

AN INTRODUCTION TO TELEWORK

1. General context : evolution from traditional work to telework

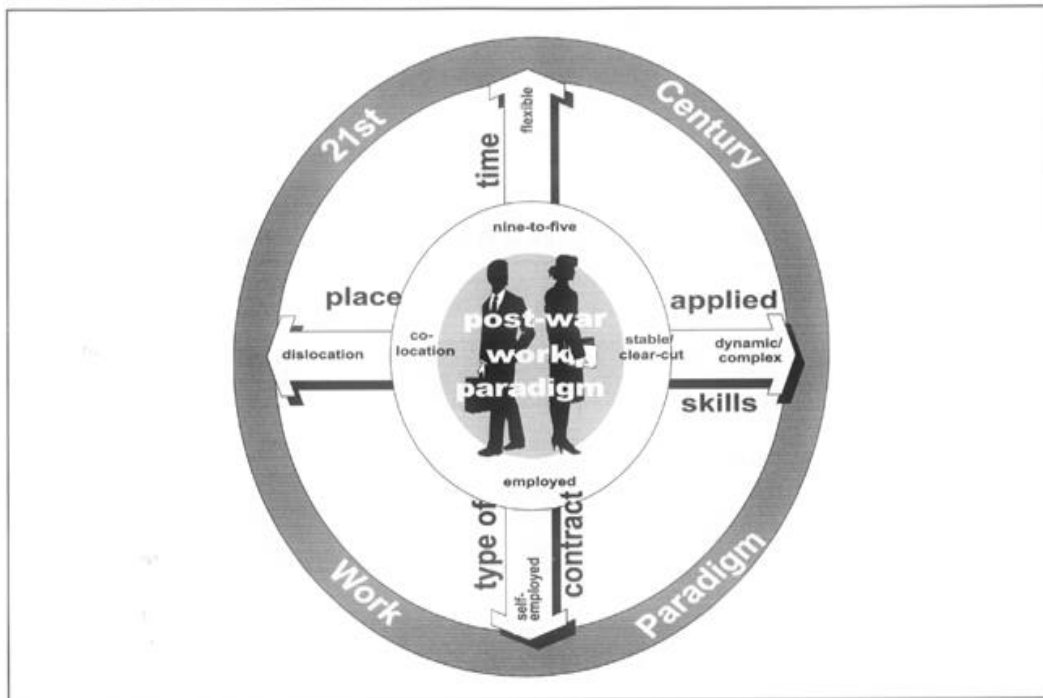
1.1 Traditional paradigm of work has the following significant parameters:

- Contract for an undetermined period of time (“life-time hiring”);
- Standard work program (“from 8 to 16” or “from 9 to 5”);
- Full-time working (xhours a week);
- State social assurances; isn’t it better to say : national social protection ?
- Workplace inside a company building;
- Intra-organisational cooperation based on meetings with employees, while the external contacts are reduced to a specific number of employees

1.2. New paradigms of work in the 21st century:

- from *routine work* to changing work continuously;
- from *fix programme* to flexible program of work;
- from *life-career* to "portfolio of careers" and “just-in-time” worker;
- from *office first* to work first ;
- from *fix workplace* to mobile workplace;
- from *workers go to work* to work comes to workers;
- from *"live and work local"* to "live local - work global".

Dimensions along which work is changing



2. *Telework definition and differences between telework and current forms of activities.*

2.1 Definition of telework

Telework is a form of work, characterised by time-flexible and distance activities carried out by the organisation who hired the employee (full-time, part-time) mainly using **informational and communicational technologies (ICT)**, which represents the **main support** of the activity. I definitely wish that we use the definition of the European framework agreement.

The main characteristics of telework, taking back the above mentioned paradigms, are:

- The fundamental difference between telework and current forms of activities is the fact that telework brings the work to worker, contributing to the change of worker's statute.
- Telework allows a person to live in a place and work anywhere in the world.
- Telework changes **the content** **NO** and the methods of work, which are based on ICT and distance communications
- Telework is not a new profession but it is a new way of organising work, adapted to various professions.

2.2. Teleworker is a person who regularly works at least one day per week, full time from distance, on legal basis with contract or mutual understanding, using ICT, that means: please, take also the definition of the European agreement

- use a personal computer

- use internet, e-mail to communicate with: data bases, colleagues, management, partners, suppliers, etc.
- is salaried employee

2.2.1. Home-based teleworkers

Home-based teleworkers work from their home where they live (I don't want that people can start thinking of independent workers based on our wording)

2.2.2. Teleworkers in telecenters

Telecenter is a place, properly ICT equipped, mainly used by teleworkers to accomplish their activity (Internet Café, Call Centre, Dedicated Company Office, Telework Centre)

2.2.3. Mobile teleworkers

The main principle of telework is the developing of the activity from distance, everywhere the teleworker is in a given moment. Of course, this presumes that the teleworker disposes the proper ICT equipment in order to do his job (laptop, mobile phone etc).

2.3. Telework equipment.

- **Phone, cable or satellite communication;**
- **PC equipment;**
- **Modem and Internet access.**

All equipment depends on the job accomplished by the teleworker.

2.4 Software

The software content will comply with hardware equipment and nature of job tasks

3. Common activities which can be teleworked within an organisation.

The telework activities can encompass the following domains:

- Administration
- Development & Design
- Management
- Marketing
- Production preparing documentation
- Accounting
- Financing
- Personnel
- Consulting
- Call centres
- Electronically archiving
- Tele-documentation
- Advertising
- Distance-education and e-learning

Please specify this are examples and not a limitation

4. Advantages of telework implementation

4.1. For organisations (the employers):

- greater productivity (the range of gains is 10-40%) reducing some costs and office overheads. *We could give examples.*
- more mobility and flexibility on the market;
- closer connection with clients;
- stimulating improved new technologies (ICT);
- accessing of (high) skills needed on different moments and places;
- *social responsibility;*
- *better citizenship, ratings to be found.*

4.2. For employees:

- job satisfaction;
- providing job in isolated parts of the country;
- less commuting time, cost and stress related to office work;
- more flexibility of work and life;
- better balance between professional and personal life including family life;
- the teleworker has the same status, same type of contract than a company based worker;
- training and e-learning.

4.3. For environment:

- less traffic congestion;
- reduced commuting to work office means less pollution;
- better use of lands, building and office space, with direct impact about transports, building, agriculture and other economic branches;
- economies of energy.

4.4. For society:

- integration of disadvantaged/with special needs (people) groups into labour market;
- local development;
- stimulating the development of information society by contribution to “dematerialisation” of economy;
- participation in the global networking economy.

4.5. Good practices (see links with VC). Each country should provide its best examples from pilots

5. Telework challenges and how to overstep them

5.1. Potential obstacles for employers:

- Telework legal aspects concerning organizations

It would probably be better to indicate that until the European Framework Agreement is not adapted to the national legal and social constraints we still have to overcome a number of issues :

- Wages regulation;
 - Working time regulation ;
 - Working time monitoring procedures ;
 - Quality of work evaluation ;
 - Assurance of ICT equipment by organization;
 - Duties and taxes for company;
 - Social security obligations for the company
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- **Management difficulties :**
 - Communicational difficulties and control problems due to the lack of face-to-face contact with employees;
 - Resistance of managers to the changes (difficulty to manage the teleworkers);
 - Motivational and management problems;
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- **Organisational and technical problems:**
 - Difficulties in organizing operative meetings;
 - Possible break from organisation's culture;
 - **Technical difficulties, problems of security.**
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- **Financial :**
 - Supplementary costs of personnel training;
 - Security of activity (data, confidentiality, circuits);
 - Larger costs for equipment, software and communications security;

5.2. Potential obstacles for employees:

- **Telework legal aspects concerning employees**
teleworker`s statute, duties and taxes, work protection, health assurance etc
- **Technical problems**
adequate working place and equipment, assistance for potential technical problems etc.
- **Training, technical knowledge about ITC.**
- **Social and psychological problems:**
 - professional isolation;
 - less opportunities for promotion or/and for career perspective;
 - the lack of face-to-face contact with colleagues and clients;
 - risk of extreme focus on working and isolation from family;
 - change of personal habits.

5.3. Some possible solutions to overcome obstacles.

- New ways of management
- Legal aspects solutions
- Create modern communication infrastructure
- Training
- Better teleworkers selection

NOTES

1. *This module represents the frame for development of the first step of a telework eLearning environment based on each partner needs and experience.*
2. *The environment should provide data, facts, examples, according to the specific aspects underlined by each partner.*
3. *We recommend the following facing for this eLearning module:*
 - a. *Establish the target group of learners depending on their objectives (general information, testing capabilities, willing to be teleworker) and their level of knowledge;*
 - b. *Establish the objectives and structure of courses suitable for each target group;*
 - c. *Divide the courses in Learning Objects (teaching and testing); Learning Objects are independent modules which come from certain knowledge and arrive to another knowledge. They can be combined in whatever useful mode;*
 - d. *Establish the final test content (basic concepts, complementary information);*
 - e. *Establish the evaluation modality;*
 - f. *Establish the duration and the calendar of courses.*