

# LOCAL AND REGIONAL TIME AGENDA

Topic 5

TOWARDS A  
MORE  
**RATIONAL AND  
SUSTAINABLE  
WORKING TIME**



## Local and Regional Time Network

The **Local and Regional Time Agenda (LRTA)** is a pioneering compilation of time policies implemented by local and regional authorities around the world. It provides an updated compendium of time policies grouped by topic and practical recommendations on how to implement them.

The Agenda is coordinated by the **Local and Regional Time Network**, the international alliance of cities, metropolises, and regions aimed at promoting the right to time where people need it most. It is the main forum to exchange and promote implementable time policies that are already changing daily life for more than 90 million people in Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

**More information:**

<https://timeuse.barcelona/local-and-regional-time-network/>



The **Time4All 2.0** project is a two-year initiative (2025-2026) that includes a series of exchanges and workshops in partner cities. Its main objective is to raise awareness about time policies and promote a balanced and sustainable use of daily time, engaging citizens and cities in discussions on the right to time. The project targets 1,800 participants, focusing on young people and women, who are disproportionately affected by time poverty.

**Funded by the European Union through the EACEA Agency** (European Education and Culture Executive Agency), Time4All 2.0 seeks to explore the value of time organisation while developing policies that enhance health, equality, productivity, sustainability, and civic participation. The project is part of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme and builds upon the achievements of its predecessor, Time4All project, implemented in 2023-2024.

The project is led by the city of Bergamo and Time Use Initiative (TUI), the international organisation promoting time policies and the right to time, which currently runs the Network's secretariat.

**More information:**

<https://timeuse.barcelona/time-networks/time4all-2-0/>

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# RECOMENDATIONS FOR A MORE RATIONAL AND SUSTAINABLE WORKING TIME IN THE AGE OF DIGITISATION AND AI

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The relentless pace of modern life, often amplified by technological connectivity, has pushed us into what some experts term the “culture of speed.” This acceleration generates exhaustion and discomfort, making the concept of time poverty a structural reality for vast swathes of the global population. While the symptoms of time poverty —like the anxiety of “not being able to keep up”— are felt individually, the roots are a collective, political problem.

Those engaged in paid employment, especially women who shoulder the double burden of market labour and domestic duties, are disproportionately affected. The urgent task for governments and institutions is not merely to cope with the digital future, but to actively re-engineer our organisation of time, particularly the sphere of paid work. This involves using digitisation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) as tools for rationality and sustainability, and unfolds a core question: it is not about whether AI can save us time, but rather with what intention it is being deployed. To date, many innovation processes remain overwhelmingly oriented towards economic efficiency and control, often overlooking the profound potential of digital tools to actually reduce time poverty and foster well-being.

The 11th Edition of the Time Use Week (Barcelona, 2025), titled *The Right to Time in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, underscored a fundamental conclusion: **technology can contribute to a more balanced use of time only if the technological revolution is accompanied by a revolution in the organisation of time.** To integrate such dimension, we can see eight recommendations:

- 1 Put time poverty at the centre
- 2 Give intentionality to AI
- 3 Regulate AI beyond efficiency
- 4 Protect the human core of work
- 5 Strengthen collective bargaining on digital time
- 6 Integrate time use in digital urban planning
- 7 Promote digital diets and slow time
- 8 Build governance for the right to time

## 8 recommendations on how to ensure the right to time in the AI era in local and regional governments

### 1. Put time poverty at the centre

Governments should recognise time distress and time poverty as key social challenges and integrate them into labour, social and digital policies. Barcelona, for instance, has created a cross-cutting “right to time” agenda, using time-use surveys and indicators to guide policies on work–life balance, mobility and public services, while **Bolzano** has used its Time Office to evaluate local actions with specific time-use metrics.

### 2. Give intentionality to AI: Use AI to reduce unwanted work hours

AI deployment should be linked to a gradual reduction of excessive working hours and to better daily and weekly rest, rather than to layoffs or work intensification. Several European and North American cities (eg. **London, Valencia, Portugal**) have supported pilots of the four-day working week, where AI tools help maintain productivity while reducing weekly hours, as seen in firms connected to innovation ecosystems in Toronto and other metropolitan areas.

### 3. Regulate AI beyond efficiency

Public regulation must ensure that AI in workplaces is evaluated not only for efficiency but also for its social, time and equality impacts. Cities in the European Union are beginning to apply new AI rules locally, focusing on fundamental-rights impacts when deploying algorithmic systems that affect workers, and **Barcelona's** digital policies already include ethical criteria and impact assessments for algorithmic tools in public services. **Bansko** policies allow the use of technology to adjust working time schedules during heatwaves.

### 4. Protect the human core of work

Governments should promote AI systems that take over repetitive, low-value tasks so that people can dedicate more time to creative, relational and democratic dimensions of work. Communication and creative agencies in cities like **Toronto** use AI to automate routine tasks so staff can devote more time to creative, strategic work, and **São Paulo's** (pp. 45-46) data-driven smart projects are designed to free professionals from repetitive processes in order to improve direct work with citizens.

## 5. Strengthen collective bargaining on digital time

Collective bargaining and social dialogue need a renewed mandate to negotiate algorithmic management, the right to disconnect and time boundaries in hybrid and platform work. In many European metropolitan areas, social partners are opening negotiations on the right to disconnect and digital surveillance. One of the best examples already implemented is the **Labour Relations Council of Catalonia** (pp. 43-44), which has a working group in which business and union organisations agree on time policies recommendations for all citizens and companies.

## 6. Integrate time use in digital urban planning

AI and tools such as digital twins should include time-use data to redesign mobility, public services and urban rhythms in favour of shorter commutes and better synchronisation of daily life. Istanbul has used AI to optimise transport flows and reduce commuting times, while cities like **Seoul** (pp. 17-20), **Amsterdam, Istanbul and Milan** (pp. 27-29) deploy AI- or digital-based mobility management to smooth traffic, cut emissions and support shorter, more predictable daily journeys.

## 7. Promote digital diets and slow time

Governments can use education, public campaigns and workplace norms to foster healthier digital habits that avoid permanent connectivity and techno-stress. Both **Barcelona's City Council** (pp. 59-62) and **Barcelona Metropolitan Area** (pp. 53-56) time policies include campaigns and guidelines to limit techno-stress and normalise disconnection outside working hours and to promote a more rational working time organisation.

## 8. Build governance for the right to time

Public institutions at all levels should adopt time policies as a permanent field of governance and link AI strategies explicitly to the right to time. The **Local and Regional TIME Network** is a unique and successful world network, which creates lasting structures and networks that help municipalities and regions to work for the right to time in the digital era.

Ultimately, whether we will have more or less free time in the future does not depend on the technology itself, but on the collective decisions we make as a society regarding its deployment. The contemporary culture of acceleration, intensified by digitalisation, demands that we consciously reclaim slowness, rest, and the quality of time.

To guarantee the right to time and social well-being in the digital era, we must pursue a deep cultural transformation centred on the human rhythm. This is not about doing things faster, but about doing them better —more sustainably, more equitably and in a more rational way towards workers and people.

### References

Time Use Initiative, 2025. 'Conclusions of Time Use Week 2025: "The Right to Time in The Era of Artificial Intelligence"'. URL: <https://timeuse.barcelona/conclusions-of-the-time-use-week-2025-the-right-to-time-in-the-era-of-artificial-intelligence/>

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