

# Remote work and the right to disconnect in Europe

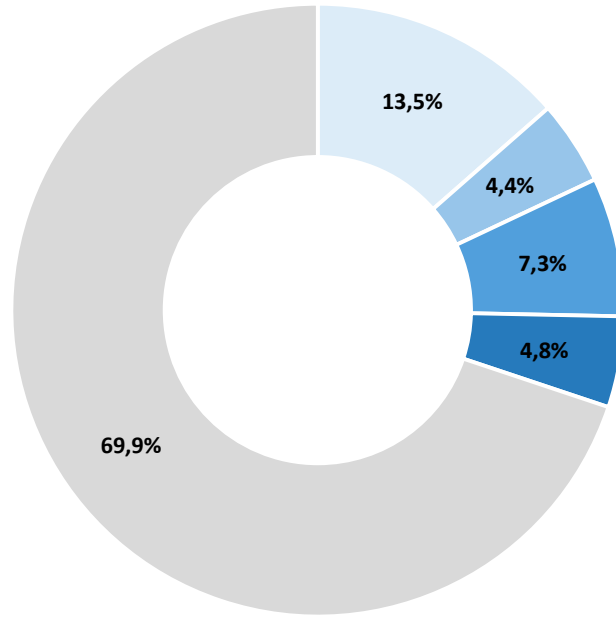
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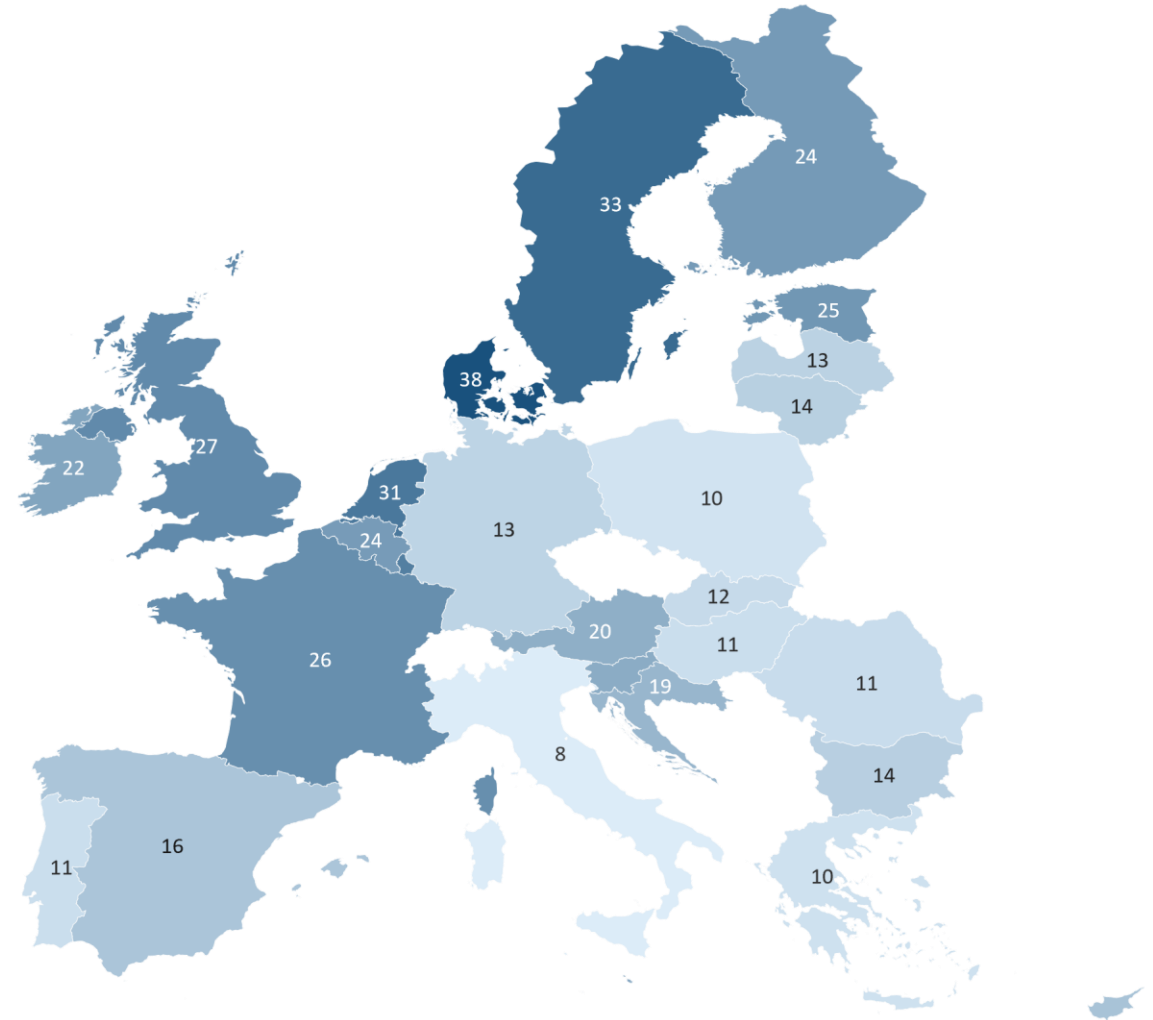
ILO Paris Office Webinar on Teleworking

# Remote work in Europe before the pandemic .... .. and its effects

## EU27 and UK



- Occasional TICTM (employee)
- Regular home-based TICTM (employee)
- Highly mobile TICTM (employee)
- Self-employed TICTM
- Other



# Factors related to prevalence of ICT- based flexible work



Digital development (DESI composite Index)



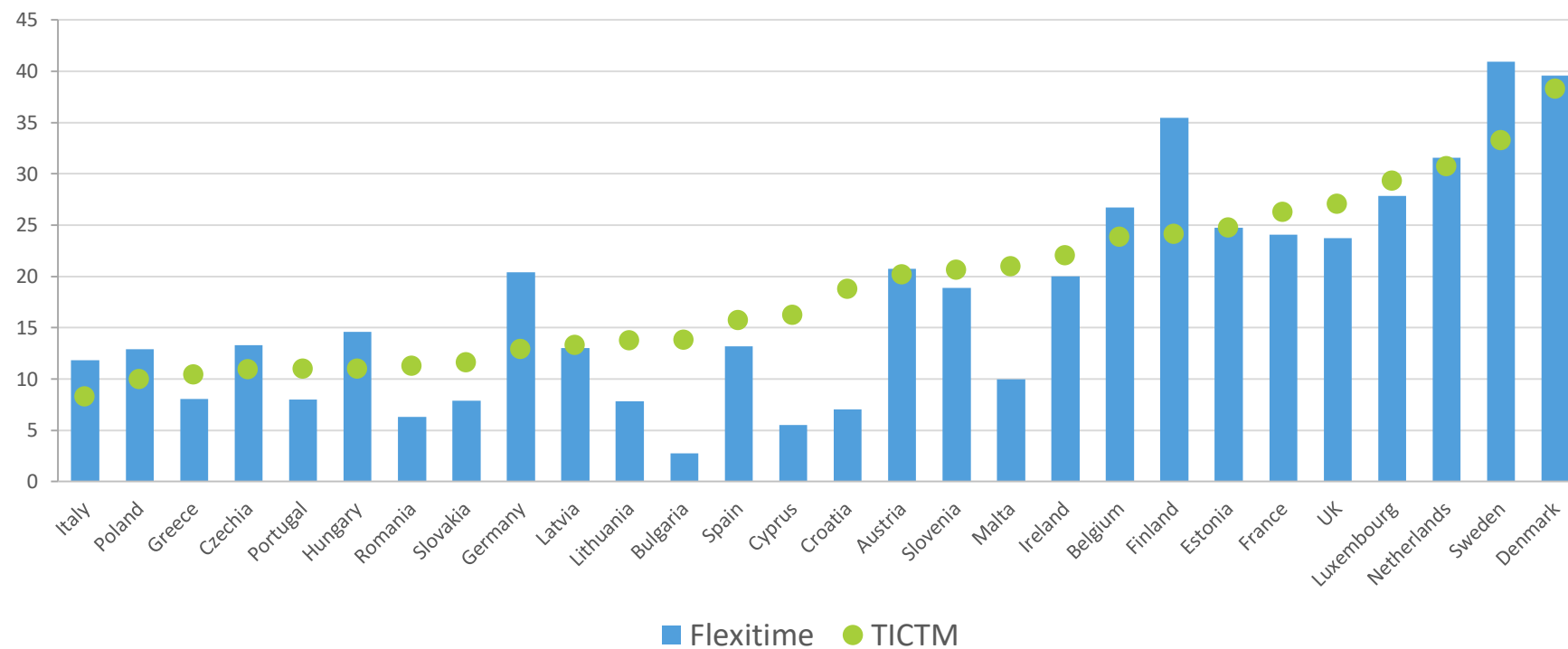
Work culture (autonomy, responsibility, career issues)



Structure of the economy



Flexible work organisation regulation



# Positive aspects of ICT-based flexible work

- Business continuity
- Productivity and performance
- Shortening of commuting time
- Work-life balance improvements

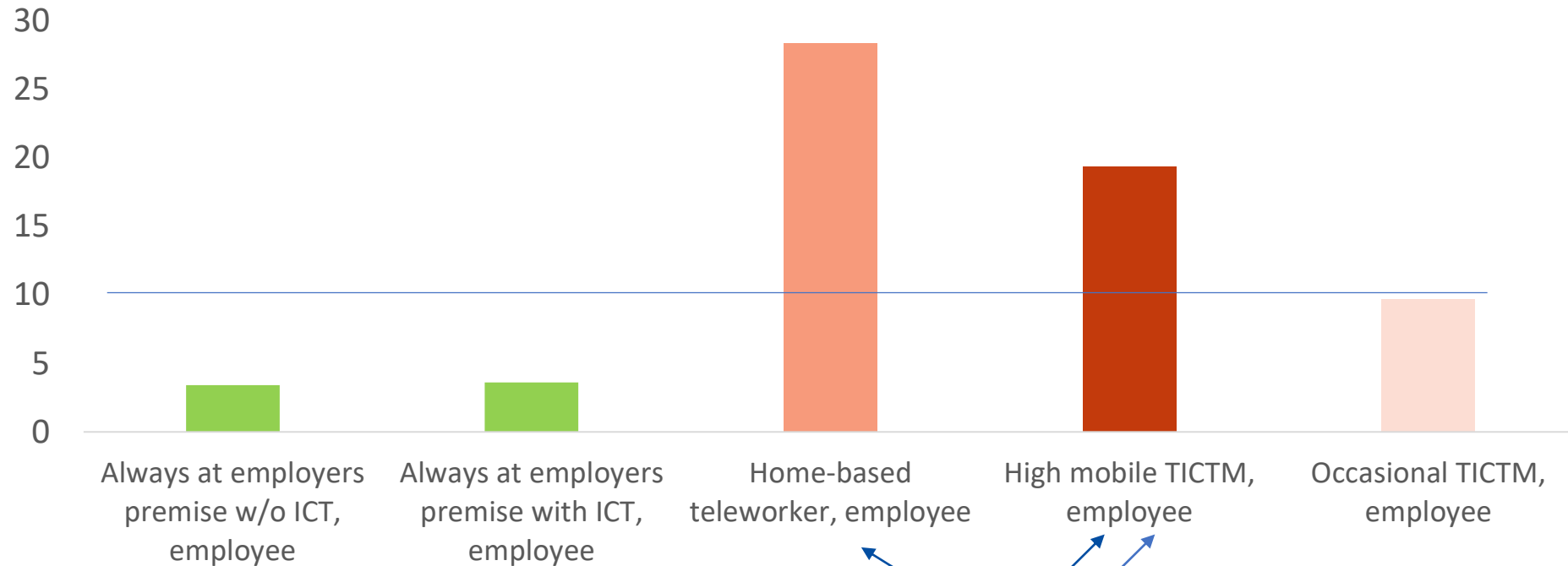
# Aspects related to working patterns in ICT-based flexible work

Working anytime anywhere

- Autonomy and flexibility
- ICT related connectivity (and availability)
- Blurring of time and “places”
- Culture and practices at work
- Workload leading to intensification of work, supplemental work, etc.

# Effects on working time

Percentage of workers working daily or several times per week in their free time (EU27 and UK)



**More than 48 hours a week**

**Reduced rest periods (below 11 hours btw working days)**

Source: Eurofound (EWCS2015)



# Effects on work-life balance and health problems (compared to employees not in ICT-based flexible work)

Risks associated with ICT-based flexible work	Categories most affected
Work – life balance	High mobile work (- -) Regular home based telework (+)
Health related problems	
Head ache and eye strain	All groups
Stress at work	High mobile work (- -) Regular home based telework (-) Occasional ICT-based (-)

**Remote work in Europe during the pandemic ....  
.. and what are the effects?**

Started home-based work because of Covid-19 (April 2020)

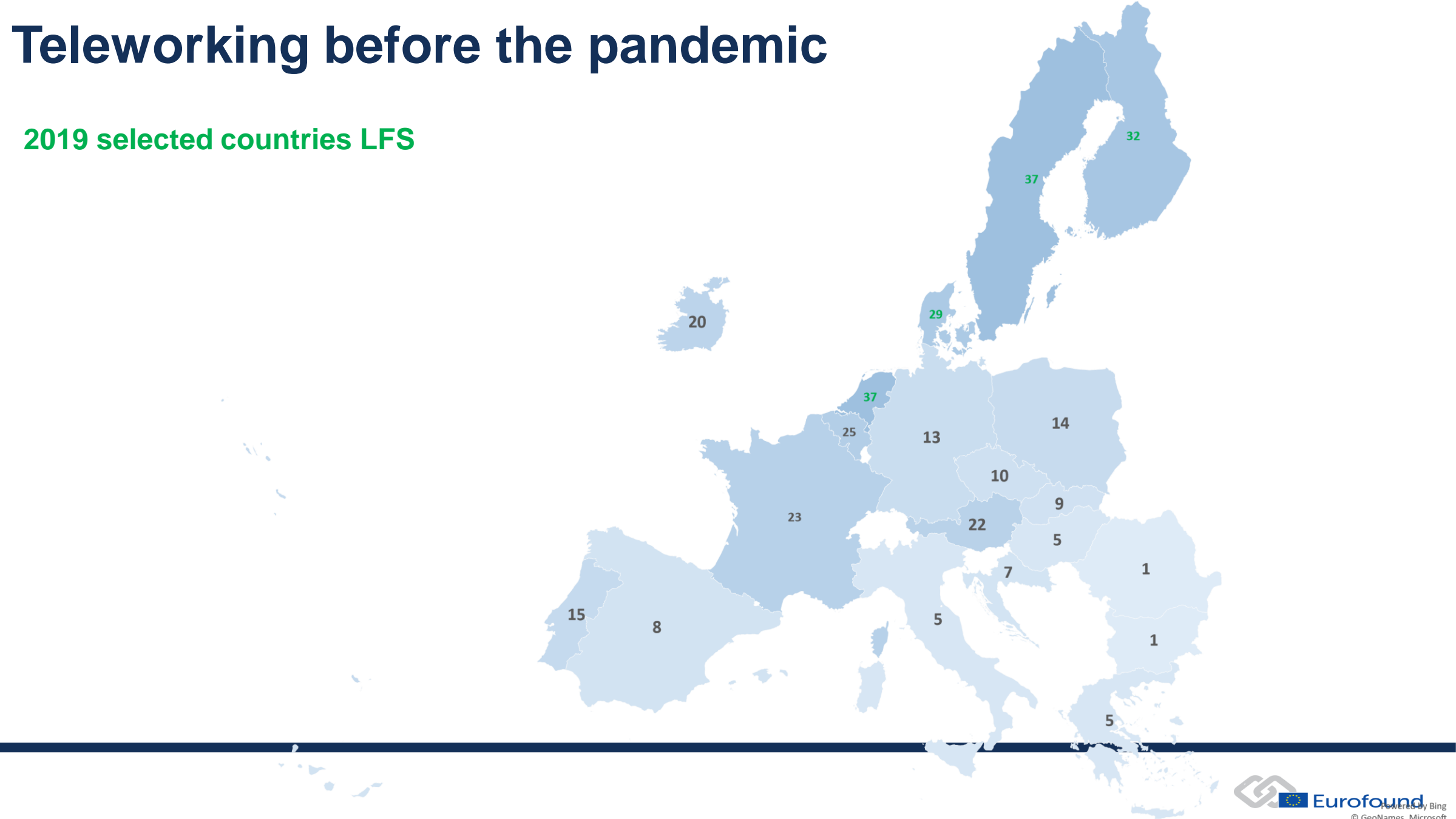
## Percentages of workers in home-based work (%)



Source: LFS 2019 and Online Survey Wave April 2020 ( $R^2=0.6$ )

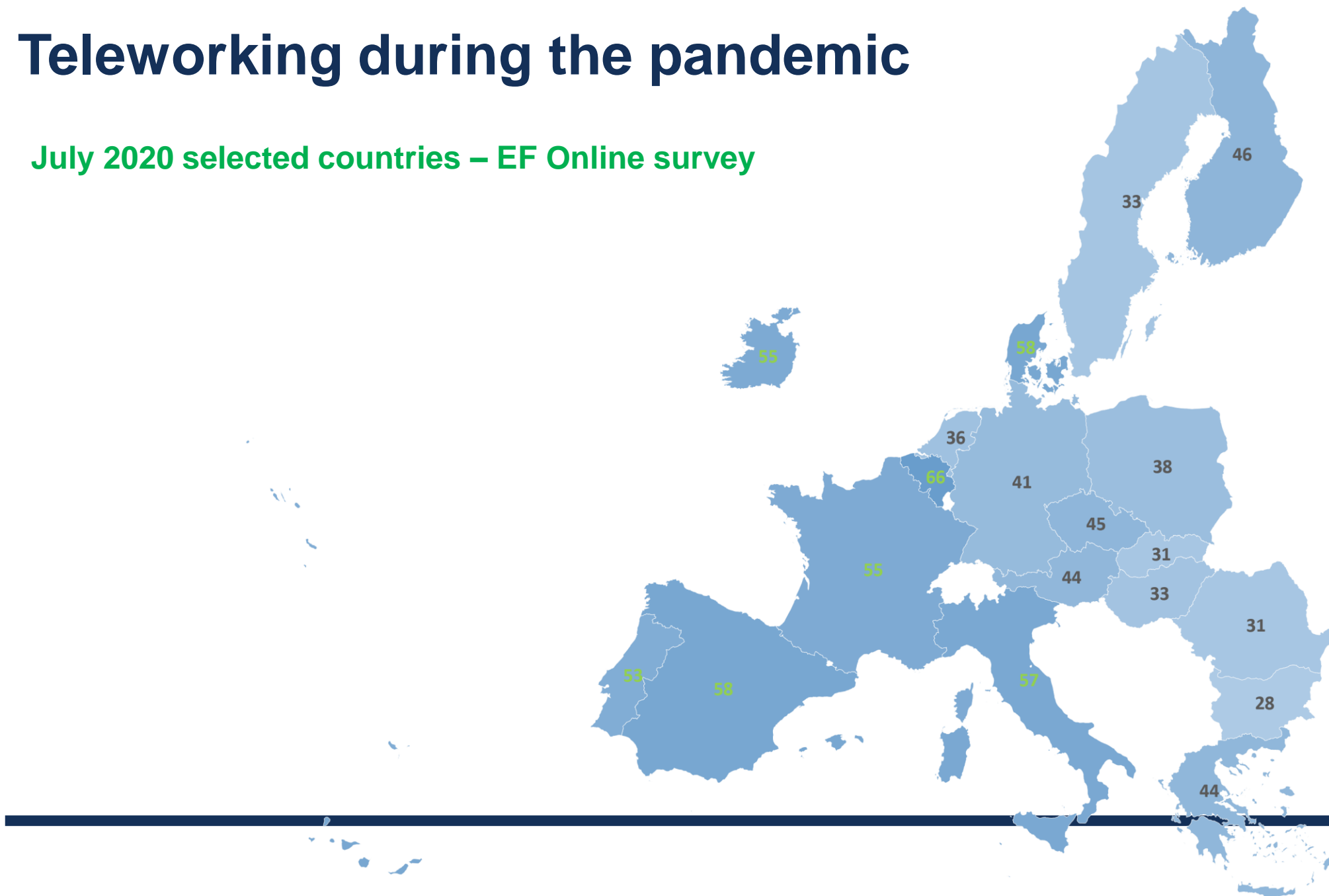
# Teleworking before the pandemic

2019 selected countries LFS



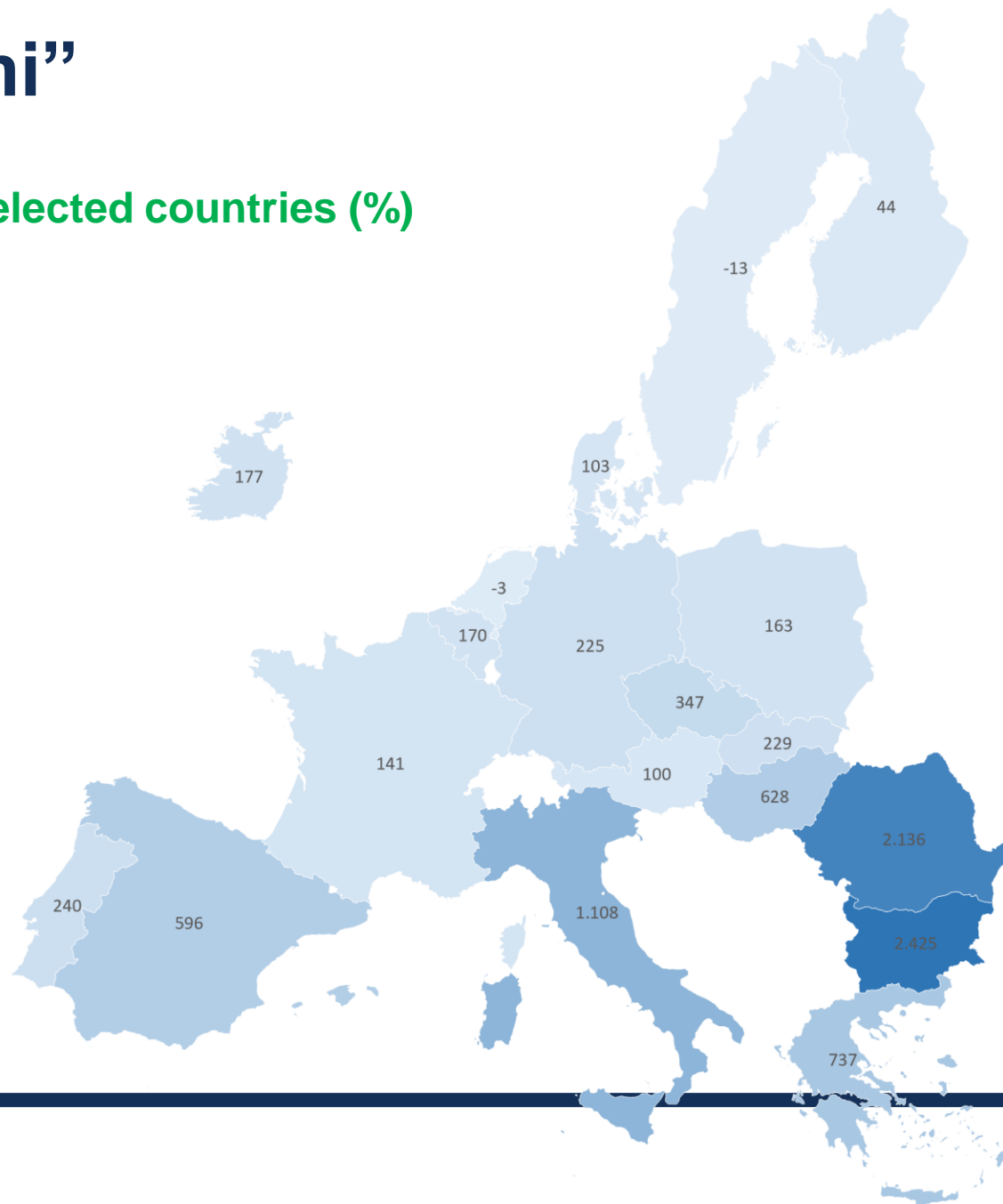
# Teleworking during the pandemic

July 2020 selected countries – EF Online survey

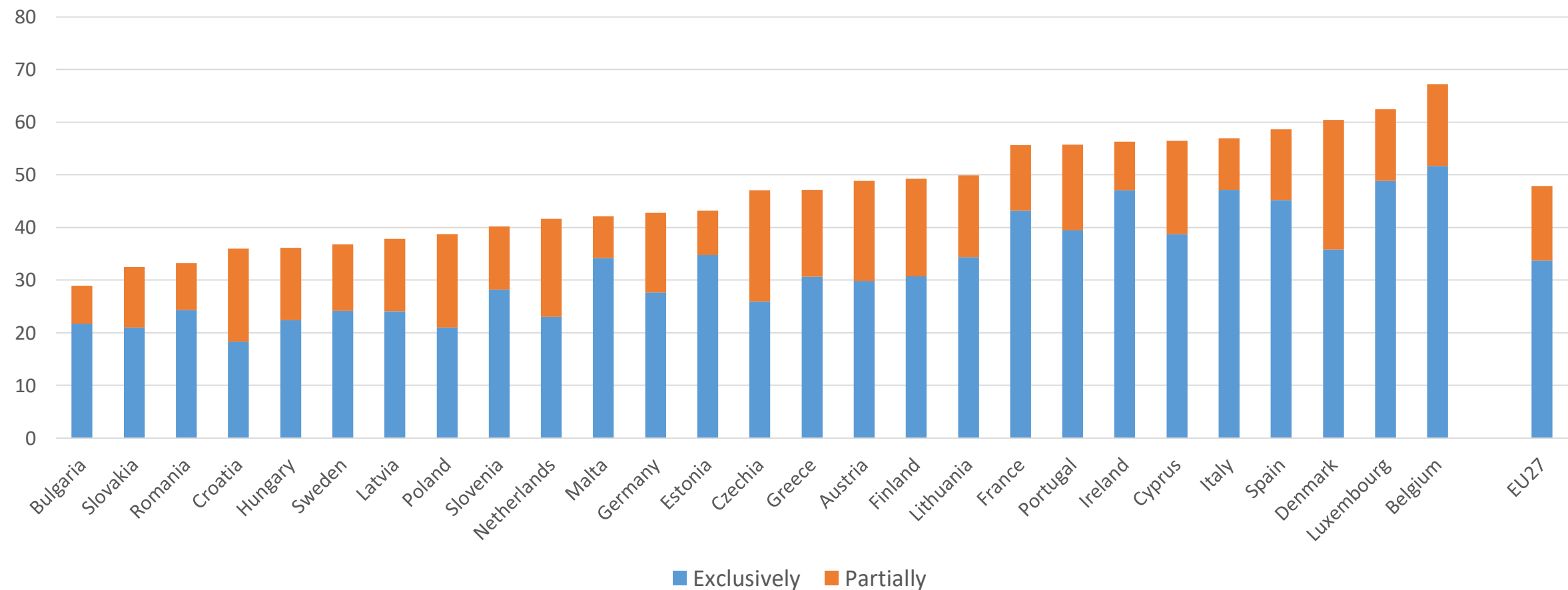


# Teleworking “Tsunami”

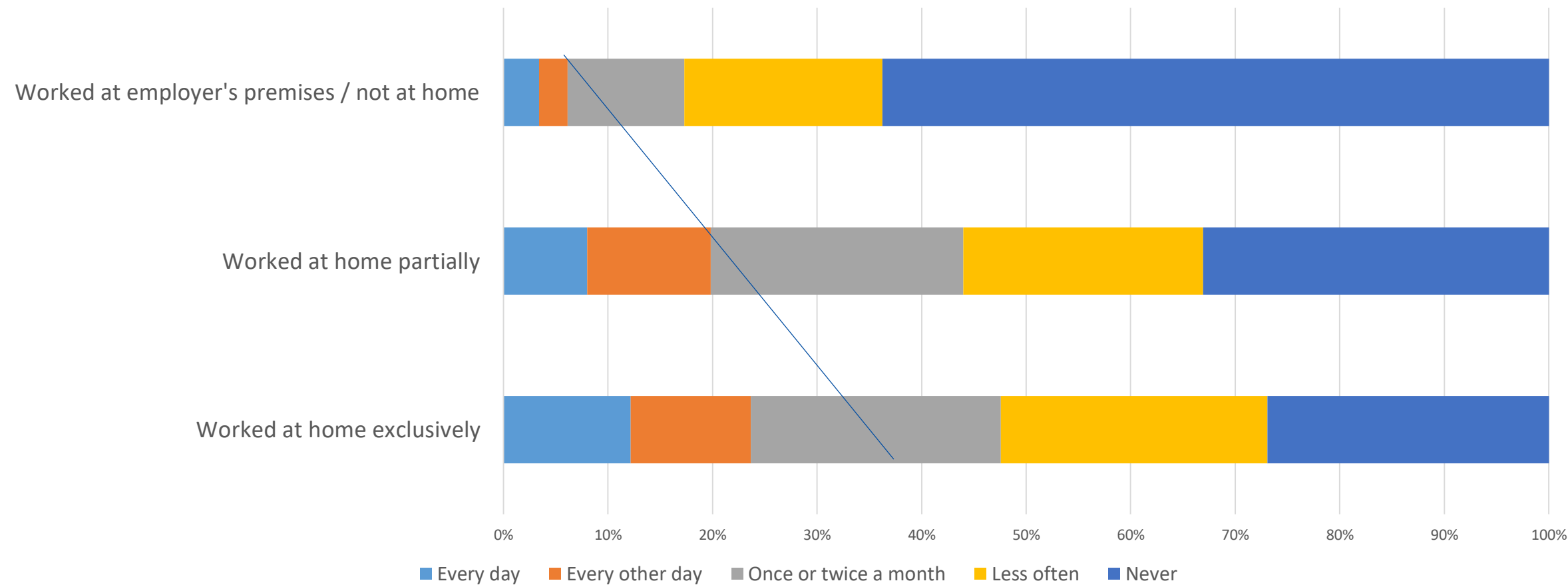
Increase average 2019 – July 2020 selected countries (%)  
“Tentative calculation”



# Teleworking during the pandemic

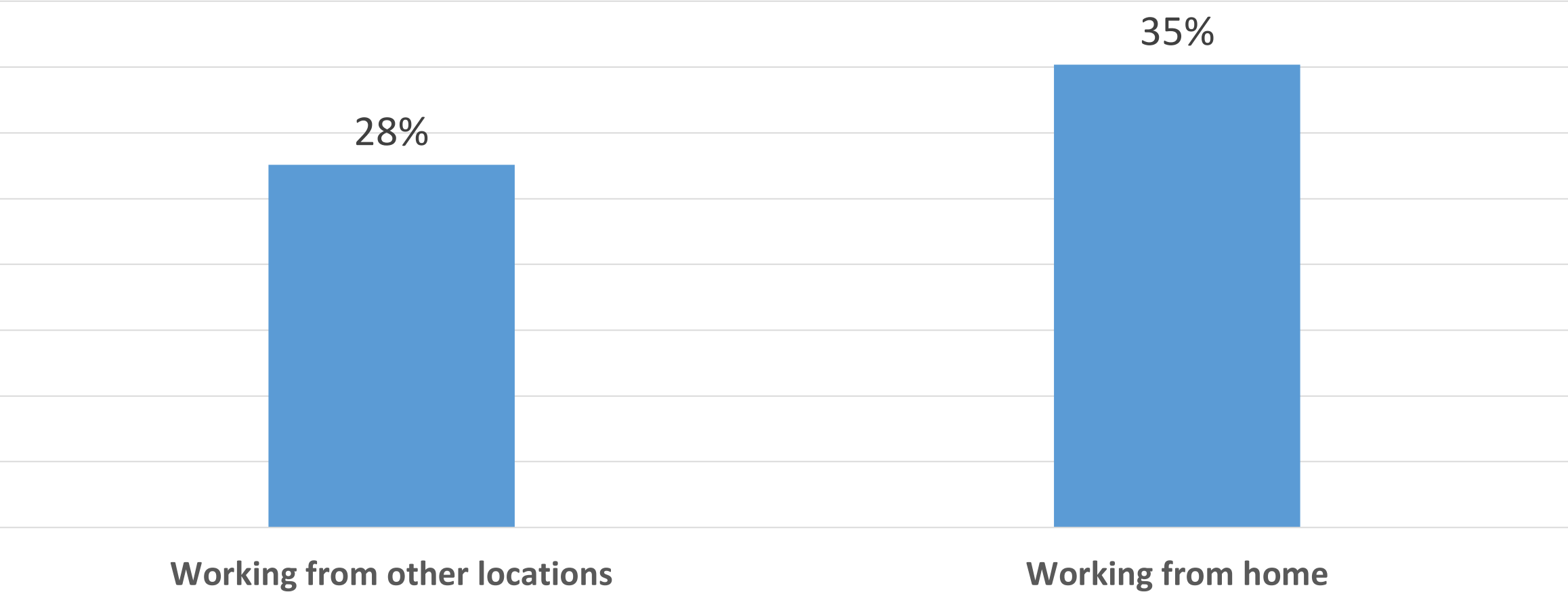


# Working during free time



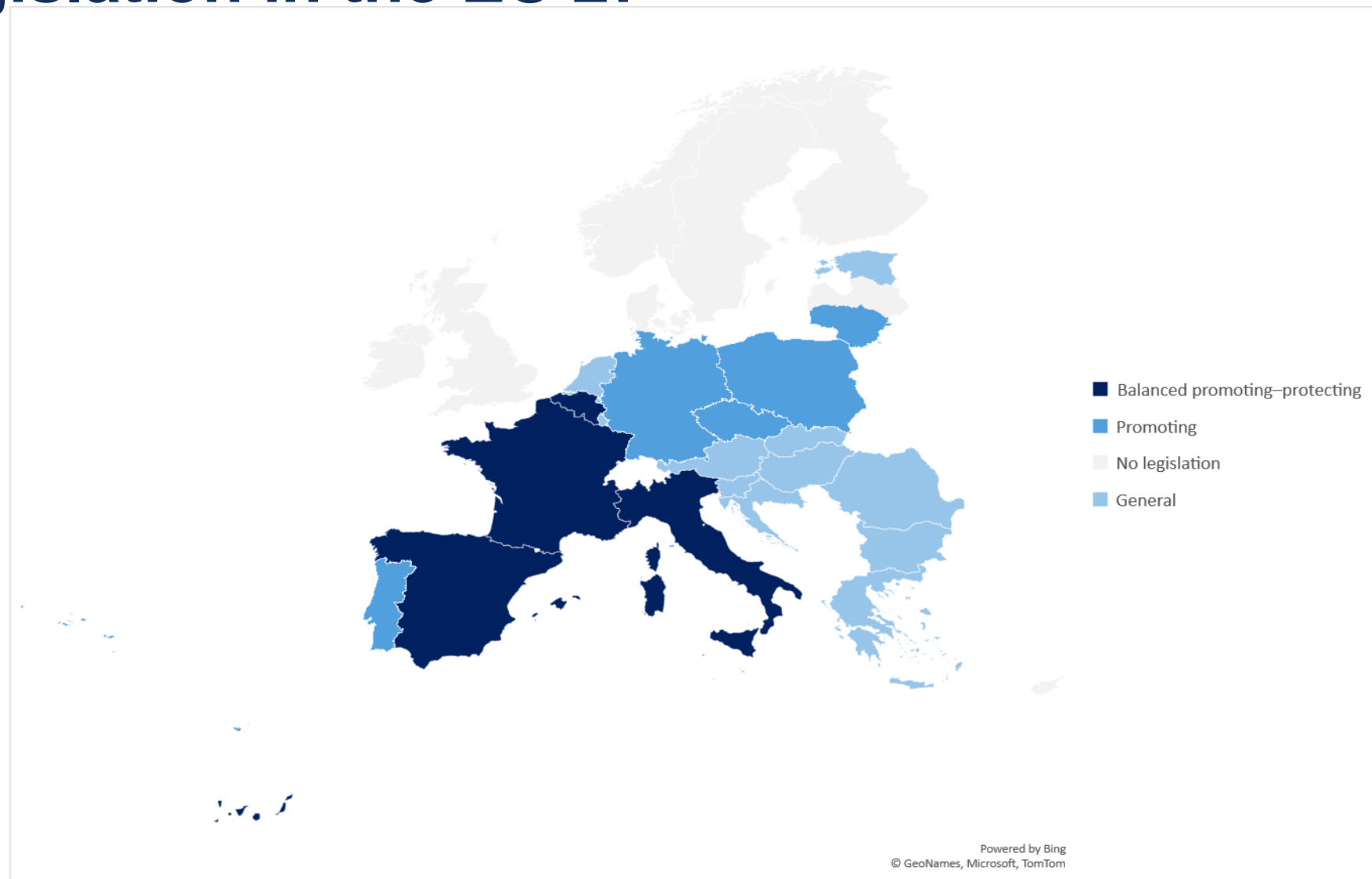


# Quantitative Demands (work intensity)

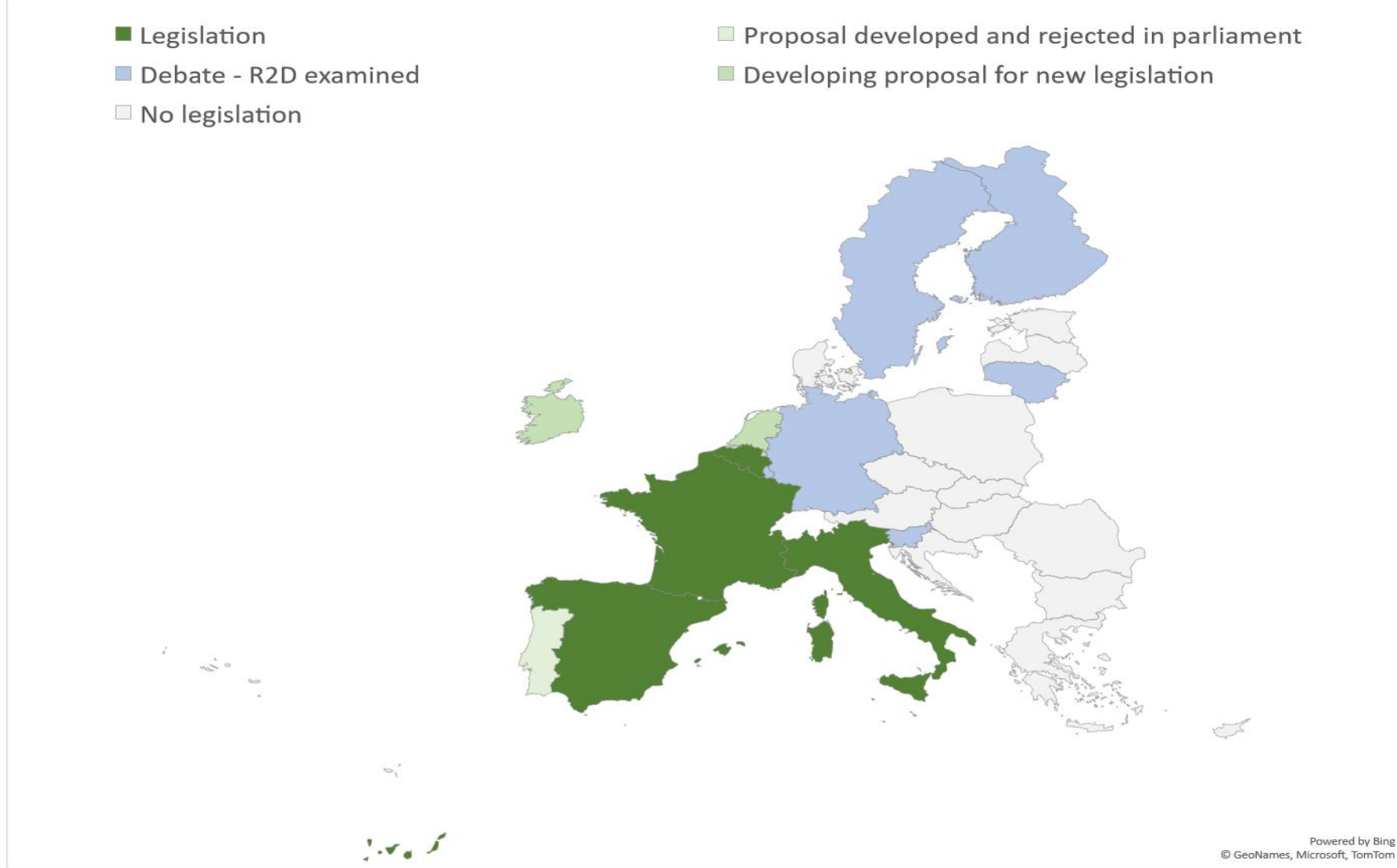


# **Policies to address the challenges of working remotely with digital tools: The Right to Disconnect**

# Telework legislation in the EU 27



# Right to Disconnect and Legislation in the EU 27



# Practical implementation at sectoral and company level (agreements)

- Technology based (hard and soft measures), including the right of choice
- Codes of conduct in relation to emails and messages (right not to reply emails during rest periods, etc.)..... without consequences for worker's career
- Guidelines and training on how to proceed in relation to work life balance and prevention of burn out
- Respect of working time by employer and employee (definition of periods and managers leading by example)
- Assessments of general level of connectivity and workload in the company

# What do we know about the consequences of the legislation?

There are no evaluations about how effective R2D provisions are for improving work-life balance and workers' health but .....

.....there is evidence that since R2D provisions were passed, the number of agreements at sectoral and company (or individual) level has been increasing.

# Covid-19 Pandemic: Teleworking and R2D

- Increase of home based teleworking. So far, there is some indication of the same situation in relation to working in free time while teleworking.
- Modification of legislation to facilitate home working in at least half of the countries in the EU
- In some countries new minimum standards for teleworking
- General renewed interest on the R2D leading to debates and/or recommendations and guidelines related to “disconnection” or highlighting existent R2D.

# Covid-19 Pandemic: A push for the R2D at EU level

- **Social Partners Framework Agreement on Digitalisation (2020)**
- **European Parliament adopts text: “ (20 January 2021) – calls the EC to initiate a legislative procedure to define minimum standards for remote working**
  - **Highlights of the text:**
    - “Always on’ culture leads to increased risk of depression, anxiety and burnout
    - The right to disconnect is considered a fundamental right
    - Essential role of social partners / tailored made solutions
    - No repercussions for workers who exercise ‘their right to disconnect’



# Thank you !



<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/blog/covid-19-unleashed-the-potential-for-telework-how-are-workers-coping>

<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/blog/does-the-new-telework-generation-need-a-right-to-disconnect>

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