced into a linear and standardised life sequence — on the other (i.e. time for learning, time for work, time for the rest).
- > To reconcile care time and work time by offering the possibility to reduce the work time, by resorting to forms of telework, offering flexibility with regard to the employee's engagements and family responsibilities (birth, adoption/entrustment, sick relatives, etc), and, by regarding care as 'social time'.
- > To favour a different business culture that supports new 'tools of freedom' within the enterprise. These tools should be at the disposal of all employees and designed

for a kind of exchange that requires more responsibilities on behalf of both parties (greater attention to the personal requirements of the employees on the employer's behalf versus a greater commitment and more professionalism on the employee's behalf).

- > To rationalise the 'times of the city' through a more satisfactory articulation of timetables of private and public services and the valorisation of 'time banks' as initiatives useful to optimise the relationship between the use of time (single and collective) and the attainment of results (personal and social).

Within the context of the modernisation operation and the simplification and transparency of Public Administration — well known as the 'Bassanini reform' — the legislator was obliged to create regulatory standards for 'work at a distance'. The formal creation of regulatory frameworks helps the starting of telework projects. Above all, the approval of the Decree institutive of telework in Public Administration (DPR. 70/99) has legitimised the resort as an organisational instrument that favours the renewal of the structures and praxes of service distribution in public administrations.

### 3.2 LAWS AND REFERENCE ACTS

Art. 4 of the law of 16 June 1998, nr. 191 (Bassanini ter) establishes that: 'public administrations may benefit from forms of 'work at a distance' and authorise their employees to carry out, for the same salary, their work activity in places other than the main office, after having determined the methods for the verification of the implementation of the working activity'.

DPR dd. 8 March 1999 nr. 70 regulates the organisational methods for the performance of article 4 of law nr. 191 of 1998:

- > Defines as telework: "the performance of work by an employee of one of the public administrations in whatever place considered suitable, located outside the head office, where the performance is technically possible, with the prevailing support of information and communication technologies, maintaining the connection with the administration to where this work would normally be performed."
- > It renders the characteristics of telework and the criteria for the implementation of telework.
- > It determines that the criteria for the allocation of telework by the administrations are established according to the 'contract of collective work' between those 'who concur to value the social and personal benefits of telework'.
- > It establishes that, to determine telework plans, 'the organ of government of every administration can insert in the annually fixed objectives, goals concerning the resorting of forms of telework, assigning appropriate resources for its development with regard to the determination of the telework plans because it believes in the feasibility of those goals'.

On 24 March 2000 an Agreement framework between ARAN (Agency for the negotiational representation in public employment) and the labour organisations of the public sector was signed, following examination by the 'Corte del Conti'.

The agreement establishes a number of fundamental points for the allocation of the Public Administration employee to plans of telework:

- > The allocation to plans of telework does not change the legal aspect of the work relationship (art. 4, paragraph 3)
- > The worker must declare his own availability with regard to telework positions; those who carry out the duties referred to in the plan or who have experience from analogous functions and are able to operate autonomously, will be given priority (art.4, paragraph 1)
- > The criteria for choosing which teleworkers should be allocated to telework, in case of there being more demands than foreseen, are related to (art.4, paragraph 2):
  - The employee’s psycho-physical (dis)ability to adjust to a new working environment
  - The employee’s family situation: whether or not he or she has children under 8 to take care of, civil status
  - Commuting time between the employee’s house and the company
- > The possibility to telework must guarantee the teleworker the same treatment and possibilities as traditional workers as far as career opportunities, participation in formative initiatives and socialisation are concerned (art.4, paragraph 2)
- > The right to telework may be revoked upon the teleworker’s request, on condition that the period of time indicated in the plan has expired or that a substitute can be provided (art.4, paragraph 3)
- > The manager can set an example to his employees by carrying out part of his own activities by means of telework (art. 4, paragraph 4)

The agreement defines the types of telework to which it is applied: “telehomework, mobile work, decentralised telework in satellite centres, mixed flexible forms, including alternating forms of telework” (art.5, paragraph 1). This last method refers to flexible models that anticipate the alternation of periods of work at home and periods of work at the office.

Other important points of the agreement focus on:

- > job emplacement and implementation in administration (art.5)
  - installation and maintenance expenses are charged to the administration, such as expenses related to the ‘maintenance of the safety levels’
  - computer, communications and instrumental equipment are granted in ‘comodato d’uso gratuito’ for the duration of the plan
  - the administration must guarantee that telework is carried out ‘in full conformity with the prevailing norms in matters of environment, safety and health of the workers’, and must provide the worker with specific information on safety matters.
- > the rights and obligations of the teleworker (art.6)
  - telework can be carried out according to innovative and flexible models of distribution with regard to work time by means of which the total amount of working hours assigned to the administrative staff is fixed, and according to the criteria defined to deal with the articulation of the working time and the determination of the available data transmission bands (art.3, paragraph 5)
  - the worker must allow the maintenance technicians and people access to the emplacement responsible for safety
  - a fixed reimbursement for expenses connected with the execution of the exercise will be granted to the teleworker

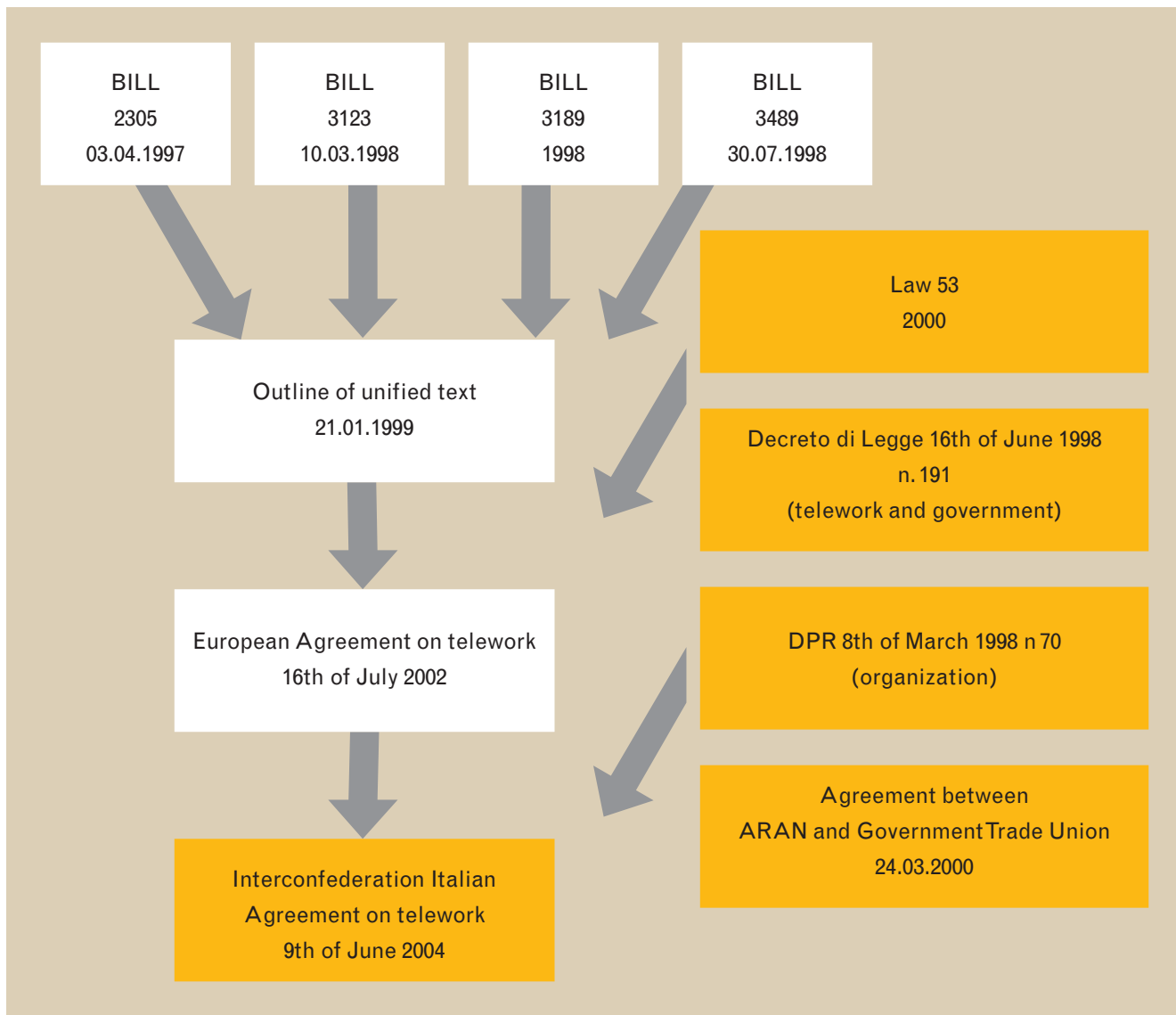
- The trade-union rights are guaranteed to the worker by means of information communicated via e-mail and appropriate electronic trade-union show-cases

### **3.3 GOVERNMENT**

#### **3.3.1 Legislation and fiscal policies to facilitate / promote / support telework:**

- > BILL NR. 2305 (03/04/1997) attachment—Standards for the promotion and the stimulus of telework
- > BILL NR. 3123 (10/03/1998) attachment—Standards for the regulation, the protection and the development of telework
- > BILL NR. 3189 (xx/xx/1998) attachment—Standards for telework and its development
- > BILL NR. 3489 (30/07/1998) attachment—Standards for the development of telework
- > Outline of Unified Text, 21/01/1999 attachment—Interconfederation Agreement 09/06/2004
- > Law 53/2000
- > Decree of Law 16/06/1998 nr.191
- > DPR 8/04/1998 nr.70
- > Agreement between ARAN and Trade Unions 24/03/2000

The following flow chart outlines the current legislative status



### 3.3.2 Regional/local policy and initiatives

Next we report a website created by CANTIERI PA, a civil service department, Presidency of the Ministry Council, FORMEZ, for good practices in terms of initiatives of plans activated by local and private agencies:

<http://www.buoniesempi.it/telelavoro.aspx>

On this website it is possible to find the most recent initiatives, summarised in cards and with the appropriate references.

### 3.4 POLITICAL PARTIES

As yet, the political parties have not taken a clear stand in the debate on telework since the missing breakthrough for this type of work constitutes no ground for political discussion.

### 3.5 TRADE UNIONS

The current situation shows us that the three main trade unions, CGL CISL and UIL, are trying to work out the advantages and disadvantages of telework.

Although the concept of telework being well known to them, there is no clear understanding as regards the repercussions it may have. This is proved by the fact that all three main trade unions work together as a whole, neither promoting nor hindering this form of work.

The traditional divide between subordinate and independent workers that acts as a border between two different types of protection, is made difficult by a range of situations that are situated somewhere in between the two legislative types.

As for telework, it differs from other types of work as far as organisational aspects are concerned. The sanctioned principles from art. 35 of the Constitution, related to the 'protection of the job in all its forms and applications', remain valid.

*The problem revolves around the protection of the teleworker, because telework can assume a variety of applicative forms, from a configuration of entrepreneurial types, a low level of protection, to one of subordinated work that offers broader guarantees with regard to legal and trade union protection.*

The 'right to work law' mentions five different types of telework to which an equal number of types or sub-types of legal contracts corresponds:

- > Telework as enterprise activity—'Contratto di appalto'
- > Telework as independent job—'Contratto d'opera libero professionale'
- > Telework as 'parasubordinated' job—'Contratto di lavoro parasubordinato'
- > Telework as subordinate job—'Contratto di lavoro subordinato ordinario'
- > Telework as subordinate delocalised job—'Contratto di lavoro subordinato a domicilio'

# 4

## Focus on Telecentres

### 4.1 WHAT ARE TELECENTRES?

A telecentre is a facility, public or private, equipped with informatic and telematic instruments, created in order to develop activities of telework and learning on the one hand, and to provide services that meet specific requirements of economically and geographically disadvantaged communities on the other hand. In Italy it is not that simple to get a proper view of the national situation of telecentres. Telecentres can be managed by non-profit organisations as well as by private organisations.

#### 4.1.1 Aims

The telecentre is therefore destined to pursue the following objectives:

- > To supply means of development and economic support in disadvantaged and/or economically deprived areas,
- > To promote experiences of telework in order to create employment in areas that are familiar with the phenomena of commuting and migration,
- > To create a work structure based on computer science and new information and communication technologies,
- > To promote interventions to remove obstacles of an economic, social and cultural nature, aimed at an effective rendering of the right to lifelong learning, based on requirements expressed by the labour market (also ensuring greater access and the offer of educational opportunities),
- > To provide the local community with services (in the area of computer science and data transmission) and the related economical context.

The aims and services offered by the different telecentres depend both on the subjects that promote these initiatives and on the demand arising from the local territory in which they are situated.

Consequently, the group of telecentres can be subdivided in:

- > Telecentres for development and experimentation, oriented towards the development and the economic reorganisation of certain areas in particular, through programmes of learning and starters' guides centred around new economic activities (above all in the area of new technologies);
- > Telecentres concentrating on local guidelines and focusing on attempts to solve such territorial problems as traffic, pollution, the lack of services;
- > Business-oriented telecentres concentrated on trade guidelines, which are viewed and managed in the same way as true customer service companies for those who are in need of back-offices and connecting services;
- > Company telecentres, established by one or more companies with the purpose of gaining experience in order to be able to use new work methodologies

#### 4.1.1 The origins of telecentres

With the birth and development of telework, facilities have been created mainly to favour the use of telework in more fields. Telecentres can be defined as 'facilities, public or private, equipped with instruments and computer science technologies and data transmissions, established in order to meet the specific requirements of a community, a company, or a geographic area' (from the Handbook of Telework, edited by P. Di Nicola and Seam 1997).

The research that was executed between 1996 and 1997 bears evidence to the transformation of telecentres from operating on a marginal level — offering retraining in crisis areas — to being a key element in the transformation of contents and operating methods with regard to transactions, and in the spread of new entrepreneurial and professional opportunities.

The first telecentres were established in 1985 in the form of two experiences of plans, and started in public administrations and other institutional bodies, in a small Swedish community and on the Hawaiian islands. The main objective of these projects was to use the telecentre in order to understand if and in what way communication technologies could contribute to the improvement and the resolution of some local problems. Two of these were: 1) migration from rural areas leading to a lack of learning services and workplaces, and 2) the distance between the Hawaiian administration, the university and the mainland.

The first great plans came from the Scandinavian countries and the United Kingdom, between 1988 and 1989. The Scandinavian countries introduced many initiatives concerning equality in which they emphasised, above all, the need for net services in small rural communities.

The continent with the greatest spread of telecentres is America, where the centres are mainly directed towards the business world and towards professionals. They offer an immense range of services, but also business counselling and Internet promotions. In Canada, telecentres are smaller than those in the United States, but much more attention is paid to the creation of collaboration nets and IT services.

Another country in which telework is being developed is Japan, where it is interpreted as 'work in present net' by companies organised as such. They are particularly interested in new methodologies of interaction and communication. In order to be able to implement these initiatives, companies organise periods of learning and apprenticeship during which instruments of intra-company collaboration are applied by some professional categories.

#### 4.1.3 A particular type of telecentre: call centres

Companies' interest in the creation of call centres, which are indispensable instruments in the development of business, is continuously increasing.

What does a telecentre offer as regards call centres?

'Call centres' are located inside telecentres. The integration of telecommunication systems, informatics, human resources, specialists etc. definitely constitutes a more modern solution for those companies aiming at the development and optimising of service quality and customer relations, at market expansion and the distribution of cost reduction.

There are different types of call centres:

#### *Territorial public agencies*

Here, public relations are managed using toll-free numbers that offer information on: services, timetables, procedures, competitions, timetable receptions, addresses, rates services, events, calendars, claims, management of claims.

#### *Private companies*

The call centre is a facility effecting the improvement of contacts between the company and its customers, its suppliers and partners. It uses a (toll-free) Green Number, which is seen by companies as a sign of innovation and high quality that improves their image. The Green Number demonstrates the availability of the companies towards their customers, and is a valid business marketing instrument.

- > *Customer assistance*: services such as managing the maintenance of installations, helpdesk activities, telephone banking, reservation services, telesale of goods and services, telemarketing, customer service, customer care and market surveys.
- > *Receptive tourist companies* and structures for tourism, hotels, camping, holiday residences, farm holidays etc. that wish to improve their image by offering their customers a free and effective information and/or reservation service in the form of a time-saving high-quality service to minimise costs and offering free numbers with the amount that has been saved.

A telecentre that disposes of a call centre offers many kinds of services.

These telecentres offer the necessary instruments and aid and, consequently, contribute to the development of work autonomy. Moreover, they are at the disposal of everyone who meets the necessary professional competences this entrepreneurial activity requires. The aim is to offer material support and specific counselling to the SME that otherwise, in the start-up phase, would have to support high costs in order to survive. Thanks to the technologically advanced equipment and workplaces, telecentres allow all those who have an 'entrepreneurial spirit' to manifest themselves as potential or new entrepreneurs.

## **4.2 CASE STUDY ON TELECENTRES: AMIATA**

### **4.2.1 AMIATA telecentres**

In 1999 the first great telework project called 'Telelavorare' was approved. It was financed by the Region of Toscana (within the PIR) and the ESF, and supported by the Municipality of Santa Fiore, Cinigiano and the Mountain Community of Amiata, located in the area of Grosseto, which has specifically contributed to the constitution of the three telecentres of the Amiata. Since they were established in the Telecentre of the Amiata, multiple activities of learning have collaborated with two formative agencies of national importance, the Forel, prior to 2003 and the Ifoa from 2003 onwards (the Agency's name for the Emilia Region Chambers of Commerce), which proved to be very effective. This collaboration has addressed its activities and inserted them in the 'big net' in which human resources, technology and professionals operate together, to realise services or set up so-called operating virtual enterprises on specific objectives.

#### 4.2.2 The services

The telecentres of AMIATA offer services to companies and public administration.

Different types of technological and telecommunicational services can be distinguished, depending on telecentres' offer of IT:

- > Video conference. Instrument developed to support meetings at a distance, conventions with people in other centres, the kind of learning where students and teacher are not located in one and the same centre.
- > Modem connections for both employed and self-employed teleworkers. An equipped telematic/informatic centre designed for small enterprises that have to fulfil commitments towards important customers or partners but fail to meet the technological requirements because of problems related to costs, organisation or specialist staff. A well-equipped laboratory for research and/or development (multimedia, surveys via satellite, net monitoring, software development).
- > Technological didactic functions for schools.
- > Graphic services and web development: with the development of the Internet, all territorial and cultural borders disappear so that an enormous public can be reached. Telecentres able to boast a tested organisational structure and technical competencies, are in a position to offer:
  - Graphical analyses and plants in order to meet every type of requirement, from simple web requirements of an informative nature to more complex interactive matters
  - Databased web management, flash animations with a strong visual impact, web pages designed for e-commerce (CD-rom multimedia for enterprises containing video animations and video catalogues)
  - Services with regard to graphic publicity: the creation of invitations, posters, etc. for organised events
- > Consulting
  - IT consulting to enterprises interested in internal (Intranet) and external (Internet) net operations
  - Software training and consulting for employees, so that both employer and employee may fully benefit from the telecentre
- > Secretarial services

The telecentre helps companies and professionals with their secretarial services in order to offer economic and effective personalised solutions:

- Back-office
- Translation, management and transcription of messages
- Data research, standards and bibliographical materials
- Data entry, insertion and elaboration of data
- Processing and recording of data for accounting
- Clients/suppliers contacts
- Mailing
- Interrogation databases
- Organisational services
- Meeting services
- Office prints

### 4.3 CASE STUDY ON TELECENTRES: IFOA

Next, we will discuss the case of IFOA, or to be more precise, a telecentre managed by this organisation. This case concerns a non-profit organisation.

IFOA is a centre dedicated to learning and services for the Chambers of Commerce, has a legal character since 1996, and carries out non-profit activities of public interest. It was established in 1972. Its aim is to educate young people on emerging professional profiles and the demands of the labour market, and to update them on the operating and manager business in order to prepare them for the continuous challenges of the economic world.

The activities take place in centres spread all over the national territory.

They are managed by a general council and associates (the Chambers of Commerce of the Emilia Romagna and Latina, Unioncamere Nazionale and Unioncamere Emilia Romagna, the Foundation Peter Manodori of Reggio Emilia) and corporate bodies (the Tagliacarne Institute of Rome, the Ministry of the University, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Foreign Policies, the Emilia Romagna Region and local Agencies).

IFOA presents itself as the expert consultant in the planning and realisation of telecentres. The telecentres of IFOA want:

- > To provide disadvantaged areas (with territorial problems and/or in economic deprivation) with means of development and economic support
- > To promote experiences of telework, with the aim of creating employment opportunities in areas traditionally subject to the phenomena of commuting and migration
- > To create facilities for research and innovation that are adapted to computer science education and the development of new information and communication technologies
- > To offer high-quality services to the local community and its economic environment

#### 4.3.1 IFOA Methodology

IFOA has elaborated a methodology to investigate the feasibility of the implementation of telecentres. Its purpose was to develop a general structure that would be applicable to the implementation of all new telecentres.

The steps in this methodology are the following:

- > Specification of the project's objectives
- > Estimation of the telework spread in areas taking an interest in telework
- > Location of the telecentre (the study of territorial characteristics)
- > Specification of the range of services offered
- > Dimensioning of the infrastructure
- > Economic intervention plan

#### 4.3.2 IFOA telework-related activities

Every phase in the telecentre development is characterised by a number of IFOA activities:

- > **Consulting:** IFOA offers consultancy and help during the *start-up phase* of the telecentre in the form of monitoring, evaluation and management. It performs consulting activities on telework applications:
  - Planning and coordination of telework experiments in *public agencies*, oriented to the employee's working method (second Law 191/98, Bassanini ter)

- Planning and coordination of telework experiments in *enterprises*, to promote working at a distance to employed and self-employed workers (e.g. outsourcing methods)

It offers consultancy on the following themes:

- Feasibility studies
- Participation in awareness and acquisition of the business consent
- Localizing of potential teleworkers
- Appraisal of the impacts on the corporate structure and definition of the operating methods
- Costs/benefits analyses
- Work at a distance training (for teleworkers and leaders)
- Predisposition of reporting and control systems
- Monitoring and coordination of the experimental information process

The phenomenon of telework requires information on:

- Definitions
- Fundamental typologies
- Data on the phenomenon of telework and the directory of websites
- Telework competences
- The advantages and disadvantages of telework
- Guidelines on the emplacement of working at a distance

It requires personalised consultancy for those who are willing to consider telework as a new way of working:

- Personal and professional exploration
- Analysis or auto-analysis and personal reconstruction of competences, knowledge and abilities
- Feed-back

#### 4.3.3 TELECENTRE IFOA — Castelnovo ne' Monti

During the survey period we have visited an IFOA telecentre managed by IFOA management, a profit-making subdivision of IFOA. This telecentre is situated in Castelnovo ne' Monti, near Reggio Emilia, and can be studied from various perspectives:

- > **Working perspective:** The main activity in this telecentre is telemarketing, which is performed by a single person for two days a week. For the remaining two days of the week this person works at the company's headquarters. The telecentre provides working space for different employers who have a direct contract with IFOA. The teacher and the technical tutor are employed and paid by the IFOA.
- > **Educational perspective:** The telecentre offers courses on different subjects, such as courses of qualified computer science training organised and managed by IFOA management. The aim is to provide the area with noteworthy educational facilities.
- > **Social perspective:** This telecentre also wants to present itself as a centre of information and debate where people can meet and exchange information, and as a point of reference. At present, only few inhabitants are truly familiar with the workings of the telecentre. The older section of the population in particular has no idea what kind of activities take place inside the telecentre's walls. This is because the telecentre has only just opened and because people need time to get used to the

concept of telecentres, to understand what they are, how they work, etc. The telecentre is of average dimensions and erected in the very centre of the town.

- > **Consumer perspective:** The telecentre's inhabitants could be seen as being mainly consumers, because at the moment it is used as a place where people can simply buy a service. In this case the services present themselves in the form of workplaces, technological devices and courses. Thus the telecentre offers a range of services that people may choose from.
- > **Cultural perspective:** Nothing has been undertaken in this department so far.

The main characteristics of the telecentre are:

- > **Forms of governance:** The administration and the management belong to the IFOA of Reggio Emilia which is a non-profit organisation, but the telecentre is managed by IFOA management, which is an entirely limited liability company.
- > **Localization and accessibility:** The telecentre belongs to the municipality and is situated in the centre of the town close to the residential areas. The telecentre of Castelnovo ne'Monti has been active since 1997, but has recently been modernised and enlarged. Its central location and proximity to public transport makes the centre easily accessible. On the other hand, it still lacks facilities for the disabled, such as audiovisual aids and wheelchair facilities.
- > **Types of workplaces:** The telecentre has large rooms for stays of average duration and a room used mainly for learning activities. It is equipped with 16 PCs and has a maximum capacity of 23 people. Another room is reserved for the activity of teleworking and yet another one for the telecentre's supervisor. There is also a planning room, a room for conferences and a classroom.
- > **Technical facilities**  
Regarding technical facilities, there is:
  - Broadband infrastructure
  - Technology of the net
  - Net LAN, and router for the Internet log-on
  - Computer systems: software: Windows 98/ Office 2000
  - Peripheral equipment: printer, fax, telephone, etc.
  - Emergence of communication and data systems
  - Connection: direct connection with the company made possible by a password-protected computer program and therefore accessible only by teleworkers, so that when the application is used by others, the information is hidden. This program is directly connected to the IFOA's IT management system.
- > **Range and social composition:** The users of the telecentre constitute a group that is socially very diverse. Inhabitants and families of any ethnic background, socio-economic status, age and sex may use the facilities of the telecentre. Formart, for example (the associative system of Confartigianato Emilia Romagna), is responsible for the training of Albanian masons, for whom they organise one day of training per week. The EFPE (Ente di Formazione Professionale Edile di Reggio Emilia) hires a room for 16 people to follow learning courses for the European patent USL of Reggio Emilia to teach people how to use e-mail, the Internet, and basic computer skills. The SERT (Servizi Tossicodipendenze) of Scandiano uses this room two afternoons a week.
- > **Ways of co-operation:** Concerning the local ways of cooperation there is cooperation with the EFPE, which is responsible for a project that involves

associations, public agencies, trade unions and enterprises, in order to create round tables to determine the particular educational requirements. There is the ENAIP (ACLI National Agency of Vocational Training: institutional work in the field of vocational training, offering multiple educational services and public financing for enterprises, agencies, associations, public administration) which finances activities, participants, the clients/users involved, the facilities, the resources and the technical and organisational equipment. The ENAIP, one of the most significant agencies for vocational training on the national territory, attends to the workers' interests and directs itself towards the marginal parts of the population in Italy. The ENAIP performs associative work, articulated in legally independent Regional Agencies, mainly co-ordinated by the National Centre, operating in all the Italian regions through the Training Centre Services (CSF). The AGRINFORM Corporation is a company founded in 1987, specialised in the supply of IT services in the agricultural field. Among its main customers are national companies and agencies, and numerous associations operative in the agricultural field, including unions and agro-tourism product associations, centres of fiscal assistance, managerial structures and agencies that offer technical support to the agricultural enterprises. The company provides informatics and telematics services to the national and territorial structure of the Italian Confederation of Agriculture, for whom in particular it manages and develops resources and Internet services. Moreover, it plans and develops informatic systems for the structures that provide agricultural services, and for specific business realities. The company is also specialised in training in IT instruments. During the last few years they have concentrated on systems of quality. These have been developed through qualified plans in association with partners in the food-processing industry, and through the creation of specific software. Moreover, the 'Appennino net' took care of the synergy between the active subjects of IFOA learning and the Centre of Employment Services of Castelnovo for the creation of a 'Wednesday of the job' in order to bring people into contact with each other and to create an information net bringing together supply and demand. With the Co-operative Credit Bank—Bank of Cavola and Sassuolo, the IFOA offered to take care of staff selection.

## Suggestion for case-studies



Introducing telework into a company would mean transforming the traditional organisation, i.e., re-structuring productive cycles, information flows, assets and the company's organisation chart. These changes can be rather radical and have to be evaluated with extreme care by the entrepreneur, who has to investigate both the advantages and disadvantages.

### 5.1 EVALUATING COSTS OF TELEWORK

The best way to decide on the opportunity to introduce telework into a company is to establish a hypothesis of analytic accounting. This is necessary to be able to estimate how much the employer would gain in terms of costs by introducing telework.

We have to take many kinds of costs into consideration:

- > The costs include present costs and future costs which have to be actualised with a low interest rate to be added to the previous amounts.
- > It is also necessary to consider 'opportunity costs', which concern possible profits the employer would have to give up when implementing telework.

Concerning the profits, all future profits resulting from the implementation of telework have to be calculated and subtracted from those future profits the employer would have obtained by sticking to the traditional organisation of the production. The profits also need to be actualised and added up, and, finally, the difference between actualised profits and actualised costs needs to be calculated. The result represents the economic measure for adopting telework as an organisational method.

#### 5.1.1 Costs related to organisation and technology

The evaluation of telework-related costs is not easy, since this is not limited to the payment of wages, but involves the fixed costs for materials, future quotes of amortisation, the expenses for updating software and the costs for keeping the teleworker up-to-date.

Telework software and accompanying costs differ according to the technical method of telework (electronic mail, Telnet, Ftp, videoconference, specific programs, etc.) and the used platform (Windows based, Linux, Unix, Apple, etc.).

The use of ISDN lines, both for the enterprise and for the teleworker, makes rapid connections possible at a relatively low cost.

Among the different costs we need to consider those related to software updates and those related to the training and updating of the teleworker.

Other costs to consider are the ones related to insurance for the teleworker.

For example, different enterprises have to sign further contracts of insurance from the moment a teleworker becomes a telehomeworker.

There are also problems related to the estimation and the allocation criteria of some general costs (telephony and energy expenses, administrative costs, etc.).

Moreover we can't forget the costs (or missed profits) that are particularly difficult to estimate and quantify.

There is some decrease in the teleworker's productivity due to the partial loss of the employer's direct control, or because of a diminished sense of belonging to the company and of individual motivation.

One should also consider that in small enterprises the employee often performs tasks that are not specifically assigned to his duties, such as answering the telephone, writing letters, photocopying, etc. The employee who works from a distance is no longer able to perform such tasks.

## 5.2 ADVANTAGES

- > Thanks to telework small entrepreneurs are now also able to operate in the context of a global market without having to belong to a multinational enterprise. Through the remoteness of the production via telematic means, the entrepreneur can participate in a market that is no longer bound by geographical limits and may benefit from the difference in wages between the various countries.
- > Telework is an attractive means to recruit sales people since it offers direct access to the market of products in which the company is active. Thus the company is able to guarantee direct presence in the sales market, overcoming a sequence of obstacles that otherwise would block the penetration of its products: urban problems or a lack of buildings in which to establish direct sales structures, difficulties with regard to the co-operation with local intermediaries, linguistic and cultural obstacles.
- > Telework allows the enterprise to reduce its transport costs. Enterprises that benefit from this particular advantage are the ones whose employees or managers are obliged to make frequent international trips. A type of telework that makes it possible for a company to reduce travel-related time and costs, is teleconference. It leads to savings in travel (which for many enterprises amounts to 6% of the company's costs), allowing a company to increase the number of meetings since these can be organised more easily and at minor costs, and improves employee training thanks to forms of remote training.
- > Telework creates the opportunity of operating at the place of work without interruption, i.e. chatting with colleagues and superiors.
- > Teleworkers can work towards certain objectives.
- > Telework offers the possibility to work in a familiar environment and to reduce the stress that results from commuting. Telehomework also permits the reduction of absence-through-illness, since the telehomeworker is able to operate directly from home. Women with children in particular can shorten their period of maternity leave.
- > Thanks to telework some enterprises have been able to reduce employee turnovers considerably.
- > Usually the introduction of telework goes hand in hand with a considerable change in the organisational structure of the company, where the hierarchies disappear, which normally results into a better, more effective circulation of information.
- > Spatial and temporal flexibility in work performances. In the case of mobile telework, teleworkers can work in the place they consider best. Telehomeworkers can

programme their working days on condition they respect the contractual agreements. This is not possible in a telecentre because there are opening and closing times to respect.

- > Freedom to move everywhere. There is the possibility to change town without abandoning the workplace, if the contract permits it.
- > Reinforcing links with the local community. The teleworker can work in the place where he has established his social network. Constructing telecentres in depressed areas could allow workers who have emigrated to return to their place of origin, where they would now be able to participate in local community life while continuing to work for the same enterprise.
- > Reduction of moving time and costs.
- > Possibility of continuous training and being kept up-to-date. The evolution of information tools affects the cultural level of the teleworker and his tendency to develop and maintain his learning capacity, which is related to a continuous need to be positively updated.
- > Greater motivation. If the teleworker can decide to work wherever and whenever he wants and personally plan the management of his work load, he will have greater work motivation.
- > Reduction of traffic. Traffic is especially a problem in the mountains, where many roads are narrow and where the traffic varies a lot according to the numbers and types of vehicles circulating. Consequently, time is variable and continuously needs to be taken into consideration. Creating the possibility to join a telecentre for people living in the mountains would allow these people to avoid travelling to the cities, and, eventually, reduce traffic.
- > Reduction of pollution. This is related to the creation of telecentres as a way to reduce the number of vehicles on the city roads. A reduction of traffic means a reduction of pollution at the same time.
- > Position of women. For women with children or those whose presence at home is required, teleworking from home turns out to be favourable. It allows them to fulfil family needs, to take care of the house and its inhabitants, much more than a man would be able to do. During maternity leave, for example, women should have the opportunity to take care of their own child and not be forced to hand its care over to someone else.

### 5.3 DISADVANTAGES

- > Increase in telehomeworkers' domestic expenses. Domestic teleworkers need a room entirely designed according to their professional needs, providing everything they need in order to be able to work comfortably.
- > Less attention for the worker's health. Teleworkers and especially telehomeworkers are subjected to minimum control in the workplace. This could bring both teleworker and employer to abandon the general safety standards, for instance, it is possible to spend too much time in front of the computer, it is possible not to have the correct lighting, etc.
- > Less union protection. The personalisation of the contracts with respect to the individual worker may cause difficulties regarding general protection and reduce the contractual force of teleworkers. However, although working at distance does not

allow employees to physically group together and head for the syndicate, the telematic tools at the employees' disposal offer new possibilities as far as communication is concerned (e.g. communication through the enterprise, etc.).

- > Disappearance of traditional forms of company training. Telework may offer the possibility to extend one's own cultural and social horizons thanks to information technologies, but at the same time it isolates the teleworker from the rest of the company. One of the most effective ways of learning, i.e. to gather the necessary know-how through the observation of colleagues, is the first to disappear with the implementation of telework.
- > Little visibility and too little information about the existence of the telecentre within the community. No money has been spent on this activity.
- > Enterprises and companies do not see the advantages of investing in the creation of external offices. As a matter of fact, this activity is perceived as having no economic reward; as an activity that involves more costs than benefits.
- > There is a lack of confidence with regard to the remote supervision of teleworkers, in terms of quality and quantity of work; the work objectives are still not very clearly perceived.
- > Lack of legal procedures which would give more visibility and regulation to telework, for both employers and employees
- > Isolation from the work atmosphere. Telework causes social isolation and the loss of contacts with colleagues, and consequently, a loss of the sense of belonging to a group, which affects one's work motivation in a negative way.

## Actions taken place

# 6

What follows is an overview of all the actions that have been taken up until now in order to make the AllInclusive project known to a wider public, and all the contacts and organisations that have been involved.

### 6.1 INTERVIEWS

In the research and study phase, we have interviewed a number of managers at telecentres, such as:

- > ERVET (Emilia-Romagna Valorizzazione Economica Territorio)
- > IFOA –Toscana—Firenze
- > IFOA—Castelnuovo ne Monti—Reggio Emilia
- > Università di Trento e Rovereto

### 6.2 ORGANISATIONS CONTACTED TO BE INFORMED OF THE ALLINCLUSIVE@WORK PROJECT

Next we have a list of associations and organisations that have been contacted with the purpose of circulating the guidelines and aims of the project and finding an appropriate number of respondents who would be willing to fill in the e-survey.

#### 6.2.1 Association of disabled people

- > ASPHI (Avviamento e Sviluppo di Progetti per ridurre l'Handicap mediante l'Informatica)
- > EtaBeta (Rete telematica regionale dei centri di prima accoglienza)
- > CDH (Centro Documentazione Handicap online)
- > AISM (Associazione Italiana Sclerosi Multipla)
- > ANMIC (Associazione Nazionale Mutilati ed Invalidi Civili)

#### 6.2.2 Websites concerning disability

- > [www.disabili.com](http://www.disabili.com)
- > [www.handimpresa.it](http://www.handimpresa.it)
- > [www.nolimit.it](http://www.nolimit.it)
- > [www.superabile.it](http://www.superabile.it)

#### 6.2.3 Other organisations

- > INAIL (national institute for the insurance of work accidents)
- > TRANSCOM Italia (call centre company)
- > INPS (national institute of welfare)
- > DELPHI (company in the automotive field)

- > VALEO (company in the automotive field)
- > SCAI (company for information system consulting for enterprises)
- > ARPA (Regional environment agency)
- > CSI Piemonte (Consortium for the information system)
- > ASM (Municipal Services of the city of Prato)
- > CONSIAG (Gas company, Prato)
- > Skill Lab (Association of education and training)
- > Telelavoro Italia web (Italian website on telework associated with ETO)
- > 'Pool Qualità Trasporti' (organisation involving the main companies of urban and metropolitan transports)
- > Politecnico Torino (University of engineering)
- > Università Studi Torino
- > Provincia di Torino
- > Centri per l'impiego provinciali (employment centres)
- > Comuni
- > Provincie
- > Regioni

### 6.3 SPECIFIC ACTIONS FOR THE E-SURVEY

These are the actions undertaken to circulate the e-survey on-line:

- > **Publications of the banner (paid):** we published the banner by paying for the following sites:
  - La Stampa [daily national newspaper]: [www.lastampa.it](http://www.lastampa.it)
  - Cliccalavoro [job offer website]: [www.cliccalavoro.it](http://www.cliccalavoro.it)
  - Secondamano [website of commercial 'buy and sell' newspaper]: [www.secondamano.it](http://www.secondamano.it)
- > **Publications of the banner (free):** we published the banner for free on the following sites:
  - Gruppo Soges [partner of Consorzio Tecfor]: [www.grupposoges.it](http://www.grupposoges.it)
  - Consorzio Tecfor: [www.consorziotecfor.it](http://www.consorziotecfor.it)
  - Pueblo Cultural Association: [www.circolopueblo.com](http://www.circolopueblo.com)
- > **Publications of the link (free):** we have published the link for free on the following sites:
  - [www.csi.it](http://www.csi.it) (CSI is a major organisation for Information Systems)
  - [www.handimpresa.it](http://www.handimpresa.it) (web site dealing with disability matters)
  - [www.etabeta.it](http://www.etabeta.it) (web site dealing with disability matters)
  - [www.nolimit.it](http://www.nolimit.it) (web site dealing with disability matters)
- > **Competition related to filling in the e-survey:**  
 To encourage people to fill in the on-line questionnaire we have linked a public contest to the e-survey. We appealed to the Ministry of Productive Activities and fulfilled the administrative duties accompanying the legalisation of our contest and the handing out of prizes (3 digital cameras).

# Proposals

## 7.1 CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS IN THE ANALYSIS OF OUR OBJECT

At the beginning of the project there was a problem with the definition of teleworking. The problem was that even though we had a formal definition regarding the kind of telework that is targeted in this project, it was difficult to find a differentiation corresponding to the real differences in the phase of analysis.

We think that the definition is broad and very specific at the same time. It is broad because first of all telework should be regulated by a contract signed by employer and employee, whereas there are many employees who could be considered as teleworkers who do not have a specific contract. Working at home, for instance, is in most cases not regulated by a contract.

So we experienced great difficulty in quantifying and monitoring the number of teleworkers and the real conditions in which they, both the ones for whom telework is formally regulated and the ones for whom it is not, find themselves.

During our research we focused on these categories:

- > handicapped people with problems in reaching the office
- > women with young children at home
- > people who need to stay home to take care of relatives

We realised that the problem relating to quantifying and monitoring these categories was the same as for the more general kind of teleworking.

So the fact that we focused on a specific category of teleworkers at the beginning of this project could have been helpful if the number of teleworkers answering to this definition had been higher and if there had been information and a regulation for this specific case.

## 7.2 METHODOLOGY RESEARCH TOPICS / QUESTIONS, AND TECHNIQUES USED FOR OUR RESEARCH PROJECT

In order to familiarise ourselves with the topics related to telework we acquired several books and documents. The information those materials contained, provided us with the basis for the subject.

In the second step we focused on information available on the Internet and, in particular, information on European studies and statistics.

For the analysis of telecentres we conducted many interviews with managers and workers at these centres.

In order to obtain a maximum of information and diffusion from the e-survey and, more generally, on the project, we used all the contacts within our organisation, and asked for the support of companies that have a good relationship with us.

## 7.3 PRELIMINARY GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.3.1 Criticism

Our proposal is based on the analysis of the main criticism regarding the diffusion of telework.

We found out, with the exception of some good experiences, that there appears to be a substantial problem at a national level with regard to the diffusion of telework. In general we found a lack of policies co-ordinated by the national government, aimed at the development of telework through specific projects. Thus it appears to be missing overall co-ordination.

Within this context, there are regions, but more often local organisations, which act as promoters of initiatives. But these are defined by the context in which they are applied and need homogeneity and comparison.

So there is a waste of energy that is difficult to recuperate and apply for other cases. Knowledge without sharing is lost.

We also notice that in some cases when a teleworking project is financially supported by institutions, it continues to exist, but once the financing ends, it comes to a halt.

### 7.3.2 Suggestions

Finally, we believe that a project on the national development of telework is needed. The government, together with the regions and other public organisations, has to develop a number of measures in order to stimulate telework.

It is necessary to spread information on telework, involving many types of players.

- > Workers need to be informed of the possibilities of telework, aided by new technology
- > Employers have to be informed of the possibilities of saving money, using human resources far from the main office
- > People have to be informed of the fact, and need to understand, that telework is merely a different way of working. There are no limits, no discrimination or differences between the workers.

# Resources

# 8

## 8.1 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## 8.2 WEBSITES

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- > <http://www.homeworkers.org>

