French national collective agreement for a successful implementation of telework

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TELEWORK IN FRANCE BEFORE COVID CRISIS

A rather confidential work organisation until now
- approx. 3% of employees used to telework over the last years

Focus on the legal/conventional framework
- National collective agreement of 2005 on telework
  - Aiming at organizing regular teleworking
- A complete social partners’ report on telework development in 2017
  - This report already identifies new stakes in implementing telework, especially regarding the use of digital tools
- Following this report, a modification of labor law on this matter in 2017
  - One main objective: enabling effective social dialogue on telework implementation at the company level
Following the 1st lockdown due to the pandemic, and considering the large-scale implementation of «imposed» telework, French social partners decided to establish a diagnosis of the situation:

- About 25% of all employees worked from home over last spring
- This was a previously unseen level of telework and we needed to identify the lessons that has to be learned from this particular experimentation in order to enable the development of telework.

Based on this assessment, and regarding the situation of the pandemics and the need for useful guidelines for workers and employers on telework, we decided to open a negotiation with 2 main objectives:

- Preserve the existing legal/conventional framework for organising and securing telework in the company
- Clarify and make explicit for trade unions and employees, existing rights and protections
- Promote and secure collective bargaining to reach a useful agreement for companies and employees
- Prevent any public authorities intervention aiming at modifying telework organisation framework

5 negotiation sessions within 1 month:

- An agreement signed by 7 out of 8 representative social partners at the national level
AGREEMENT’S ARCHITECTURE

1. Thinking about the place of telework within the company’s strategy
2. Implementing telework
3. Organizing telework
4. Guiding employees and managers in a telework context
5. Preserving the work relationship while teleworking
6. Maintaining a good level of social dialogue in case of telework
7. Guidelines to implement telework in extraordinary circumstances (such as pandemics)
NEXT STEPS

- How to make this agreement useful at the company and at the sectorial level?

- How French social partners intend to deal with other aspects of digitalization – especially the impacts of A.I. on employment?
  - What are those impacts?
  - How can it change the nature of jobs and needed competences?
  - How can we better foresee/take into account those impacts?