

EU pushes for 'right to disconnect' from work at home

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European Union lawmakers on Wednesday voted in favor of a "right to disconnect" from the internet and email, with around one third of people now working from home across the 27-nation bloc due in large part to coronavirus restrictions.

In a resolution, the parliamentarians argue that disconnecting from work should be a fundamental right and they want the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, to draw up rules allowing people to take time out from the pressures of working at home.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the way we work and we must update our rules to catch up with the new reality," said Maltese Socialist [lawmaker](#) Alex Agius Saliba, who led work on the resolution.

"After months of teleworking, many workers are now suffering from [negative side effects](#) such as isolation, fatigue, depression, burnout, muscular or eye illnesses," he said. "The pressure to always be reachable, always available, is mounting," he said, resulting in unpaid overtime and burnout.

The resolution, which is non-binding, was passed by 31 votes to 6 against, with 18 abstentions in the European Parliament's Employment Committee. It must still have to be rubber stamped by the full house, then submitted to the commission and national EU governments for possible endorsement.

In it, the lawmakers argue that the culture of being "always on" and the growing expectation that workers should be reachable at any time can hurt work-life balance, physical and [mental health](#), and well-being.

They say home workers should be able to disconnect without facing repercussions from their employers.

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