

To

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## REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON TELEWORK, FINLAND

The European framework agreement on telework has been implemented in Finland by an agreement between the social partners on the 23 May 2005. All labour market confederations both in the private sector and the public sector have signed the agreement (confederations listed below).

As for sectoral agreements, no changes based on the EU agreement have yet been reported. This is mainly because most sectoral agreements are valid to the end of September 2007.

Guidelines on the most important telework related issues are annexed to the agreement of the social partners. The aim of the guidelines is to facilitate drafting local telework agreements.

### The content of the agreement

In the agreement of 23 May 2005, the social partners

- recommend that the principles of the framework agreement are applied in individual employment contracts as from 23 May 2005
- emphasise the importance of applying the principles of the framework agreement to employment terms and conditions of all personnel groups
- agree that an individual agreement on telework and its conditions should normally be done in writing
- state that the principles of the framework agreement on telework lay a basis if provisions on telework are included in collective agreements
- encourage their member associations to pay specific attention to questions relating to telework when negotiating collective agreements, as well as in member associations' counselling work

- have drafted guidelines on issues having specific importance when making agreements on telework. In the guidelines, both the principles of the framework agreement and Finnish labour legislation have been taken into account.

- have committed themselves to promote the awareness and realisation of the principles of the framework agreement by informing of them as part of their ordinary information services; this had to be done during the year 2005.

## Parties to the agreement and the process

As mentioned above, all labour market confederations are parties to this agreement, that is:

### Employers' confederations

- Confederation of Finnish Industries EK
- Office for the Government as Employer
- Commission for the Local Authority Employers
- Church of Finland Negotiating Commission

### Employees' confederations

- The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK
- The Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees STTK
- AKAVA – Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals

The parties to this agreement are the same as parties to comprehensive collective agreements when such agreements are made. Thus, the agreement covers the Finnish labour market in its entirety.

The Federation of Finnish Enterprises (member of UEAPME) is not a party to this agreement as labour market agreements are made between labour market organisations. The Federation was, however, informed on the negotiation process and its outcome.

At the beginning of the negotiations, the parties made a thorough analysis of the Finnish labour legislation and collective agreements. No need for amendments in labour legislation could be pointed. However, slightly different interpretations exist on the need for amendments. As for sectoral agreements, the parties found out that there are few specific telework related provisions in our collective agreements. The parties also found out that at the workplace level, there is a need for practical guidance when discussing questions and making agreements related to telework.

Thus, the confederations chose an agreement where they recommend that the principles of the telework agreement are applied in employment contracts, where they encourage their member associations to pay special attention to telework in their collective agreements and where employers and employees are given practical guidance in telework issues.

### The effects of the EU agreement

All labour market confederations have informed their member associations and employers and employees of the EU framework agreement and of their own agreement of 23 May 2005. This has taken place through news letters, educational gatherings and through the Internet.

As mentioned above, no changes in sectoral agreements have yet been reported. In Finland, sectoral agreements are an important instrument when defining employment terms and conditions. It is likely that telework will be on the agenda during the next sectoral negotiations but this depends, of course, completely on the parties to any sectoral agreement. Therefore, it is too early to estimate possible sectoral level effects of the agreement of the confederations.

As for companies and other employers, the confederations have not yet any data at their disposal on the effects of the EU framework agreement and of the agreement of the labour market confederations.

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