



EU laws on working time

Summary: The EU sets minimum requirements for conditions of employment that are concerned with health and safety, such as number of working hours per week, rest periods and annual paid holiday.

The objective of the Directive 93/104/EC of November 23, 1993 is to set out minimum requirements in the organisation of working time that relate to health and safety.

Member states are required to take measures to ensure workers enjoy:

- ◆ Minimum daily rest of 11 consecutive hours per period of 24 hours;
- ◆ Minimum of one rest day in every seven days;
- ◆ A break in a daily period of six hours
- ◆ Not less than four weeks' annual paid holiday. To qualify for this entitlement will be determined by national practice and trades unions
- ◆ An average working week of not more than 48 hours including overtime.
- ◆ Normal hours for night workers should not exceed eight hours in any 24 hour period.

Member states may depart from these requirements in certain activities at certain times, for example in the case of treatment provided by hospitals, or in agriculture.

For doctors in training the reduction to a 48 hour working week was to be phased in over a five year period from 2004.

For more information about EU laws on the organisation of working time:

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/other/c10405_en.htm