

Press Release

For immediate release
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IoD slams Commission's 'back to the Seventies' plans for working time

EU plans to curtail Britain's flexible approach to working time smack of a 'back to the 1970s' approach to labour market policy, according to the Institute of Directors (IoD).

The IoD was responding to reports that the European Commission's plans for reform of the UK's opt-out from the Working Time Directive would require trades unions, not individual employees, to decide whether staff could exercise their right to opt out of the 48-hour maximum working week.

Under the Commission's proposals, employees in non-unionised companies would have to renew their opt-out every year, and opt-outs during probationary periods would be banned. The Commission also plans to return to the possibility of scrapping the opt-out altogether in five years' time.

The IoD's Head of European and Regulatory Affairs, James Walsh, said:

"The Commission's plans are rooted in a 1970s approach to labour market policy at the very time when we need to be competing in the global markets of the Twenty First Century.

"We need a more flexible approach to employee-employer relations. Scrapping the working hours opt-out and handing more powers to the unions takes us in completely the wrong direction.

"Some 76% of IoD members say they would not be able to run their companies as efficiently if the opt-out were to go. The Government will have our strong support in fighting these misguided proposals."