

# European Union

In 2009 [the European Working Time Directive](#) limits the weekly working hours to an average of 48 in all [European Union](#) member states. The recent published effects on education and patient care are discussed.

In European Union member states with traditional long working hours for hospital doctors the reduced working hours led to a decrease in trainee case loads. A negative effect on patients care is only suspected, but not yet measured. In particular, British anesthetists started a discussion about the required changes in training and assessment to counterbalance the lack of practice. European Surgical Disciplines demand for 48 h working time and 12 h teaching and education time per week for trainees. So far many member states have delayed the implementation of European laws in national laws.

There are less measured clinical facts than political statements published. The actual working time directives in the European Union member states are inconsistent and further political development on this topic across the European Union remains unclear <sup>1)</sup>. see [Europe](#)

<sup>1)</sup>

Waurick R, Weber T, Bröking K, Van Aken H. The European Working Time Directive: effect on education and clinical care. Curr Opin Anaesthesiol. 2007 Dec;20(6):576-9. Review. PubMed PMID: 17989553.

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