

Spain shifts towards a 37.5-hour week.

January 2024

Spain's government has opened negotiations with the social partners towards a gradual reduction in working hours. The aim is to reduce the current 40-hour week to 38.5 hours this year and to 37.5 hours in 2025.

Yolanda Diaz, the labour minister, wants to make shorter working hours one of her main objectives, to achieve a better work-life balance and sharing of responsibilities within families. She promises a reduction in working time without any reduction in pay because we are in the first quarter of the 21st century and new technology makes this possible. The legal working week of 40 hours has not changed in Spain since 1983.

An assessment of the results will enable further reductions to be made, depending on the economic context. The government intends to effectively monitor the time actually worked through compulsory time registers in the workplaces.

10.3 million workers can be affected.

The Spanish unions point out that the move to 38.5 hours a week will have little impact, as this is in line with many collective agreements that have already incorporated a reduction in hours. However, the second reduction to 37.5 hours could affect 10.3 million workers in the private sector. Public sector employees already benefit from the 37.5-hour week.

On the employers' side, the CEOE association has expressed reservations about a national plan that seems to have been made in advance by the labour ministry. Unfavourable to legislation, CEOE is calling for shorter hours to be negotiated locally based on productivity and the financial situation of the companies in the different sectors.

Edited by industriAll Europe.