



# Do we need a right to disconnect?

## SOME COLLEAGUES OFFER THEIR VIEWPOINTS

### Niels, Manager

I connect by remote +/- 30 minutes a day to my mail. This gives me the advantage to shorten my working day, because I do not have to check at work the emails checked at home.

In my opinion connecting outside working hours should be voluntary. In my experience availability after working hours is seldom directly imposed by the hierarchy. Leaving aside a few bizarre examples, I have not seen any formal notes instructing staff to be constantly available. Availability after working hours is instead part of the local office culture, in which all staff members feel obliged to adjust to what is considered normal practise.

The hierarchy quite often enforces this practise indirectly, by giving rewards to those who are available after working hours (promotions, missions, etc.).

And peer pressure is an equally potent tool: if the norm is to be constantly available, colleagues who do not adhere to this norm are quite often ill-regarded by their colleagues.

### Diana, Policy Officer

I connect to my work tools outside working hours on average 2 hours a week.

I only see advantages. I consider that it is a privilege to be able to connect myself and finish an urgent task without having to stay long hours in my office. I have to return home to take care of my family before 20h30 and I continue to work from a distance after 22h00 when necessary.

It is also practical to be able to work at home and so have the possibility to deal with a domestic problem.

On the other hand, if I have a smartphone, that does not mean that I am available to reply to colleagues while I am on mission or giving a speech at a conference! One does not have to feel obliged to react in real time. Nor do I check my emails at every instant.

I think that in general a boss should not expect one to reply

immediately to them when we are on leave. I consider that the right to be disconnected is necessary when we are on leave. There has to be a balance between respect for private life and the possibility to connect from a distance in order to terminate or follow up on urgent work.

I am happy with the information tools that we have available to us to work from a distance. Of course problems can sometimes arise, but they are rare.

### Marc, Project Manager

I connect to my work tools outside working hours on average 3 hours a week to check if there is something urgent.

I think that a right to disconnect should depend on the type of business and the nature of the work, responsibilities and roles that we take on. In my case, I appreciate the opportunity that is offered to me.

However, I need information tools that are reliable so as not to lose time. Recently I was unable to make connection from a distance because my password had expired.



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