EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

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THE GENERAL PERSONNEL COUNCIL OF PALESTINE*

Regional seminar for high level civil servants

13th UniDem Med

"PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FACING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: MODERNISATION AND DIGITAL INNOVATIONS"

Videoconference, Palestine*

5-6 October 2021

GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE AGE OF DIGITALISATION: ADAPTING FOR BETTER TRANSFORMATION

by

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* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe and European Union member States on this issue.
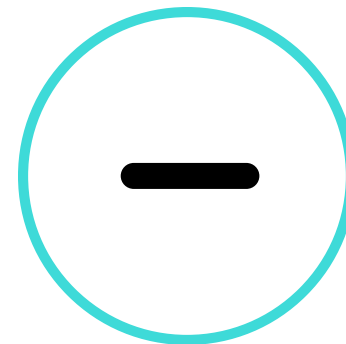
13TH UNIDEM MED REGIONAL SEMINAR

"PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FACING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC: MODERNISATION AND DIGITAL INNOVATIONS"

6th of October 2021
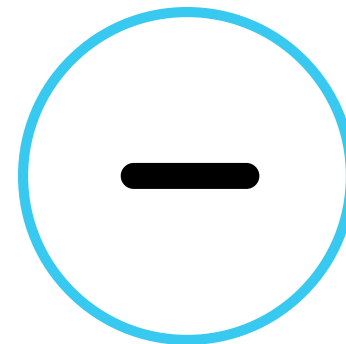Zoltan Vadkerti, the WorkLife HUB
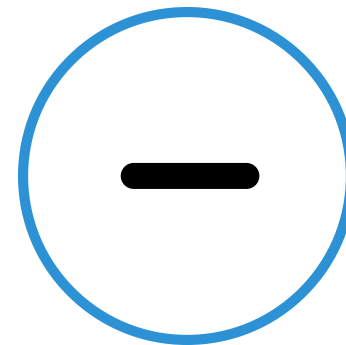
OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENTATION
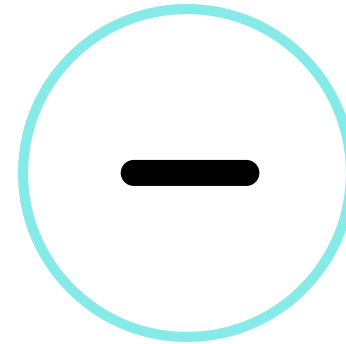
TELEWORK IN THE EU BEFORE AND DURING COVID-19
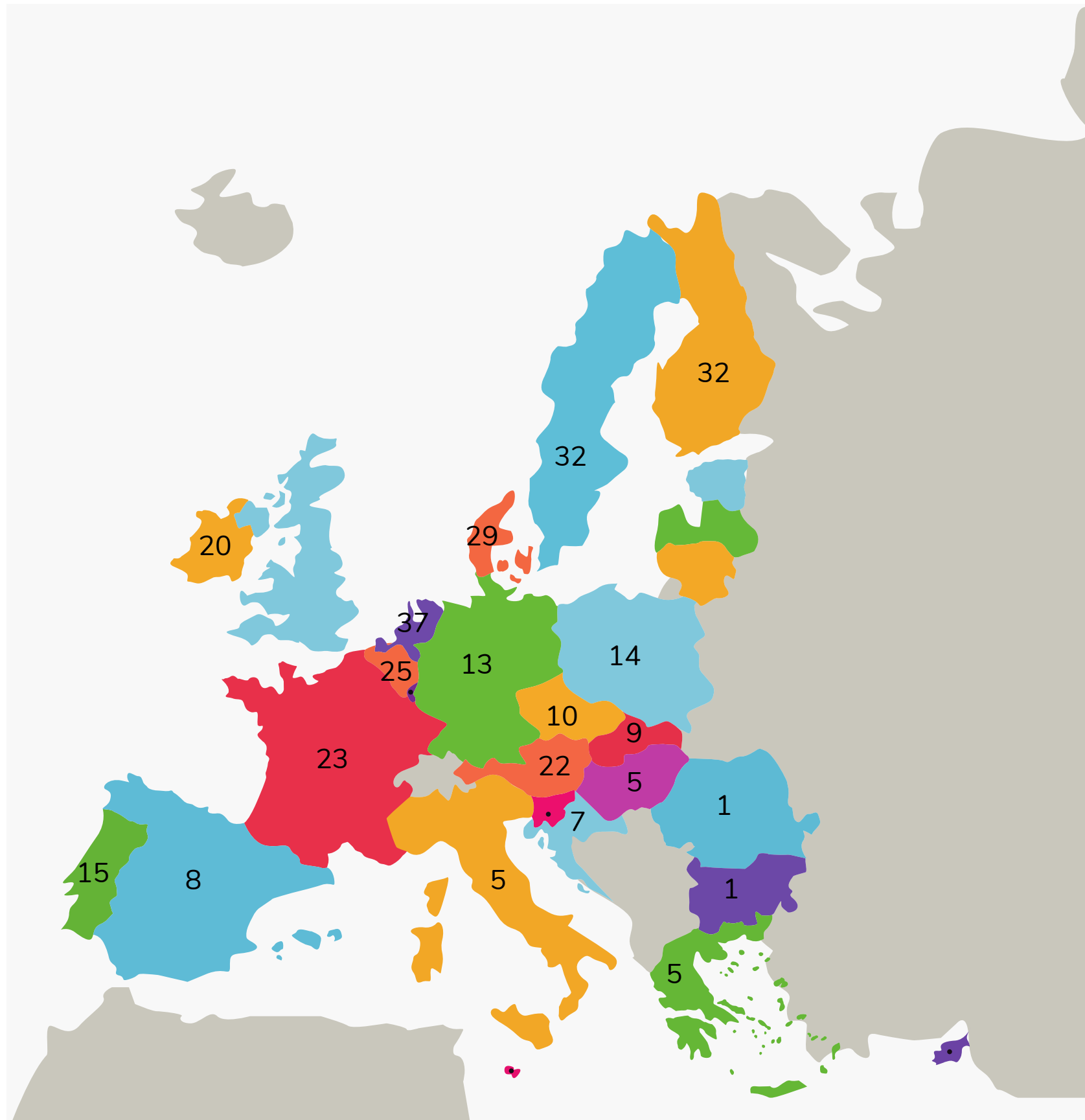
TOOLKIT ON TELEWORKING

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE AND QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

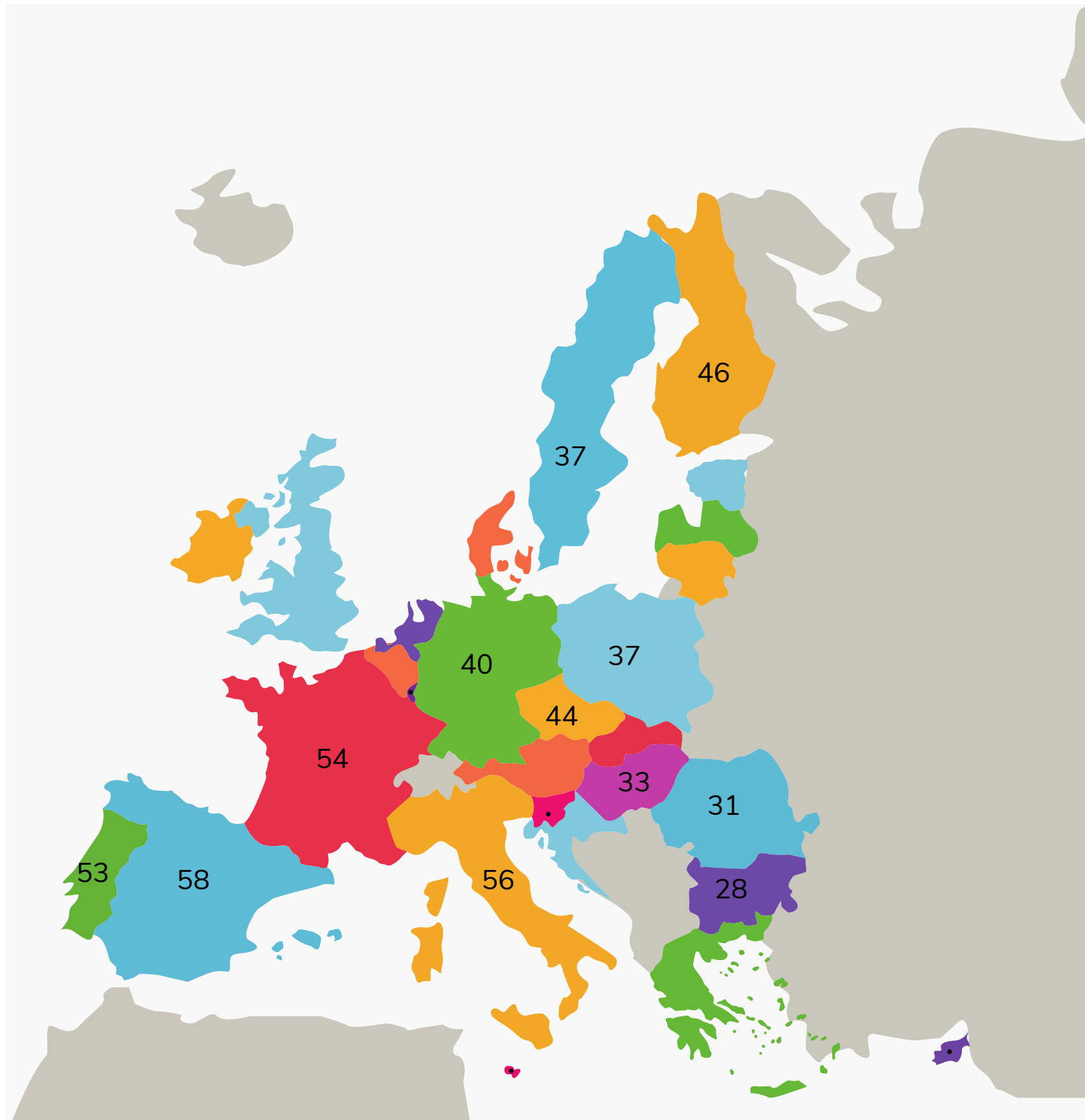PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES TELEWORKING BEFORE THE PANDEMIC IN THE EU (2019)

(working from home usually or occasionally)

Source: Eurofound. 2019.

PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES
TELEWORKING DURING THE
PANDEMIC
(JULY 2020)

(working from home usually or occasionally)

WHO COULD WORK FROM HOME? TELEWORKING DURING COVID-19, EU27 (%)
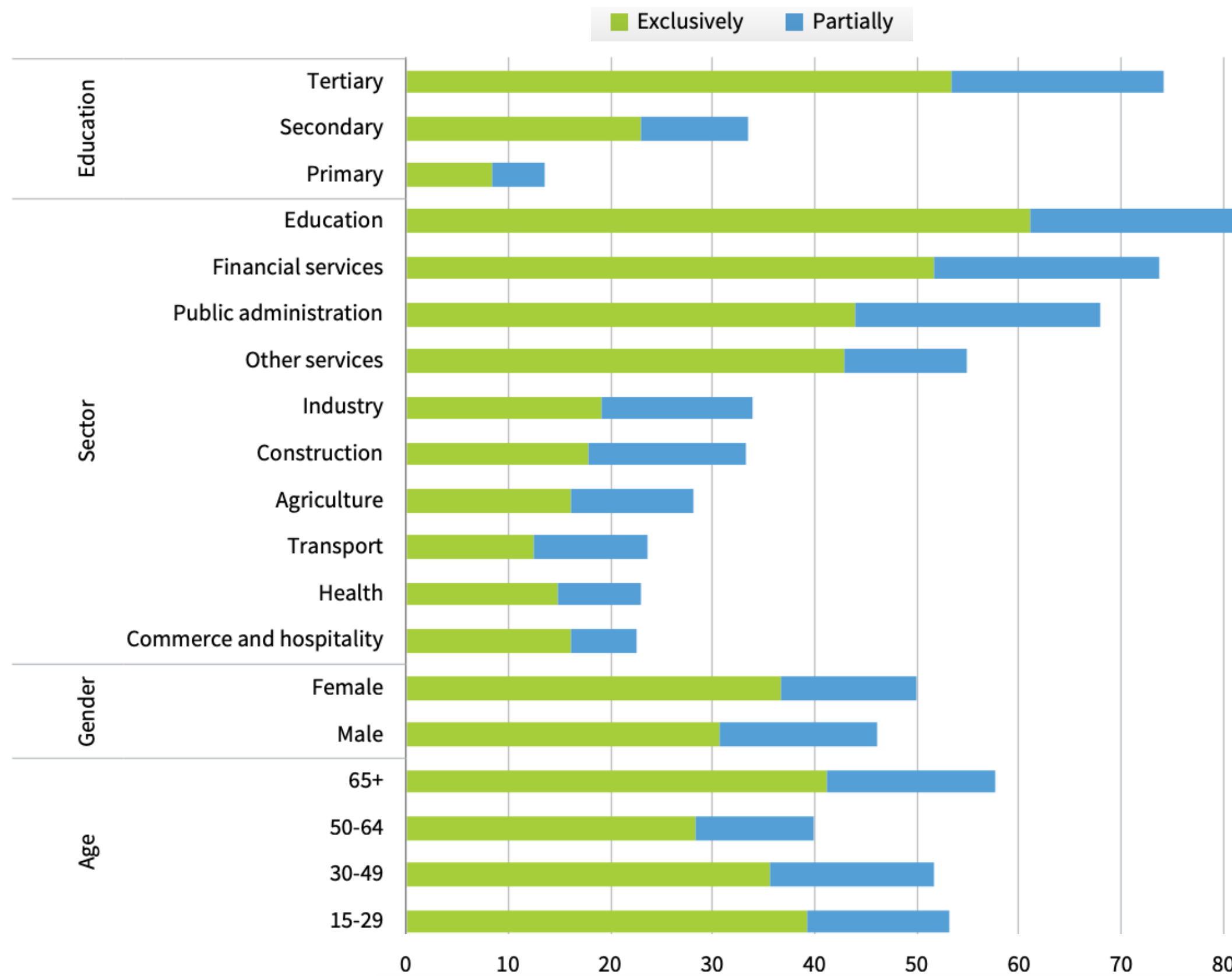
- The **strongest single correlate** of working from home during the crisis **was the educational level of the employee**.
- There was also an important **divide in homeworking** incidence **by sector**.
- A somewhat **higher share of women** than men **indicated working from home**.
- Findings suggest that those working from home were disproportionately **urban-based, white-collar, well-educated, service sector employees**.

Source: Eurofound. 2021.

TELEWORK IS HERE TO STAY - BUT HOW IT WILL EVOLVE?

Source: Eurofound. 2021.
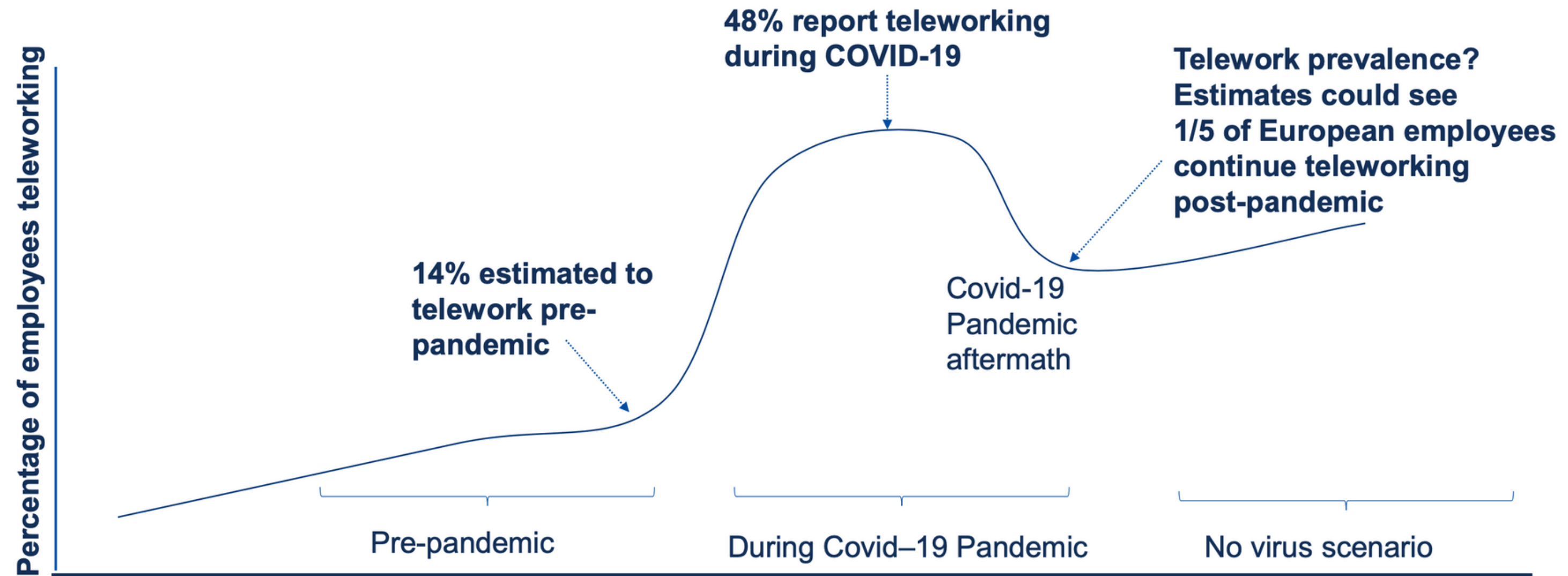
CONTEXT OF THE TOOLKIT

COVID-19 global pandemic

The Toolkit is referencing the global pandemic, but aims at being much more universal and valid even beyond the 2020/2021 situation.

Digitalisation and eGovernment

The push for more online service for citizens, increased citizen autonomy in dealing with municipal and other public affairs can go hand in hand with the digitalisation required for teleworking.

Increased attention on work-life balance

Growing number of specific legislation on teleworking, increased awareness about mental health risks, gender equality and tackling climate change create the necessary legislative push.

Lack of comparable tools

Teleworking in the public sector is relatively new and there aren't many other comparable, universal Toolkits.

TOOLKIT ON TELEWORKING IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS

- Launched in **December 2020**.
- Published by the **Centre of Expertise for Good Governance**.
- It is based on comprehensive desk research, an online survey (298 responses), interviews with key informants.
- Addressed the **most important challenges public administrations faced** with regards to the pandemic and its induced teleworking.
- **Available in Arabic** as well.

Toolkit on Teleworking in Public Administrations

Council of Europe Toolkit
Prepared by the Centre of Expertise
for Good Governance

Agnes Uhereczky and Zoltan Vadkerti,
WorkLife HUB
2020

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE
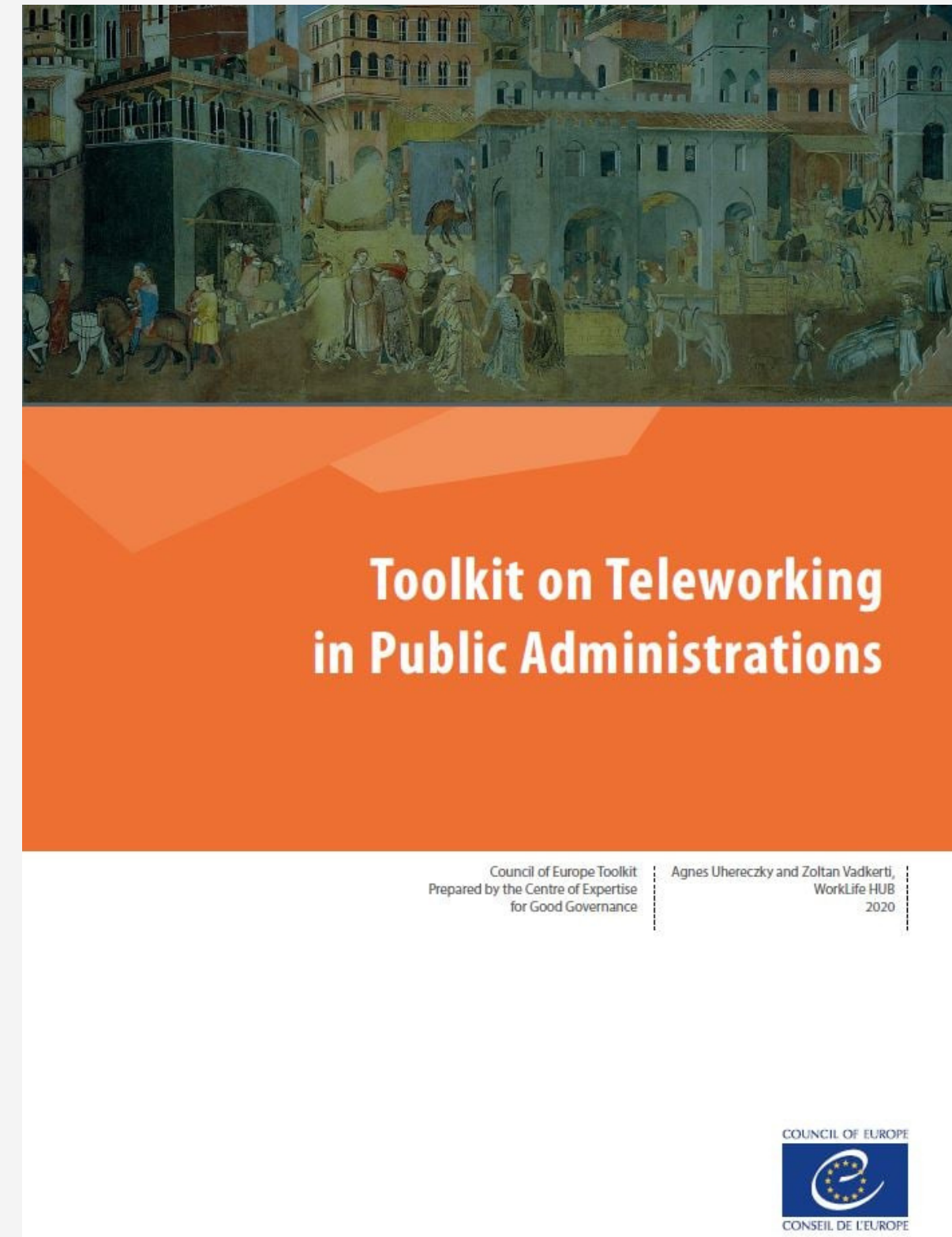
TOOLKIT CONTENT

TOOLKIT INTRODUCTION

Who is the Toolkit for, how to use the Toolkit and **myths of Teleworking** in the Public sector.

INTRODUCING TELEWORKING

What are the **key steps** when a public administration is introducing Teleworking: policy, agreement, pilot, IT.

MANAGING TELEWORKING

The **day-to-day implementation of Teleworking**, management by results and objectives.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

A number of **mediating factors** play a very important role in the success or failure of Teleworking.

ANNEXES

A number of **templates ready-to-use**: Telework Agreement, checking role amenability, employee readiness, management by objectives.

SOME OF THE CONCRETE RESULTS OF THE TOOLKIT

1 **Teleworking policy implementation**

Vlaanderen.be (Flemish community in Belgium) used the Toolkit to develop its own **teleworking policy**.

2 **Dissemination**

The Toolkit has been actively promoted by the **Centre of Expertise for Good Governance** since its adoption and was shared with the CoR Member States.

3 **Public discussion**

Social media exchange, downloads etc.

4 **Training and capacity building**

To address capacity gaps, and enhance the skillsets of relevant actors the Toolkit was used in training settings. For example, ANCI Piemonte distributed the Toolkit via its t**rainings and institutional meetings**.

LESSONS LEARNED

(1) **Low take-up of remote working options among civil servants**
Relatively low levels of take-up amongst pubic sector workers during the pandemic. This level was even lower in municipalities.

(2) **The technical requirements for remote working are not met**
Civil servants did not have the right software to access data. Also, there was a lack of secure access to internal administrative networks or the tools for virtual collaboration and telephone or video conferences were incompatible.

(3) **Digital challenge**
Understanding the digital divide became urgent (now - and future state) coupled with the right training to staff.

(4) **Changed user perspective**
Increased pressure on public administrations to digitize their services that follow the changing needs of the society.

BUILDING NEW PUBLIC POLICIES AND STANDARDS - HOW?

1 **Policies that address the challenges of working remotely with digital tools include:**
Telework/remote work/working from home legislation, the right to disconnect measures - TOOLKIT: pitfalls to avoid

2 **Teleworking regulations during COVID-19 included:**
Modification of legislation, new minimum standards, general renewed interest and recommendations and guidelines related to "disconnection" - TOOLKIT: assess the potential risks

3 **The end of the pandemic will offer a clear opportunity for MENA policymakers and social parties:**
Changes in how we work (hybrid work models) will spill over to the rest of the economy, international mobility etc. - TOOLKIT: focuses on transversal areas (health and safety, skills development, practical implementation, MbO)

CASE EXAMPLES

FRANCE: FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON TELEWORKING

From September 1, 2021, based on a **framework agreement**, public officials are able to telework for a maximum of 3 days per week for full time.

ROMANIA: NATIONAL LAW ON TELEWORKING

Drafted before the pandemic, Romania in June 2020, adopted a **national law on teleworking**. It aims to offer greater flexibility to both workers and employers

GREECE: REVISED EMPLOYMENT LAW

Greece, in June 2021, has adopted a **new employment law** with reference to remote working, right to disconnection, work-life balance.

MALTA: MANUAL ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The Government published a **Manual on Work-life Balance**, applicable to public sector employees as well, with reference to remote working, flexi-time and work-life balance.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Update of laws and regulations

- Post-pandemic: at least 1/5 of employees will telework.
- **How employment law will cope** with the accelerated world of work (hybrid work, telework, working from home)?
- How the **digital divide** will be tackled? (internet subsidy)

Implementation and prevention

- Setting specific **protection for employees in telework arrangements** will be critical (right to disconnect).
- Other considerations: digital training, employees' health and safety, data protection etc.

Pointers in the Toolkit

- **Success factors** (gender dimension, trade union involvement)
- **Digitalisation and technology requirements** (IT resources, IT-related corruption and security risks)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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